

William Randolph Woodson
Chancellor, North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina

4/3/2012

Dear Mr. Woodson,

The Seriously Free Speech Committee is a Vancouver (B.C., Canada)-based group mandated to defend freedom of speech specifically in relation to issues of Palestinian rights or the criticism of Israeli policies. We write in support of Dr. Terri Ginsberg, whose credentials for a tenure-track position at NCSU were discounted in 2007-8 because of her expressed or implied political views. We are aware that the university's legal counsel advised offering Dr. Ginsberg a grievance hearing, but that your predecessor as chancellor, supported by your Board of Governors, denied her this opportunity to seek a remedy.

This miscarriage of justice—devastating for the victim—is especially deplorable in light of the apparent praise given recent “Arab spring” events at the start of your 2011-2012 report (available online). The censorship of principled teachers like Dr. Ginsberg can only be seen as complicity in the continuing oppression of an already oppressed people in the Middle East, the Palestinians, with whom Dr. Ginsberg apparently expressed sympathy.

We are aware that Dr. Ginsberg has sought remediation through the courts. While it is not within our purview to address the court, we urge you to correct your predecessor's mistake: to grant Dr. Ginsberg the grievance hearing she deserved and to offer her a substantial financial settlement to offset the financial hardship she has suffered as a consequence of the university's apparent refusal to open itself to the play of ideas that should define higher education. Even better would be to offer her the tenure-track position for which her department evidently considered her well qualified until the question of her politics arose. This is not the way for any university to establish a sound academic reputation, and we hope that you will see your way clear to set right, as far as it lies in your power, the injustice committed against Dr. Ginsberg.

Yours sincerely,

Sheila Delany for SFSC