Envelope-to: pfeiff16@msu.edu
From: "Curtis Stokes" <stokes@msu.edu>
To: "C. M. Allen" <pfeiff16@msu.edu>
Cc: "William B. Allen" <allenwi@msu.edu>
Subject: Re: Publicity materials for the TAFM Debate on 10/19
Date: Thu, 21 Sep 2006 08:32:35 -0400
X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 6.00.2900.2869
X-Virus: None found by Clam AV

I do appreciate your points but, in fairness to the potential audience, I think it is appropriate to make changes in the publicity materials beyond accommodating me on my brief biography. When I agreed to do this my assumption was that there would be balance, which includes the publicity. If this cannot be attained then I will not be participating in this event.

I would love to be part of this conversation but not under these conditions.

Curtis

----- Original Message -----
From: C. M. Allen
To: Curtis Stokes
Cc: William B. Allen
Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2006 8:33 PM
Subject: Re: Publicity materials for the TAFM Debate on 10/19

Dear Professor Stokes,

Allow me to say again that I regret that my initial message to you inadvertently communicated an invitation for you to review all aspects of TAFM's publicity for the debate. As I mentioned in an earlier e-mail, I had intended only to ask you to review that part of the publicity that described you – the bio sketch. And I have revised that part to match your requested modifications.

TAFM does not ask that our speakers review/edit our overall publicity materials, nor has any other speaker objected to the language that you are concerned about – which has appeared in our publicity for every debate to date.

I did, nonetheless, give serious consideration to your concern, particularly as it was somewhat similar to a concern expressed by a cosponsor for another upcoming debate. We do, routinely, work with our cosponsors on the overall publicity.

TAFM's goal is to structure all aspects of the debate so that it is fair and even-handed to the "pro" and the "con" speaker in the debate. Speakers speak on their own behalf (as I have communicated to you previously) and not on behalf of TAFM. If you have problems with the wording of the ballot language, you are free to express them during the debate, and we encourage you to do so. We take other steps as well to make sure that the structure of the debate favors neither side:

1. Each speaker has the exact same amount of time to speak, and we enforce time limits for each speaker.

2. We alternate from one debate to the next whether the “pro” or the “con” speaker speaks first.
3. We rigorously stress to moderators the need to be fair, impartial, and even-handed in their interactions with each speaker.
4. We try hard to recruit excellent speakers for each side of the debate.

The title for the debate (“Affirmative Action: Pro & Con”) makes it clear that it is the overall policy of affirmative action that will be the subject of the debate, and that one speaker will speak in favor of it and one in opposition.

I understand that both sides of the political campaign over Proposition 2 are dissatisfied with the wording of the ballot language. But, if TAFM chooses one side’s language or the other side’s language to frame the basic question, then we are not presenting the debate in an unbiased way.

After reflecting on your concern (and that expressed by a cosponsor for another debate), William and I concluded that the most neutral stance to take in the publicity material is to use the actual language of the ballot itself, and to place it in quotations, and to make it clear that the wording comes from the ballot itself.

This is our final revision on this aspect of the publicity. We thank you for helping us to see that the earlier wording could be improved in this way; however, we will not consider any further revisions.

Thanks.

Carol