

UNIVERSITY SENATE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced By: CAFFECOR

Date: March 22, 2010

DELETION OF
"PRINCIPLES FOR A JUST COMMUNITY"
FROM UNIVERSITY DOCUMENTS

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. The "Principles for a Just Community" statement be removed from the *Community Rights and Responsibilities*
2. That the Bill be forwarded to the President for approval and implementation.

BACKGROUND:

The “Principles of a Just Community” statement was first approved by the Senate in 89-90. A revision was last made in 00-01. The initial rationale for the 89-90 bill was not explicitly included therein, but seems to have been an administrative response to off-campus incidents in the New York City area. The revisions in 00-01 were sponsored by ULC; the background section of that bill stated that “There have been requests for minor revisions to this document. In response to those requests, the University Life Council reviewed it and approved the proposed revisions.”

The 89-90 bill proposed that the “Principles for a Just Community’ be endorsed by the University Senate, and that these principles be included in all appropriate publications and otherwise disseminated throughout the University Community.” Consequently, the PJC currently appears, among other places, at the front of the “Community Rights and Responsibilities” and the *Undergraduate Bulletin*.

In a recent review of the “Principles of a Just Community” as a part of a comprehensive review of the “Community Rights and Responsibilities,” CAFFECOR discovered a number of passages in the former which conflicted with the text in the latter. For example, the “Principles of a Just Community” states, “the University must allow the free expression of ideas, no matter how outrageous” whereas the CRR states, “The University at Albany strives to protect all members of the University at Albany community by prosecuting bias or hate crimes that occur within the campus jurisdiction” where “bias or hate crimes” are defined as “Engaging in behaviors or using language that demonstrate hatred or bias against other persons because of national origin, ethnicity, race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, color, creed, or marital status.”

Moreover, CAFFECOR found that on occasion the PJC seemed to contradict itself. For example, one passage states “...this academic community...must...be just. There is no definitive theory of justice.”

In sum, CAFFECOR was concerned that these passages would cause confusion among students and other members of the university community. After careful consideration, CAFFECOR decided that any attempted revisions of the “Principles of a Just Community” would only further complicate the document. And, because freedom of speech is already addressed elsewhere in the CRR, the best solution was to delete PJC from CRR.

The members of CAFFECOR would like to stress that this action is not tantamount to eliminating the concept of justice, or the importance of justice, on this campus. Rather, this action is an attempt to clarify campus policy for the entire community. The PJC will remain on other university documents, unless another Senate Council or Committee proposes otherwise.