

## President of William and Mary forced out

Contributed by Megan Fitzgerald  
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As many have probably already seen, the President of the College of William and Mary, Gene Nichol, resigned his position today following a Board of Visitors vote not to renew his contract. Looking at reports from the state and talking to students and faculty on the ground, it's nearly impossible to see this as anything more than an attempt to restrict the free exchange of ideas on the William and Mary campus. We, frankly, are appalled by this sort of business.

President Nichol has been under incredible fire over the past year because of the political implications of some of his decisions-not because the university's rankings have diminished, because students are complaining that their education has suffered, because the research the college produces has become sub-standard or because he's been unable to keep the university on sound financial/administrative ground. In fact, the students and faculty just organized a large vigil on his behalf and according to the Student Assembly president, "I think the student body and faculty are behind Nichol 110 percent." Instead, he's been attacked because he pulled a cross off a public university building and allowed students to hold a student-organized and student fee-funded event called the "Sex Workers Art Show." As you'd expect, those attacks have come from the same sources that have lobbed attacks across the country against academic freedom, free speech on campus and faculty members with politically controversial views.

What's more alarming is that it would appear the Board of Visitors know exactly how this move appears. According to a letter sent to the campus community, President Nichol was offered financial incentives to "not to characterize [the non-renewal decision] as based on ideological grounds."

We could say more, but fortunately, President Nichol has issued his own statement, published in the campus paper.