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The Colgate Maroon-News

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF COLGATE UNIVERSITY

Current Issue: **Friday, April 22, 2005**New! **04/23**: [David Hale Responds to Phony Email](#). [View Letter](#)

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F.A.C.T. Rally at Delta Kappa Epsilon

By *Steven Fair*

Published: Friday, April 15, 2005

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RALLY CATS: Over 300 protestors made the rounds Tuesday, marching from DKE to President Chopp in the Admissions Office.

On Tuesday morning on the front lawn of the Delta Kappa Epsilon (DKE) house, approximately 300 students and several members of the media gathered to participate in the Freedom of Association: the Coalition for Truth (F.A.C.T.) Rally. The rally focused on protesting Colgate's Residential Plan, which, according to the official Colgate website, will require all Greek-letter organizations to be based in University housing.

The University plan requires the sale of all Greek letter houses to the University. At the current time, all Greek-letter alumni associations are voting on whether or not to sell their houses to Colgate. Thus far, DKE has posed the strongest resistance to the plan. The president of F.A.C.T., senior Sean Devlin, is a member of DKE.

Devlin, however, has made it clear that the issue does not extend to just DKE or to the Greek system. He feels that this is an issue which effects the entire Colgate campus.

In speaking about the rally in last week's edition of the Maroon-News,

Devlin stated that he had hoped "to bring the whole student body together, for the students to rally together for a cause that really affects them. It affects every student on this campus. If one group of students does not have its First Amendment rights respected by the administration, all bets are off. Any student group can be sanctioned."

The issue of First Amendment rights was an important topic at the rally. Much of the recent debate has centered upon the appropriate rights of students at private universities and at Colgate in particular. Many at the rally were there to protest their right to assemble, which they felt was provided to them by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

"I was there to defend my fundamental right as a Colgate student," first-year Mark Bello said. "This transcends the Greek system. The administration is setting no limit as to how far they can go. If the administration can trample one group of students, why can't they trample another group of students that they dislike? They're setting a precedent that anything they don't agree with, they can just go over our Constitutional rights to enforce them."

To begin the rally, each individual in attendance received a F.A.C.T. pin, a pocket Constitution and a copy of Fire's Guide to Free Speech on Campus, a book co-written by Greg Lukanoff, Harvey Silverglate and David A. French, the president of Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (F.I.R.E.). French was a speaker at the event. Those in attendance also received a free Dinosaur Barbecue lunch.

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After a brief introduction by junior Leigh Cuttino, a sister of the Kappa Kappa Gamma (Kappa) sorority, the first speaker of the event was Greg Narag '89, a Phi Delta Theta (Phi Delta) alumnus. Narag's first order of business was to return the flag of the Delta Upsilon (DU) taken from the house in the late 1980s. The representatives from DU were seniors Jon Lebovitz and Cory Kilpatrick.

Narag then delivered an emotional speech, mentioning the names of Dean of the College Adam Weinberg and Associate Dean of the College Jim Terhune, both of which elicited negative reactions from the assembled students. Narag proceeded to refer to Terhune as a "putz," a reference to an e-mail sent by Terhune in the summer of 2003 to Evan Wolf '04. Terhune's e-mail, which described Wolf as a putz, was sent to Wolf by mistake after the student had sent a sarcastic e-mail to Dean of First-Year Students Beverly Low.

"Oh yeah, we heard about that one too," Narag stated.

Narag ended his speech by pointing to the Phi Delta house, which stands next door to the DKE house, and stating, "That's my house. Colgate, get the hell off!"

Narag then introduced the next speaker, David Horowitz, the President of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture. Narag introduced Horowitz as a defender of equal rights for many different groups of people. Many Colgate students may remember Horowitz from his visit to campus on February 11, 2003. There were some who left that speech upset with some of Horowitz's controversial comments.

In speaking to the crowd on the DKE lawn, Horowitz focused on some of the national issues at hand with the University's acquisition plans. It was a contrast to Narag's Colgate-charged speech and for the most part, was spoken with a different tone than was his speech in 2003.

Horowitz referenced an incident at Baylor University, where an African-American basketball player was indicted for murder.

"Does that mean that all black students or all basketball players should be kicked out of Baylor?" Horowitz sarcastically asked. "It sounds ludicrous, but in a sense, this is what Colgate is doing with the Greek

system. Because of one tragic incident four years ago [a car accident on Oak Drive which resulted in four deaths and the incarceration of Rob Koester, a member of DKE], the entire Greek system is being punished."

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"I think that when Horowitz came here, everybody was expecting a right wing speech," Devlin said. "But, he was primarily just concerned with First Amendment rights. His speech was inclusive, and it reached out to people from all parts of the political spectrum."

Horowitz then introduced French, whom he called a "hero of his." According to Horowitz, French turned down a potentially lucrative career for devotion to what Horowitz termed "the cause." According to www.thefire.org French, who holds a Juris Doctor degree from Harvard, speaks at college campuses across the country promoting "freedom of speech, legal equality, due process, religious liberty, and sanctity of conscience."

French offered a legal perspective on the matter and encouraged all students to fight for First Amendment rights. He ended his speech by encouraging students to visit www.thefire.org and to "Submit a Case" if they felt they were dealing with injustice.

The final speaker of the afternoon was John "Rocky" Willard '65, a Phi Delta alumnus. Like Narag, Willard offered a fiery speech with a Colgate perspective. Willard called the new Residential Plan one of the most "horrendous, egregious violations of rights" he has seen in all his years of studying law. Several students in the crowd sang the theme song from the 1976 film Rocky as Willard spoke. He ended his speech with a simple thumbs up and by flashing the peace sign.

Devlin then took the podium and organized a march from DKE to James B. Colgate Hall. The march walked directly past the James C. Colgate Hall, where April Visit Days registration was taking place. In last week's issue of the Maroon-News, Devlin stated that he looked to get prospective students involved in the F.A.C.T. rally.

Still, some students took offense to this decision. In an article submitted to the Commentary section of this week's Maroon-News, junior Ashley Becker states that because of the rally, prospective students "absorbed all of the negative opinions, harsh words and biased viewpoints that were presented and were undoubtedly left with feelings of confusion."

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Standing outside of James B. Colgate Hall, where University President Rebecca Chopp's office is located on the third floor, students, led by Devlin, started chanting "We want Chopp!" Finally, the decision was made to enter the building, where Chopp was waiting for students on the staircase. Devlin approached Chopp with a petition with 1,200 signatures with a list of 13 demands. Devlin then read those demands to Chopp as the rest of the group crammed its way into the building.

"We knew we were going to march to [James B. Colgate Hall]," Devlin said. "But what we were going to do was up in the air. We weren't even sure if she was going to be there. It worked out well."

Chopp immediately responded to some of the demands of F.A.C.T. by stating that Colgate has always upheld the tradition of behaving like a private university.

Devlin interrupted with "What about the tradition of upholding First Amendment rights?"

Chopp asserted that Colgate has always upheld First Amendment rights for students.

"It is important that you understand that Colgate, as a private institution, has neither the ability nor the desire to limit the protections of the First Amendment," Chopp said in a letter printed on the Colgate website as a response to the question of student rights. "Rather, the Bill of Rights exists to safeguard the freedom of private citizens and organizations from overreaching, improper action by the government. Indeed, the Constitution affords Colgate University, like other private institutions (e.g. Rotary or the Girl Scouts), the freedom to establish a framework for achieving our educational mission without governmental interference."

Dean of the College Adam Weinberg also believes that the values of freedom of speech and student rights are important to the Colgate community.

"We always respect the rights of students to raise issues. We value free speech," Weinberg said. "But we also hope that those voicing an opinion will do so in a respectful and truthful manner. A number of the

statements being made are factually incorrect. Most important, Colgate is not violating student rights. As a private institution, we have both the right and the responsibility to set policies for Colgate. Just as we establish standards for what happens in the classroom, as a residential college we establish standards for residential life. We do so to ensure that our students are getting a great education."

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"Prove it!" was the response of the crowd to Chopp's assertion that she supports First Amendment rights.

Chopp responded in reference to the rally, "What did you do this morning?" She also pointed to the Broad Street Community Council, which included several students and helped to create this plan for acquisition of Greek-letter housing.

"The Broad Street Community Council has Greek-letter and non-Greek students working together to solve problems and create policies," Chopp said in her letter on the Colgate website. "I am encouraged by the numbers of students and alumni who have partnered with Colgate as we have begun the work necessary to build a strong and healthy Broad Street community."

Weinberg agrees.

"Next fall, we will have a strong and vibrant Broad Street," Weinberg said. "We will have 10 fraternities and sororities along with over a dozen non-Greek-letter communities along Broad Street, including the new townhouses. The Broad Street Community Council has been doing great work to launch the program. Despite some of claims being made, we will have a fantastic student driven program on Broad Street." To the question of "What did you do this morning?," the group sarcastically responded "Thank you, President Chopp. Thank you for letting us hold our rally."

"Everybody saw how arrogant President Chopp was right there," Devlin said. "'We let you hold your rally?' How arrogant is that? It's laughable. It's like, thanks for allowing us to hold our rally, President Chopp."

The meeting on the staircase ended with President Chopp thanking Devlin for his efforts and letting the group know that she plans on thoroughly reviewing the group's demands, as written on the petition, with the administration.

"With the exception of DKE, every other Greek-letter organization with an active undergraduate chapter has entered into an agreement to transfer ownership of its house to Colgate," Weinberg said. "We are

excited for the future."

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