

March 2, 2005

Re: Ward Churchill

Dear President Hoffman, Chancellor DiStefano, Deans Gleeson and Getches, and the Regents of the University of Colorado:

We write this letter to register our strong objection to the University of Colorado's reaction to Professor Churchill's essay about September 11. It appears that the University has bowed to political pressure by putting Professor Churchill's vast body of scholarship, as well as his entire personal life, under a public microscope.

As your own rules acknowledge, universities should be fostering academic freedom, not attempting to silence dissenting voices. Tenure exists to allow professors to engage the public in debate about unpopular issues without fear of job-related retaliation. Ad hoc investigations of the sort you have initiated abrogate the protections of well-established tenure and review procedures, as well as the First Amendment.

This sets a dangerous precedent for us all. If free speech is squelched within the halls of academia, it cannot be fostered anywhere. Rather than sanction Professor Churchill, we urge you to defend his right to raise controversial issues, and to take a stand against this kind of microscopic investigation of all aspects of Professor Churchill's academic and personal life. By doing so you will not only be acting in accordance with your own rules, but you will be protecting a constitutional principle that is much larger than the current debate.

Sincerely,

This letter has been signed by the 141 people listed on the attached pages.

\* All institutional affiliations in this letter are for identification purposes only. The views expressed in this letter are those of the signatories and not of their respective institutions.

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