

# DONOHUE REPLIES TO ROLLINS TRUSTEE

The day after Bill Donohue spoke to the student, Marshall Polston, and the president of Rollins, Dr. Grant H. Cornwell, we received an email from Allan E. Keen, chairman of the Board of Trustees. Bill Donohue offered the following pointed rejoinder to Keen; he also commented on a news story in the *Orlando Sentinel* by Gabrielle Russon. The italics are Donohue's response to cited remarks.

- In his email, Keen said Polston "was suspended because of a matter related to another student." *No details were given.*
- In his letter to the Trustees, Keen contended this issue was not a recent development, saying that "there were actions and concerns going back for several months, and even after some intervention, the student continued to act somewhat unusual..." *No details were given.*
- Keen said the student was not suspended for his "disagreements with the professor, or these classroom activities." Rather, "it was related to a 'different' incident with a student." *No details were given.*
- In her story in the *Orlando Sentinel*, Russon said the professor "filed a 'protection against stalking' request" against the student last Friday. Rollins then suspended him. *No one questioned the filing or the injunction. But was there evidence that he actually stalked her? Or did she file the complaint believing he might stalk her?*
- The injunction, Russon said, listed the nature of the professor's problems with the student. "He has disrupted class twice (we've only had two classes) with antagonizing interjections, contradicting me and monopolizing class time." *As a former professor, this*

*complaint read as an indictment of the professor, not the student. "Antagonizing interjections"? Meaning he sharply disagreed? More important, since when has it been regarded as inappropriate student behavior to "contradict" a professor? Why isn't this simply a matter of free speech? Similarly, did he not allow other students to speak—did he filibuster?—or was he overly talkative?*

- Russon said of the professor, "She wanted him out of her class." *Precisely—this says it all.*
- Russon wrote that "School officials intervened to meet with Polston and his behavior improved over the next few weeks." *But what exactly did he do wrong to merit this intervention? Did he violate campus policy in some way? And how did his "behavior" change? Or was the intervention meant to have a chilling effect on his free speech? If so, this is a very serious matter.*
- The professor failed Polston (a straight-A student) for an essay he submitted on March 8. Russon said the professor "was concerned about his reaction" and wrote to a public safety official about it. "The next day, Polston emailed her." He accused her of "extreme bias." *In other words, the professor contacted the public safety office **in anticipation of a threat, one that never happened!***
- Russon quoted an associate dean saying, "At no point did he threaten anyone openly." *This seals it: Her complaint to the public safety office was not based on any threat by the student.*
- Russon wrote, "Zufari was so concerned that she canceled class." *About a non-existent threat? This is posturing, a gambit designed to indict the student on charges that are false, by her own admission.*