

Dear Members of the Oberlin Community:

I am writing to update you on the lawsuit that Gibson Bros., Inc. filed against Oberlin College and Vice President and Dean of Students Meredith Raimondo in the Lorain County Court of Common Pleas in November 2017.

Following a trial that spanned almost a full month, the jury found for the plaintiffs earlier today.

We are disappointed with the verdict and regret that the jury did not agree with the clear evidence our team presented.

Neither Oberlin College nor Dean Meredith Raimondo defamed a local business or its owners, and they never endorsed statements made by others. Rather, the College and Dr. Raimondo worked to ensure that students' freedom of speech was protected and that the student demonstrations were safe and lawful, and they attempted to help the plaintiffs repair any harm caused by the student protests.

As we have stated, colleges cannot be held liable for the independent actions of their students. Institutions of higher education are obligated to protect freedom of speech on their campuses and respect their students' decision to peacefully exercise their First Amendment rights. Oberlin College acted in accordance with these obligations.

While we are disappointed with the outcome, Oberlin College wishes to thank the members of the jury for their attention and dedication during this lengthy trial. They contributed a great deal of time and effort to this case, and we appreciate their commitment.

Our team will review the jury's verdict and determine how to move forward.

Donica Thomas Varner
Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary