

Allan Rock

From: Allan Rock [Allan.Rock@uottawa.ca]
Sent: Wednesday March 24, 2010 4:40 PM
To: Francois Houle; Diane Davidson; Victor Simon; Louis De Melo; Mona Nemer
Subject: CONFIDENTIAL | Reference - Ann Coulter
Attachments: Dear Ms Coulter.doc; Courriel éclair du recteur | Snapshot Message from the President

Colleagues:

This message and the attached draft have been prepared for the purpose of seeking legal advice with respect to a potential Human Rights Commission complaint against the University. We have also included the media statement sent today to both external and internal audiences.

Here is the background:

1. The University's commitment to freedom of expression is sincere.
2. Notwithstanding her views, the University did nothing to oppose Ann Coulter's scheduled appearance.
3. We regret that it did not happen as planned.
4. The letter that we sent to her in advance was intended not to limit her freedom but to encourage civil discourse.
5. Nonetheless, the letter, especially given the cancellation last night, is being used to argue that the University did not enable Coulter to exercise her freedom of expression.
6. Editorial and professional opinion has been generally negative towards the University's handling of this matter.
7. Classic communication strategy would favour avoiding any step that might prolong coverage and sustain the issue in the media.
8. At the same time, the most tangible way to demonstrate the sincerity of our commitment to freedom of expression, an absence of intent to exclude Coulter, and respect for the standards of conduct contained in Human Rights legislation, is to invite her to return.
9. An invitation to Ms. Coulter to return to the campus would demonstrate good faith on the part of the University and an unqualified commitment to freedom of expression.

Your comments on the proposed purpose (i.e., sending the attached letter to Ms. Coulter and its contents) would be greatly appreciated before noon tomorrow.

Allan



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