



Ontario
Civil Liberties
Association

"The OCLA takes a vigorous and highly principled approach to defending free speech rights, which is an approach that is sorely needed in Canada today."

—John Carpay,
President,
Justice Centre for
Constitutional Freedoms

"I am very pleased to learn of the Ontario Civil Liberties Association, and wish it the greatest success in its work, which could not be more timely and urgent as elementary civil rights, including freedom of speech, are under attack in much of the world, not excluding the more free and democratic societies."

—Noam Chomsky,
Institute Professor, MIT

"Freedom of expression is our most fundamental and most precious freedom. It has been under attack in Canada for years. The Ontario Civil Liberties Association has taken a position on freedom of expression that is both courageous and principled. The OCLA now stands alone and its position should be supported by all Canadians who cherish democracy and freedom."

—Robert Martin,
Professor of Law,
Emeritus,
Western University

ocla.ca



August 28, 2013

By Fax and E-mail

Ms. Nathalie Des Rosiers
Dean, Common Law Section, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
Dean's Office
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57 Louis Pasteur, Room 112
Ottawa, ON
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Re: Your faculty's support for the use of public funds to sponsor a private lawsuit against Denis Rancourt

Dear Dean Des Rosiers:

Congratulations on your former position with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and your recent appointment as dean of the Common Law Section of the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa.

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Civil Liberties Association (OCLA) to express our deep concern that the former dean, Mr. Bruce Feldthusen, authorized and supported the public university's financing of a private defamation lawsuit against a long-time and outspoken critic of the university, Denis Rancourt.

As you may know, the lawsuit is about a blog article on Mr. Rancourt's "U of O Watch" blog in which Mr. Rancourt concluded (correctly, it turned out) that president Allan Rock had asked a black professor to criticize a student report that accused the university of racial discrimination.

Based on court submissions for legal costs, OCLA estimates that the university has spent over \$1 million to date pursuing Rancourt, using public money from the university's operating budget. The lawsuit is ongoing, and the Ontario Superior Court recently scheduled the matter for a three-week trial starting May 12, 2014.

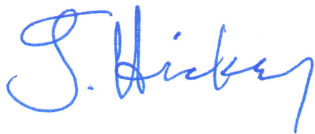
OCLA believes that the university's funding of this private legal action is wrong, and that it never should have been supported by your predecessor, the former dean. As a former General Counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, you no doubt recognize the severe problem with a university using public funds to finance a private defamation lawsuit against one of its critics.

We trust that you will investigate the past role of the dean's office in this matter, and we urge you to repudiate and end the dean's office's support for the university's funding of the lawsuit against Mr. Rancourt. OCLA asks that you make a public statement about your position regarding the funding.

You are unwittingly but nonetheless now involved in a major violation of civil liberties by a Canadian university, under unprecedented circumstances, and OCLA asks that you uphold the principles for which universities and civil society should stand.

We look forward to your public statement.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Hickey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "J." and the last name "Hickey" clearly distinguishable.

Joseph Hickey
Executive Director
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