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Letter seeking advice from University Chancellor

Howard R. Neville

President, University of Maine

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January 18, 1974

Chancellor Donald R. McNeil
228 Deering Avenue
Portland, Maine 04102

Dear Don:

You no doubt have read of discussions concerning the approval of an organization called the Wilde-Stein Club by the Student Government of UMO; concerning the use of our facilities for social events by the Wilde-Stein Club; and a request to use our facilities for a state-wide meeting of "gay people" some time in the Spring. I am perfectly prepared to take a position on this, as you know, and then argue the merits of my position either on the campus community or in the State, or both.

However, because this has far-reaching ramifications both for the UMO campus and for other units of the total University of Maine, it seems to me I should seek guidance from you and your office about our actions:

1. Should I interfere in any way with the continuing responsibility of the Student Government to recognize this student group?
2. Do you believe we should allow the Wilde-Stein Club, recognized by Student Government, to use our facilities for social activities and perhaps even other activities the group demands?
3. Do you believe we should make available to "gay people" of the State the use of our facilities for a state-wide conference on "gay" activities? I am sure that if we did this we would have to accept the notion hereafter that any group could meet on our campus regardless of the matter to be discussed or what the group itself might be (we have from time to time turned down groups who wished to meet here.)

I think your office should develop a statement on this matter which will give direction to all University campuses. You should know that in this particular case we will give your office credit for it.

Chancellor Donald R. McNeil
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I would suggest that you get a statement from Barney Shur which could be the basis on which you establish directives to the campus on this particular matter. I would hope, of course, that before the directive is finalized I would get a chance to review it with you; for you know that we at Orono, at least for the moment, have the most to gain or lose by what that directive says. We ought to understand each other on this issue to avoid public confusion.

I need your instructions at the earliest possible time.

Sincerely yours,

Howard R. Neville
President

HRN:jc