

University Official Orders Student to Remove Cross Necklace

Monday, Liberty Institute attorneys met with officials at Sonoma State University on behalf of its client, student Audrey Jarvis, whom a university official asked to hide or remove her cross necklace because it “might offend someone.”

“The University said they are now investigating this religious discrimination issue and they are taking it very seriously,” explains Liberty Institute Director of Litigation Hiram Sasser. “At the conclusion of the investigation, we hope to receive a letter of apology as well as a written assurance that Audrey can continue to wear her cross.”

Jarvis, a 19-year-old liberal arts major, was working for the university’s Associated Students Production (ASP) organization at a student orientation fair when her supervisor asked her to remove the necklace.

The supervisor told Jarvis that the chancellor had a policy against wearing religious items and said the cross necklace “might offend others, it might make incoming students feel unwelcome, or it might cause incoming students to feel that ASP was not an organization they should join.”

Her supervisor approached her a second time and told her to put the cross under her shirt or remove it. Jarvis, a devout Catholic, was so upset about the incident that she left the student fair early.

Last week, with the assistance of Liberty Institute, Jarvis filed a religious accommodation request with the university. Her main motivation for taking such a bold stand was to ensure that other students wouldn’t have to face similar

discrimination.

Jarvis' story is a true testament to what can be accomplished when even just one person has the courage to stand for our First Amendment rights. Her story has made headlines around the world, bringing to light the very important topic of assaults on religious freedom in our schools and universities.

In this case, Sonoma State University is taking positive steps to resolve this issue. The university spokesperson said, "It's possible that political correctness got out of hand."