

THE JAMES G.   
MARTIN CENTER  
FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL

Dr. Martha Pollack, President  
300 Day Hall  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, NY 14850

Re: Adding Freedom of Speech Training to New Student Orientation

Dear President Pollack,

I am writing in support of two proposals made by the Cornell Free Speech Alliance regarding free speech training at Cornell. I am the president of the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal, a nonprofit organization that promotes public policy solutions to critical issues in higher education.


As the Cornell Free Speech Alliance mentioned in its May 10 letter, 88 percent of Cornell students censor themselves because of how other students, faculty, and staff may respond. Adding freedom of speech training to new student orientation will address this problem. It is an essential first step to helping future students understand the importance of freedom of expression and to making the campus community more tolerant and vibrant.

Free speech training is already included in first-year orientation at many universities across the country, including every school in the University of North Carolina System as well as universities in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Virginia. It is a proven policy solution to the problem of self-censorship on campus.

Adding free speech training for members of the University Review Board and University Hearing Board will ensure that they are able to support students' rights by accurately distinguishing between misconduct and protected expression or assembly.

I strongly support both proposals made by the Cornell Free Speech Alliance. Free speech training—for new students and for members of the University Review Board and University Hearing Board—will improve the climate of inquiry, expression, and intellectual exploration on Cornell's campus.

Sincerely,



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President

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President

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