



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](http://ocla.ca)



August 28, 2013

By Fax and Email

Mr. Allan Rock, President, University of Ottawa  
Office of the President  
Tabaret Hall  
550 Cumberland, Room 212  
Ottawa, ON  
K1N 6N5  
Fax: (613) 562-5103

**Re: The university's funding of a private defamation lawsuit against Denis Rancourt**

Dear President Rock:

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Civil Liberties Association (OCLA) to express our deep concern that you have authorized and continue to authorize university financing of a private defamation lawsuit against long-time and outspoken critic of the university Denis Rancourt.

As you 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 you 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 on-going, and the Ontario Superior Court recently scheduled the matter for a three-week trial starting May 12, 2014.

Following your instructions, the University of Ottawa is using public funds to finance the lawsuit without a spending limit, with "no cap", as you have testified under cross-examination. OCLA believes that the university's funding of this private defamation lawsuit is wrong.

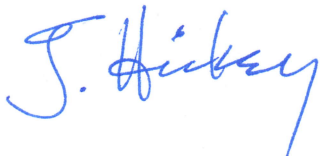
OCLA is also concerned that you appear to justify your decision with accusations of racism against Mr. Rancourt, and that you have done this by using a prominent lawyer to voice your accusations, rather than voice them yourself.

Furthermore, we note that the university appears to have done nothing to address the original student complaint of racial discrimination, which has been at the center

of the matter since the complaint was reported by the Student Federation in November 2008.

We ask you to stop using public funds to finance this private lawsuit against one of your critics, to consider spending the resources instead on addressing the reported problems of institutional racism, and to make a public statement that the university will refrain in the future from funding private defamation lawsuits against its critics.

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

Ontario Civil Liberties Association (OCLA) <http://www.ocla.ca>

613-252-6148 (c)

[joseph.hickey@ocla.ca](mailto:joseph.hickey@ocla.ca)