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Presidential Candidate Platforms:

Separation of Church and State

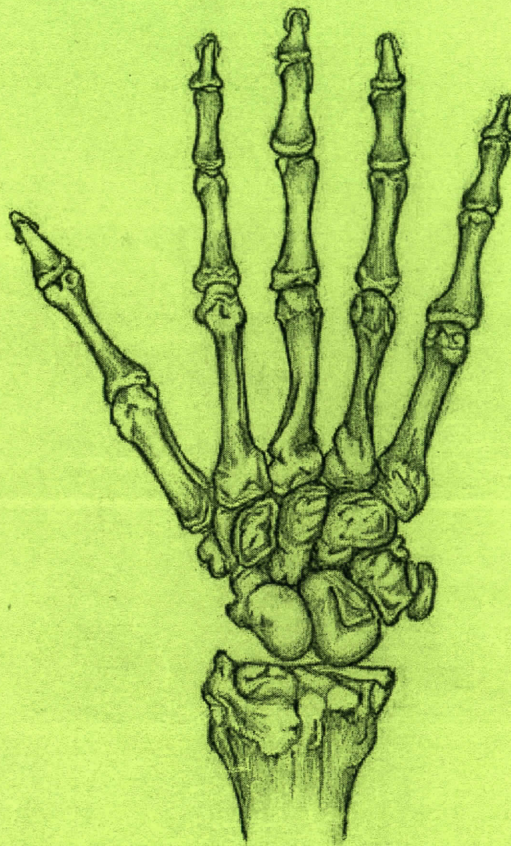
Ron Paul believes that prayer in public schools should not be prohibited at the federal or state level, nor should it be made compulsory to engage in. He rejects the notion of "separation of Church and state", instead seeing the issue as "free exercise of religion" and "no establishment of religion."

Mitt Romney pledged in 2008 to serve the common good and no single religion if he were to be elected president. He also made an impassioned plea for the importance of faith and religion in the public arena.

Rick Santorum says the separation of church and state makes him want to "throw up." Santorum as a congressman, senator and presidential candidate has consistently and vociferously fought to dissolve the First Amendment wall between church and state.

Newt Gingrich believes it is the first duty of the President to serve as President rather than a religion, and supports JFK's speech on the separation between church and state. However, he also believes President Obama's administration is "anti-religious."

Barack Obama tends to use Christian rhetoric, but is a supporter of the separation of church and state. He recently was challenged by conservatives for asking religious organizations who provide health insurance to also provide forms of birth control.

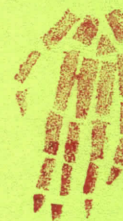


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Questions or comments? Let us know at fallin-gapplecnu@gmail.com. All emails will be read.



The Falling Apple



Edition #4

2012

Falling Apple Award

We of SSH would like to publicly congratulate Dr. Laura Grade Godwin of CNU's Theater Department as the second recipient of the Hook Award. Dr. Lori Underwood, the first recipient of the Hook Award, recently passed the award along to its newest recipient, Dr. Godwin. This award was created to celebrate those professors who are held in high esteem by their students and who exemplify the best qualities of educators at the collegiate level. The true test of a professor's success is the reputation he or she holds with students, and the professors selected are those that have had a tremendously significant and positive impact on their students and community. This award itself is passed from professor to professor, but the recognition is a permanent honor.

Dr. Godwin continually ensures that class is interesting and engaging, whether through informative and entertaining lectures or through mediated class discussions. She is unafraid to speak her mind, she is genuinely interested in the perspectives and opinions of her students, and she makes a point of not censoring herself or others. More specifically, she displays forward thinking, positive word choice in respect for the power of language, and a healthy awareness of speaker and audience. She is able to command a classroom effectively, and does so without stifling her students or creating an uncomfortable atmosphere. She has an ability to organize and tie together the most important messages of her subject, and present them to students in a way that is clear and powerful. Most importantly, she values the intellectual and personal betterment of her students above all else. These qualities inspire a great freedom of intellectual thought and creativity, and embody the true ideals of higher education.

It is vital that an institution of higher education never forgets what truly drives the success of that institution, and to that end, professors as a whole deserve much more recognition than can be expressed by a single organization. The Hook Award is meant to at least partially redress this lack of appreciation, and will continually recognize the professors that are truly exceptional. Congratulations Dr. Godwin, and thank you for your time and effort for the sake of your students and this University.

CNU Commencement:

Bob McDonnell

It is impossible to be a current student of Christopher Newport University and not have heard of the controversy surrounding the selection of Bob McDonnell as the commencement speaker for this May's graduation ceremony. In regards to this issue, there appears to be four distinct ways students are perceiving the problem:

1.) The Governor— Many students are viewing this opportunity as an honor, as the governor of Virginia is giving the commencement speech. The focus in this type of thinking is on the office and the prestige that office entails.

2.) The Person— Another significant portion of students do not see Governor McDonnell as just a governor, but as a person that has enacted or supported legislation significantly against their ideals, and according to their arguments, the ideals of CNU. They don't care about the office, but rather they care about the man who holds that office, and what that person supports personally.

3.) The Ability to Choose— The current petition online, although often supported by those of the 2nd viewpoint, states that regardless of who was chosen, the students of CNU should have an active voice in who is selected for their commencement. This view contends that the graduation ceremony is one for the sake of the students, and it makes clear sense that the students should impact who delivers their commencement speech. Rather than focus on the individual selected for commencement, the attention is on the actual process of how commencement speakers are chosen, and how that process should be fixed.

4.) Apathy— An unfortunately large section of CNU students seem to not care at all who gets chosen for commencements or how that process works. Their goal is to grab the diploma and run.

While there is some value to be found in all the perspectives provided, the 3rd viewpoint is a perspective that all CNU students should support. Regardless of political affiliation or personal feelings about Governor McDonnell, the students of CNU should have a significant voice in how these decisions are made. This process was not open to students, and although at any point there could have been "recommendations" made from the student body, it's clear that the administration should make a point to ask students while these decisions are under consideration. The commencement ceremony is not to celebrate anyone or anything beyond the graduates that have spent countless hours working toward a degree. It seems obvious then that these same graduates should have a distinct voice in these processes.

Students should sign the online petition being advertised. Regardless of a person's individual feelings towards Bob McDonnell, telling the administration in a clear and definitive way that their opinion should matter when these decisions are made is wise and called for. Having this type of policy would encourage the students to speak openly with the administration and could significantly improve the day meant to celebrate their achievements. It is never wrong for the students of an academic institution to have an active voice in policy decisions, and to that end, there is little reason not to support the petition.