

**SOCIETY OF
PROFESSIONAL
JOURNALISTS**



SINCE 1909

**THE NATIONAL
JOURNALISM CENTER**

3909 N. MERIDIAN ST.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. 46208

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June 8, 2010

President Mary Jane Saunders
Florida Atlantic University
Office of the President
Florida Atlantic University
Administration Bldg., Room # 339
777 Glades Road
Boca Raton, FL 33431

Dear President Saunders:

The leadership of the Society of Professional Journalists is troubled by news reports that administrators at Florida Atlantic University have threatened to punish a student journalist if she continued to recognize Michael Koretzky as a volunteer adviser for the student newspaper, the *University Press*.

We understand that student journalists at the newspaper have chosen to meet regularly with Mr. Koretzky even though he recently was relieved of his official duties as newspaper adviser. We also understand that the newspaper's editor-in-chief, Karla Bowsher, wishes to recognize Mr. Koretzky's involvement by publishing his name in the newspaper as a volunteer adviser.

While Mr. Koretzky's continued involvement may be awkward for administrators and the newspaper's official adviser, we do not believe the university has any right to threaten Ms. Bowsher or any other FAU student simply for seeking Mr. Koretzky's counsel and choosing to list him as a volunteer adviser.

Mr. Koretzky is a member of the SPJ national board, but our involvement and concern with this issue would be the same regardless of Mr. Koretzky's connection to the organization. One of the missions of SPJ is to protect student press rights. We are involved because it appears those rights are being violated.

We believe the First Amendment's freedoms of speech, press and assembly apply here. FAU students should be free to meet with whom they wish, and student editors of the *University Press* should be free to control the content of the newspaper. Threatening an editor for listing Mr. Koretzky as a volunteer adviser not only violates that editor's First Amendment rights, but it sends a signal to all other FAU students that

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university officials do not respect all of the students' Constitutional freedoms.

If news reports of the threat have been inaccurate, we urge you to set the record straight and publicly declare that students are free to meet with Mr. Koretzky at any time to discuss anything they choose. We also urge you to declare that student editors of the *University Press* are free to list Mr. Koretzky as adviser.

If news reports about the threat are correct, we urge you to remove the threat and require any administrator involved to apologize for attempting to violate the First Amendment rights of an FAU student.

The Society of Professional Journalists, the nation's largest membership journalism organization, promotes the free flow of information vital to a well-informed citizenry; works to inspire and educate the next generation of journalists; and protects First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Z. Smith'.

Kevin Z. Smith
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Ralston'.

Neil Ralston
Vice President of Campus Chapter Affairs

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darcie Lunsford'.

Darcie Lunsford
President, South Florida Chapter of SPJ

CC: Terry Mena, Marti Harvey