

March 7, 2005

To: BOT of University of Colorado at Boulder

From: The Faculty Senate of Central Connecticut State University

We are alarmed by the attacks on Professor Ward Churchill's right to free speech and academic freedom which entitles him to speak what he believes to be true and germane to his subject matter without censorship.

In keeping with the principles of academic freedom espoused by AAUP (2003, p. 59)*, we, as responsible academicians, must take every opportunity to "remind our friends, families, neighbors, and colleagues outside the university community of the vital and durable values of academic freedom and free inquiry".

We abhor any institutional or individual attempts to silence intellectual discourse and to limit and control freedom of expression, thought and scholarship regardless of how disagreeable these ideas may be.

We oppose pressure from "individuals and groups, on and off the campus, who seek to bar speakers whose views they oppose, to ban events for purposes they loathe, or to punish or silence faculty, students, and staff whose opinions they cannot abide" (AAUP, 2003, p. 62)*. We oppose the use of investigation and dismissal as a way to curb free speech, and efforts to make an example of faculty who express unpopular ideas. We oppose actions to silence those with controversial views. Such actions nourish an oppressive, hostile culture and imperil the democratic values of free speech and free inquiry.

We fully respect the rights of others to challenge Professor Churchill's controversial ideas through open and civil processes. We endorse the use of tolerance, open exchange, debate, discourse, discussion, and more speech.

An attack on academic freedom is an attack upon democracy. "The basic precepts of academic freedom are not 'negotiable' and we can not forget that society failed to protect these values during the McCarthy era (AAUP, 2003, p. 59)*. We must not make the same mistake now. We will do everything necessary to protect our democracy by preserving free and open speech.

Thus, the Faculty Senate of Central Connecticut State University wishes to express full support for the academic freedom of Professor Ward Churchill, Professor of Ethnic Studies, at University of Colorado, Boulder.

*AAUP (2003) report "Academic Freedom and National Security in a Time of Crisis" Executive Summary: 10/03/2003