

January 13, 2004

President Shirley Robinson Pippins  
Suffolk County Community College, Ammerman Campus  
37 Norman F. Lehtrecker Building  
533 College Road  
Selden, New York 11784-2899

Dear President Pippins,

On October 6 of last year, I wrote to you regarding then-president Salvatore J. La Lima's treatment of SCCC student Ursula Monaco. As you will recall, Ms. Monaco was unlawfully punished for accidentally sending an e-mail with profanity in it to a professor.

On October 30, the day before he was to step down, President La Lima wrote to Ms. Monaco to inform her that he was "suspending" her punishment effective October 31. In the letter, President La Lima admitted that the e-mail for which Ms. Monaco was sanctioned did not constitute "any real form of harassment."

We are pleased that President La Lima came to that realization; however, we are profoundly troubled by both his claim that "the panel that heard this case acted in good faith" and his failure to expunge Ms. Monaco's unjust punishment from the records.

Simply ending the months-long punishment does not resolve the matter; the punishment must be overturned and your students and faculty reassured that their basic rights will not be disregarded again. Free inquiry is at the core of the process of higher education, and a public institution like SCCC is required by the First Amendment to protect free inquiry—not to silence it.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Greg Lukianoff  
Director of Legal and Public Advocacy

cc:

James F. Canniff, Vice President for Academic and Campus Affairs, Suffolk County Community College

Michael Weissberg, Vice President for Student Affairs, Suffolk County Community College

Steven F. Schrier, Vice President for Legal, Planni