

85

Allan Rock

From: Allan Rock
Sent: Wednesday March 24, 2010 6:35 PM
To: Debby Hanscom
Subject: Fwd: CONFIDENTIAL | Reference - Ann Coulter
Attachments: Earnscliffe_3 (1K); ATT18250717.htm; image.png; ATT18250718.htm; image.png; ATT18250719.htm; Site Web de l'Universite d'Ottawa _ University of Ottawa website; ATT18250720.htm

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Elly Alboim" <Elly@earnsccliffe.ca>
Date: March 24, 2010 5:55:52 PM EDT
To: "Allan Rock" <Allan.Rock@uottawa.ca>
Subject: FW: CONFIDENTIAL | Reference - Ann Coulter

My own personal view is that, on balance, I would not re-invite her.

I understand the logic behind the proposal to do so and agree that it communicates sincerity, at least at some level. But prudent calculation suggests that it likely won't end there.

Should she decide to take you up on the offer, her appearance will become a live news event that she will cynically use to personal advantage to extend her sense of grievance and victimization and amplify her profile. Sympathetic media will provide her that platform throughout North America. It will be her win, not about your gesture.

The event will likely attract the crazies who tried to disrupt the G8. There will be a lot of people –unrelated to UOttawa – working their agendas under the glare of the media spotlight. It will be a zoo. And perhaps worse.

And it won't fix the misperceptions of last night's cancellation nor end the confusion about it.

Remember as well that part of the controversy unfortunately is attributable to Francois' email. Your statement today does not address that, nor does the proposed invitation. Obviously without distancing yourself from what he wrote, the impression will stand that the university made some sort of presumptive judgment about her and her motivation in an attempt to moderate the way she expressed her views. I'm not sure we can underestimate the importance of that email and the way it is being perceived. The university cannot credibly position itself as a wholly innocent victim of a drive by.

This is also a bit of an evolving story. She next appears at the University of Calgary. She'll obviously reference her experience at UOttawa and we have no idea what she'll say. But re-inviting her will appear to be partly in response to that whatever it is.

Frankly, at the moment, it's a bit of a PR tossup between concerns about Houle's email and last night's cancellation and the obviously bizarre comment she made at UWO about riding camels, confirming her stereotype. My own view is that it is very much a "life's like that" story. We can make it much worse by giving everyone a chance to re-stage their grievances and hostilities.

The half way house is to amplify the statement issued today by buying ads where appropriate and more fulsomely stating support for freedom of speech and reiterating that the U of O welcomed her appearance and did not cancel the event. It'll sow some confusion which is about the best that can be done.