April 12, 2012

BY E-MAIL AND FIRST-CLASS MAIL

Dr. Richard L. McCormick

Office of the President

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

83 Somerset Street

New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear President McCormick:  
  
 We received your letter of yesterday’s date, acknowledging how despicable and hurtful *The Medium*’s actions were in falsely attributing to Aaron Marcus an op-ed mocking and trivializing the Holocaust. As you recognized, the actions were particularly painful to Mr. Marcus since he is Jewish. You should know that Aaron Marcus is also the grandson of Holocaust survivors. In addition, we read the statement you issued on April 6th, condemning *The Medium*’s actions and noting that Rutgers is investigating the incident as a bias incident, which we assume was triggered by the bias report that Mr. Marcus filed.

These were important first steps. But additional steps are necessary.

This is not the first time that *The Medium* has engaged in reprehensible anti-Semitic conduct. In 2004, *The Medium* published a cartoon depicting a man throwing a ball at another bearded man sitting on an oven at the campus’ spring fair. The text read: “Knock a Jew in the oven! Three throws for one dollar! Really! No, REALLY!”

You took appropriate, forceful action in response to *The Medium*’s vile conduct in 2004. You not only publicly condemned it, but you also made it clear that the conduct was “completely at odds with our values as a university.” And, you urged the students involved in the publication “to reflect on what they have done, take responsibility for their actions and apologize for the hurt they have caused to our community.” Furthermore, you reportedly directed *The Medium*’s editorial staff to attend a meeting with university officials, where they were educated about the Holocaust and why their actions were hurtful and wrong.

Given the current circumstances, Rutgers should be responding to last week’s incident just as forcefully, and should be going even further. *The Medium* not only desecrated the memory of the Holocaust once again, by publishing an op-ed praising Hitler, thereby offending the Jewish community and all decent people. *The Medium*’s actions were even more offensive, because they deliberately singled out Rutgers student Aaron Marcus – even going so far as to publish his picture – all because Mr. Marcus is Jewish and a vocal supporter of Israel.

Amy DiMaria, the editor-in-chief of *The Medium*, posted a letter in the *Targum* last Monday, in which she completely justified *The Medium*’s actions. Ms. DiMaria did not express one iota of remorse about hurting Mr. Marcus. Indeed, she described at great length the efforts that *The Medium* went to, to “research” Mr. Marcus’ work and “accurately mimic” his writing style, plainly so that readers would be led to believe that he wrote the despicable piece. These efforts apparently worked, because several students were led to believe that Mr. Marcus authored the piece, hurting Mr. Marcus even more.

Ms. DiMaria went so far as to insult Mr. Marcus and suggest that he had this op-ed coming to him, because of his so-called “continued use of subjects many University students do not find popular.” We assume that when Ms. Di Maria is referring to Mr. Marcus’ “unpopular subjects,” she is referring to his criticism of campus speakers and programs that promote hateful falsehoods about Jews and Israel. In effect, *The Medium* has sent a clear and intolerable message to Mr. Marcus and all Jewish students: If you stand up to anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing on campus, you will pay for it. You will be singled out and ridiculed before the entire university community.

As you know, this is not the first time that Mr. Marcus has been harassed and bullied for speaking out against the demonization of Jews and Israel. He has been physically threatened by students and even by a university official who, for reasons that are completely incomprehensible to us, is still employed by Rutgers as the Outreach Coordinator for the Middle East Studies Center. Mr. Marcus has also been subjected to anti-Semitic name-calling by this same university official. As you also know, Rutgers is now being investigated by the federal government for failing to respond to these incidents appropriately, as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

As we wrote to you on April 4th, we believe that Rutgers must take responsibility for having allowed an environment to take seed and grow at Rutgers, where Jewish students – particularly when they speak up against anti-Semitism and Israel-bashing – are perceived as permissible targets, because the university will not take the necessary steps to protect them.

This must stop.

For these reasons, we urge you to take the following steps:

1. As you did in response to the 2004 incident, you must make clear in a public statement that what *The Medium* did to Aaron Marcus is against the values of the university community.
2. Your public statement must make clear that the students at *The Medium* who are responsible for this despicable incident take responsibility for their actions and apologize for the hurt they caused to the community and specifically, to Aaron Marcus. When you call for an apology, you should specifically name Ms. DiMaria and all of the other students responsible for writing and publishing this heinous article, in the same way that they specifically named Mr. Marcus.
3. You should be calling the entire editorial staff of *The Medium* to a meeting where they can be educated about why their actions were wrong and hurtful. They should understand that while they may have had a right to publish the op-ed, they acted without decency or responsibility.
4. The staff at *The Medium* should be reminded that the paper receives thousands of dollars per year in funding and makes use of many university’s resources to put its paper together. That means that *The Medium* must adhere to the university’s values of civility and respect toward each and every student in the community, regardless of the student’s religion, ethnicity, or political views.
5. You should make a speech to the entire university community, acknowledging that there have been several anti-Semitic incidents particularly over the past two academic years, which have caused great harm and pain to members of the community. Your speech should commit to finally redressing the wrongs that have been committed, consistent with the rules and values of the university, as well as the requirements of the law.

We await your response.

Respectfully,

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Morton A. Klein Dr. Michael Goldblatt Susan B. Tuchman, Esq.

National President Chairman of the Board Director, Center for Law and Justice

cc: U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights

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