



Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms

February 5, 2014

Today the student group University of Ottawa Liberty Society erected a **free speech wall** inside the University Centre of the University of Ottawa. The wall will stand from 10:00AM until February 6 at 4:00PM. The University of Ottawa Free Speech Wall is part of a campaign to raise awareness about free expression rights in Canada and is sponsored by the Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms (JCCF).

Over the course of the day members of the University of Ottawa Liberty Society will invite students, faculty and community members to express their thoughts and opinions on the wall, as an exercise of their free expression rights. They will hand out information about the state of free speech at Canadian public universities, measured in the JCCF's **2013 Campus Freedom Index**. The Index is the first report in Canada to measure and rank the state of free speech at Canadian public universities. With 180 grades awarded to 45 campuses, Canada's universities and student unions receive only six 'A' grades. Conversely, and troublingly, 'F' grades were earned 32 times: 13 by universities and 19 by student unions.

In total, 23 campuses earned at least one 'F'. Put another way, this means that more than half of the 45 universities studied—51%—have engaged in the censorship of student expression on campus.

The 2013 Index reports that the University of Ottawa is one of the worst universities in Canada for upholding free speech on campus. **The University earns a 'D' for its written policies and an 'F' for its practices with respect to campus speech. The Student Federation of the University of Ottawa receives a 'D' for its policies and a 'D' for its practices.** The University of Ottawa failed to provide adequate security for a lecture by American author Ann Coulter, which forced the cancellation of the club-sponsored event just hours before it was to begin. The University also sent Coulter a letter prior to her arrival, warning her to "watch her words" while visiting the campus. On February 20, 2009, the University of Ottawa banned posters associated with the national campus event, Israeli Apartheid Week because in their view the posters did not respect the "human dignity" of others.

The JCCF hopes that this free speech wall will remind students, administrators and faculty at the University of Ottawa that free speech is a fundamental value in higher education. For more information, please contact:

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[Click here to read the 2013 Campus Freedom Index](#)

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