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March 18, 2016

Dear Trustee:

The University of Minnesota has been forthright in upholding core values of academic freedom. Last fall, its officers acted with integrity when they removed and arrested protestors who disrupted the guest lecture given by NYU School of Law Professor Moshe Halbertal. In doing so, they admirably ensured that the “heckler’s veto” did not interfere with the right of the speaker to express his opinion or the right of the audience to hear it.

Most recently, the Faculty Consultative Committee articulated a draft statement of principles of academic freedom. It eloquently asserts the core values of the university:

Ideas are the lifeblood of a free society and universities are its beating heart. If freedom of speech is undermined on a university campus, it is not safe anywhere. The University of Minnesota resolves that the freedom of speech is, and will always be, safe at this institution.

The Committee’s recommendations reference the 1974 report developed under the direction of Professor C. Vann Woodward in response to challenges to free speech at Yale University. The report, included in the enclosed publication, *Free to Teach, Free to Learn*, identifies the unique opportunity—and obligation—of those at a university to protect free expression, and it provides guidance on the policies and procedures needed to maintain such values on campus.

The Faculty Committee’s statement reflects the best practices of American higher education. That is why we urge that you, the Regents, formally adopt the Committee’s recommendations on free speech into board policies as well as procedures to ensure the appropriate protection of speech and dissent. In doing so, you would be among a small—but growing—group of higher education institutions around the country that are publicly and proudly upholding academic freedom and free speech—fundamental principles of a free society and academic community.

PROMOTING ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND EXCELLENCE

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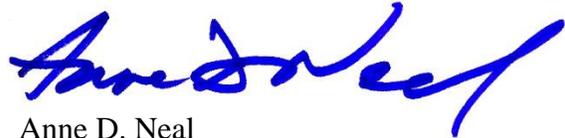
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As I am sure you know, after the publication of the University of Chicago's Report of the Committee on Freedom of Expression in 2014, Princeton, Purdue, Chapman, the University of Wisconsin System, and other schools subsequently issued statements that adopted those principles. Johns Hopkins and American University have come forward with their own powerful statements, and these efforts have recently been highlighted by the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

We are eager to help the board in any way we can and look forward to hearing how you will proceed.

Thank you for your service to American higher education.

Warm regards,



Anne D. Neal
President

Enclosure

cc: Eric W. Kaler, Ph.D., President, University of Minnesota