A Resolution

Whereas, The Representative Assembly endorsed RA 05-36; and

Whereas, RA 05-36 endorses the principle of academic rights, professing it as innate to an academic environment; and

Whereas, the debate surrounding academic rights has been confused by the debate surrounding academic freedom; and

Whereas, while the principle of academic freedom bestows upon the individual the freedom to voice their idea/argument/ideology without fear of vindictive repercussion, the principle of academic rights places an affirmative obligation on the institution to represent and contemplate all ideas/ideologies/arguments in the classroom without consideration of the quality of the argument; and

Whereas, the principle of academic freedom is premised on the idea that free and uninhibited discourse will lead to the increase in the wealth of knowledge, the principle of academic rights is premised on the idea that ‘nature of all human knowledge is unsettled’ and that ‘all ideas/ideologies/arguments are equally meritorious’; and

Whereas, while academic freedom is innate and integral to an academic environment, academic rights are not; and

Whereas, bestowing academic rights upon individuals inhibits the faculty’s ability to moderate the classroom environment as they deem fit and consistent with the course structure; and

Whereas, the faculty should have the ability to choose which ideas from the ‘market place’ of ideas best represents and achieves the goals of their course; and

Whereas, not all ideas have equal capital and adherence in an academic community; and

Whereas, the proven intellectuals of an academic community (i.e. the faculty) are best enabled to recognize and pass judgment on the capital, quality and merit of an idea/argument; and

Whereas, RA 05-36 while valuable in that it sparked campus discussion, was detrimental in that the politicization of it caused the Bates College Faculty to be caricatured as ideologues as opposed to critical thinkers and academics; and

Now, Therefore let it be resolved:
That we reject the principles that bestow academic rights upon individuals endorsed in RA 05-36.

That we should continue to uphold the values of academic freedom so dearly held by the academic community at large and the Bates community in specific.

That all ideas should be discussed, contemplated and assessed on the basis of the substance and quality of the argument and not on the basis of the political/religious ideologies it upholds or represents.

That we place our faith in the Bates College Faculty to determine the ideas/arguments that pass academic muster and deserve academic treatment while best representing and fulfilling the goals of the course.

That the classroom is a sanctuary for intellectual inquiry and that no individual should be unfairly marginalized from fully partaking in it because of their political ideology and/or religious belief.

That this resolution is a simple affirmation of ideals that are inextricable from an academic community and not an affirmation of a political ideology or agenda.

That upon passage, the body of the resolution be communicated to the Bates Community at large and any other invested groups on or off campus.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vaibhav Bajpai
Treasurer, BCSG

Michael Neville-O’Neill
Representative, Wentworth Adams Hall

Co-Sponsors:

Winthrop Rodgers
Representative, Hedge Hall

Paul Suitter
Representative, Roger Williams Hall

Michael Williams
Member, Bates Community

John Leavitt,
Representative, Frye House

Rakhshan Zahid
Member, Bates Community

**LEGISLATIVE ACTION**

**Monday, October 31, 2005:**
Originally proposed & passed