

Response to letter complaining about *Darwin or Design* event at USF.

Thank you for your comments regarding the upcoming event "Darwin or Design" that will be taking place at the Sun Dome on Friday, September 29, 2006. I appreciate your comments but wish to correct some factual errors in your e-mail.

First, your Point 1 states that the memo gives the impression that the event is underwritten by USF and/or supported by a significant number of its faculty. If you will read the postcard carefully, you will notice that it specifically states that the event is sponsored by "Physicians and Surgeons for Scientific Integrity" and nowhere in the narrative does it state that USF is the sponsor. Other than the mention of the location at the USF Sun Dome, there is no mention of USF anywhere else. I find it difficult to believe that any person reading the narrative would get the impression that the event is a USF event, rather than just an event taking place at USF. It is obvious that you are reading more into the narrative than what is there. Also, with 8 individuals "signing" the memo, I find it hard to believe that any person reading the memo would assume that 8 persons represent the hundreds of academic faculty on the Tampa campus of USF.

In Point 2, you make another false assumption regarding the "positions or their biases with respect to the topic of the memo." Clearly while you advocate scientific inquiry and integrity, you seem to believe that only what you believe to be scientific is relevant or correct. If you would take the time to investigate the academic credentials of the two main speakers at the event, you will find that their records are impeccable. They are "world class" academic scholars and well regarded in the scientific community. As to the supposed biases of the memo's authors, I suppose all persons, including the memo authors and yourself, would be considered biased in one way or another. In an environment of academic freedom, people may express their views on a variety of subjects and the authors of the memo wish to express their views on this subject, at least from the perspective of having open-minded people listen to the scientific arguments for the intelligent design position.

Finally, your Point 3 totally misses the point regarding scientific inquiry. As academics, we recognize all facets of education and learning. Science and philosophy are subjects taught independently, although there is a long history of the blending of both. If you examine the area of "philosophy of science" of which there are numerous PhD-level courses at most universities with this title, you will find that the majority of individuals who devoted their lives to science were also somewhat philosophers themselves. This goes all the way back to Bacon who is considered the father of the scientific method. All great scientific researchers have some type of philosophy based on their individual world view. Obviously, this program goes against your worldview and/or personal philosophy, and that's OK. But to provide the false notion that everyone hearing about this program or perhaps attending it will be somehow drawn away from scientific exploration of issues is grossly exaggerated. If you would listen to the speakers on Friday (and you are certainly welcome to attend) or read some of their published articles, you would be provided with scientific, not philosophic, arguments supporting intelligent design. People can make up their own minds regarding the scientific reliability and believability of the positions espoused by the speakers.

As a final point, if you will examine the Chronicle for Higher Education and other academic related publications, you will find that the discussion of intelligent design versus Darwinian evolution, is in fact, an issue being discussed on college campuses. Your blanket statement that this is not an issue being discussed shows a lack of awareness of what is taking place on college and university campuses in North America.

As a personal point, I find it interesting that you refer to "a Republican judicial appointee" in your quote regarding the court decision you cited. Am I to assume, as you have in your response to seeing the Darwin or Design memo, that you are "biased?" Why not simply refer to the case without the reference to the political appointment process for naming this judge? Does it matter?

Apparently it did to you since you mentioned it. Are you assuming that all of the signers of the memo are Republicans? Why should it even matter? Scientific inquiry is not a political issue, although you, by implication, try to make it one. I truly feel sorry for you and your limited perspective regarding the search for truth through scientific investigation.