

**Resolution on Academic Freedom and the CUNY Board of Trustees' Decision on May 2, 2011,
Regarding Tony Kushner's Honorary Degree from John Jay College**

Passed on May 13, 2011

WHEREAS, on May 2, 2011, the CUNY Board of Trustees tabled a vote to approve John Jay College faculty's decision to grant Tony Kushner an honorary degree while passing a slate of other honorary degrees;

Plenary	WHEREAS, not a single trustee spoke on behalf of the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright; and Mr. Benno Schmidt, Mr. Philip Alfonzo Berry, Ms. Valerie Lancaster Beal, Mr. Wellington Z. Chen, Mr. Judah Gribetz, Mr. Joseph J. Lhota, Dr. Hugo M. Morales, Mr. Peter S. Pantaleo, Ms. Kathleen M. Pesile, Ms. Carol A. Robles-Román, and Mr. Charles A. Shorter all remained silent, refusing to speak to the literary, artistic, and academic accomplishments of Mr. Kushner;
Steering Committee	
Constitution and Bylaws	
Media Board	WHEREAS, Mr. Jeffrey S. Wiesenfeld, the trustee who did speak about Mr. Kushner, distorted the honoree's views by selectively taking the playwright's words out of context, a practice which stands in opposition to the principles of academic integrity;
Health Issues	
Cultural Affairs	WHEREAS, Mr. Kushner's purported political beliefs were the only reasons given for the tabling of his nomination;
Professional Development	WHEREAS, both intimidation and silence are tactics used to stifle academic freedoms;

WHEREAS, Article 1, Policy 1.2 of the CUNY Board of Trustees Manual of General Policy states: "The City University of New York should remain a forum for the advocacy of all ideas protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution and the principles of academic freedom;"

WHEREAS, Section 15.0 of the CUNY Board of Trustees Bylaws states: "Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Student participation, responsibility, academic freedom, and due process are essential to the operation of the academic enterprise;"

WHEREAS, academic freedom, academic integrity, freedom of expression, and the free exchange of ideas are thus necessary to higher learning and the academy;

WHEREAS, the Doctoral Students' Council is the democratically elected representative body for all doctoral and master's students at CUNY;

RESOLVED that the CUNY Board of Trustees shall be held to the same principles of academic freedom that the Board of Trustees expects from its students, faculty, and administration;

FURTHER RESOLVED that the CUNY Board of Trustees institutes mandatory training for all of its members pertaining to academic freedom, the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America, the Bylaws of the CUNY Board of Trustees, and the CUNY Board of Trustees Manual of General Policy;

FINALLY RESOLVED that the CUNY Board of Trustees issues a public, formal apology to Mr. Kushner and to the students, faculty, and administration of John Jay College of Criminal Justice and the CUNY system.