

UNIV. OF COLORADO CENSORS CHRISTMAS PARTIES

According to a story in the Rocky Mountain News, a state audit released last year barred the University of Colorado from holding Christmas parties; the university notified all employees that a "holiday party is no longer sole justification for an allowable university event." According to Bronson Hillard, spokesman for the university, "What matters the most is the reason for the party." There can be a staff appreciation party, he said, "but the motivation cannot be the holiday itself." Hillard did not say what techniques the university possesses to police motivation.

We were curious about this so we decided to contact Sally Symanski, the state auditor. She referred us to the State of Colorado Fiscal Rule 2-7 that says state monies can only be spent for official functions. As we expected, there is absolutely no mention of any Christmas or holiday party in 2-7. When asked what statute or court decision the audit was leaning on to ban Christmas parties, we were told to speak to Mary Catherine Gaisbauer in the controller's office of the university.

Gaisbauer told us that holiday parties are no longer allowed, but holiday-themed parties were okay so long as they met the criteria for an official function. We were still perplexed: "goodwill functions" are explicitly recognized as constituting an official function. Upon further questioning, she directed us to Recommendation #15 of the state audit. But Recommendation #15 says not a word about parties, Christmas or otherwise; it deals with procurement practices.

In other words, there is no statute or court decision that mandates censoring Christmas parties; the state audit is equally silent on this matter. What we have is a clear case of

bureaucratic overkill and political correctness
run amok.