



PRESS RELEASE
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Cornell Coalition for Life Stands by Earlier Statement

Pro-Life Student Organization Responds to University Administration

Ithaca, NY - In response to statements made by Cornell University's administration, the Cornell Coalition for Life (CCFL) stands by their earlier press release (copied below) as a fair and accurate description of the events of Wednesday, October 22.

"It is incredible that putting up signs explaining that a baby's heart first beats 25 days after fertilization and other biological facts could lead to this situation. We are surprised and disappointed to see that the administration has decided to issue a statement denying that the staff members acted improperly instead of simply apologizing and admitting that the Elena Campaign should not have been removed in the first place," stated Tristen Cramer, senior at Cornell and former president of CCFL.

The "Elena Campaign", a series of educational signs detailing the biological facts of fetal development, was improperly removed by a staff member of the College of Engineering at approximately 9AM on Wednesday. Despite the fact that the president of CCFL immediately provided proof of administrative approval for the display, the signs were not returned to the organization until an hour and a half later. Though the staff then admitted that the proper approval was in place, the students were strongly encouraged by the Associate Dean of Administration not to resume the display because of an "unwritten policy" regarding opinionated displays on the Engineering Quad.

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October 22, 2008 Press Release:

Ithaca, NY - Less than one hour after the Cornell Coalition for Life (CCFL) set up their "Elena Campaign" signs in the Engineering Quad, the signs were abruptly removed by Dawn Warren, an administrative assistant, and taken to the Facilities Office of the College of Engineering. The "Elena Campaign" is a series of light-hearted educational signs with pictures and text detailing the biological development of an unborn child. Though CCFL had gone through the proper administrative avenues to get approval for the display, Warren removed the signs without permission because she did not personally approve of the content.

Tristen Cramer, senior at Cornell University and former president of CCFL stated, "It borders on the absurd that the facilities staff at the College of Engineering finds photos depicting biological fetal development to be controversial or offensive. Furthermore, it speaks volumes that this member of the Cornell staff chose to censor speech she disagreed with rather than facilitating an open discussion about the issue."

Together, Dawn Warren and Cathy Dove, Associate Dean for Administration in the College of Engineering, attempted to prevent members of CCFL from retrieving the signs. Only when the Cornell Police were brought in did Warren and Dove relinquish the property. Even then, Dove tried to intimidate the students and requested that the signs not be put up again, referencing an "unwritten policy" among the College of Engineering to prevent "opinionated displays."

Katherine Weible, junior at Cornell University and current president of the CCFL said, "As an engineering student, I am surprised and disappointed that some of our staff would censor the issues that we are exposed to. In their claims that all engineering displays must be engineering related, they are severely short-changing all engineering students."

"The Cornell community should be aware that our right to free speech regarding relevant current issues is hindered by this so-called 'unwritten policy,'" said Cramer.

For more information about the Cornell Coalition for Life or about the Elena Campaign, please call Tristen Cramer at 307/240-0943 or email trc32@cornell.edu.

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