Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This is the second annual newsletter of The Center for Freedom and Western Civilization at Colgate University. It is written for all who have inquired about our mission and activities and who wish to be informed on a regular basis about how we are working to change the political and intellectual climate of the Colgate campus.

If you have not already done so, please consider giving a gift to The Center as we continue our efforts to restore the traditional meaning of Liberal Arts Education as an education worthy of a free citizen and a free mind.

The Mission

The Center for Freedom and Western Civilization was established in 2004 when it was formally chartered by Colgate President, Rebecca Chopp. Its mission is to promote intellectual diversity by presenting a “conservative voice” on campus and to support public discussion and research into the Western heritage of freedom and civilization. It is governed by a director, a faculty advisory board of Colgate professors, and an alumni advisory board of supporters and donors.

The public response so far has been tremendous because of the growing sense that our universities are unbalanced: The bias in favor of liberal and left-wing viewpoints is so overwhelming that we rarely have genuine debates on the great issues of our day or the great ideas of Western civilization. The Center for Freedom and Western Civilization is one of several institutes across the country (others have been created at Duke, Princeton, Michigan State, and Claremont) that is challenging the prevailing intellectual conformity and working to restore genuine liberal arts education. It is also part of a growing movement led by ACTA (the American Council of Trustees and Alumni) and other organizations that are linking together many of the new centers in order to change the political balance at American universities.

Speakers and Events

In an effort to bring alternative voices to Colgate’s campus, the Center sponsored a number of exciting speakers and events in 2005 - 2006:

• David Boaz of the Cato Institute gave a compelling speech on “Why I am a Libertarian” and led a class discussion on the libertarian philosophy of limited government, free markets, and individual liberty.
• Khaleel Mohammed, an Islamic scholar and imam, addressed the question, “Islam and the West: Harmony or Conflict?” and sharply criticized the anti-Western bias of many Islamic preachers and scholars.
• Constitution Day Panel: The Center celebrated the federally mandated Constitution Day by sponsoring a panel discussion of legal experts on “The Battle over the Courts and the Constitution.”
• George Weigel, the acclaimed biographer of Pope John Paul II, gave a lecture on “John Paul II and the Theology of Freedom” and spoke with our Newman Society students about his book, Letters to a Young Catholic.
• Dinesh D’Souza gave an exciting talk on his new book, “What’s so Great about America?” which explained why so many people love America as well as the reasons for anti-Americanism in the Muslim world. He also joined 20 College Republicans for dinner and gave them an inspiring pep talk.

Awards

The Center has created awards and scholarships for students who have made outstanding contributions to promoting the ideals of freedom and Western civilization. The Richard L. Stone ’81 Civic Freedom Awards were given at commencement 2006 to two graduating seniors: Jeff Galletly for his work in founding the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and leadership in campus ministry; and Nicholas Brown for his work as scholarship chairman at Phi Delta Theta Fraternity and dedication to Medieval-Renaissance Studies.

Public Relations

In order to reach out to the general public, we have embarked on an extensive public relations campaign. The Center’s role in restoring intellectual balance on campus was mentioned in The Colgate Scene as well as in articles in the Weekly Standard, City Journal, and the Chronicle of Higher
Education. We were specifically cited as one of several new centers across the country that is leading the way in changing our universities.

I also appeared on a Time Warner cable show, “Right Angle,” with host Mark Finklestein to promote the Center and explain how liberal college professors contemptuously dismiss conservative ideas in politics, economics, religion, and culture as “beyond the pale” — stifling freedom of thought and speech among students.

We have created a website on Colgate’s portal to inform prospective students and parents of the Center’s presence on campus (http://groups.colgate.edu/center-for-freedom); and I gave a talk at Colgate’s Reunion Weekend in June to explain the challenge of “intellectual diversity” on college campuses. To support my case, I distributed an article by Professor Stanley Brubaker which discusses a survey of political attitudes among Colgate faculty: the survey showed that only 2.4% of the Colgate faculty considered themselves “conservatives,” while 22.6% called themselves “far left,” 53.6% called themselves “liberal” and the remaining 21.4% considered themselves “middle of the road.” What a huge imbalance!

Project Afghanistan

In an effort to reach beyond the Colgate campus, the Center established links with universities in Iraq and Afghanistan to help their struggles for freedom and pro-Western ideals. The Center provided seed money for “Project Afghanistan,” directed by Colgate Professor Alexander Nakhimovsky and joined by Colgate alumnus, Michael Smith ’70. In March of 2006, they sponsored an amazing conference at Colgate on education and development in Afghanistan in which the keynote addresses were given by the Afghan ambassador to the U.S., Said Tayeb Jawad, and the chancellor of Kabul University, Dr. Ashraf Ghani.

The long term goal is build computer systems and English language software for the University of Kabul and to establish a “sister” relation between Colgate and the University of Kabul, providing a link between Afghanistan and the Western world.

Future Plans

We are now making plans for next academic year, 2006-2007, and we have ideas for exciting speakers and topics in the pipeline. On Constitution Day (Sept. 18, 2006) we will be presenting a debate between Colgate professors Barry Shain and Tim Byrnes on “Religion and the American Constitution.” In October, we will be sponsoring a debate on the important topic of immigration reform, featuring Michelle Malkin of Fox News and Ruben Navarrette of CNN and the San Diego Tribune; they will be debating “Immigration, National Security, and American Citizenship.”

We are also actively pursuing other speakers and topics, such as Kevin Phillips on his new book, “American Theocracy,” the economist Hernando de Soto on “Free Market Solutions to Third World Poverty”; the movie critic Michael Medved on “Hollywood vs. America”; Leon Kass on “The Ethics of Stem Cell Research”; Charles Murray on “The Crisis of the Welfare State in Europe and America”; and a debate about the “Neoconservative Influence on American Policy.”

Plans for the future also include continuing the work begun on Project Afghanistan (including bringing Afghan students and faculty to America); promoting a more positive image of the American military on college campuses, including sponsoring a petition to restore ROTC to Colgate; establishing a Post-Doc Teaching Fellowship associated with the Center that will help the scholarly careers of young conservative intellectuals and offer courses affiliated with the Center; continuing the civic freedom awards to develop future leaders dedicated to the ideals of freedom and Western civilization. I will also be attending a conference in Cambridge, Mass. in November 2006 sponsored by ISI (the Intercollegiate Studies Institute) that will share our experience with other new “conservative” centers springing up across the country to reform our universities.

With best wishes,
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Professor of Political Science and
Director, The Center for Freedom and Western Civilization

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