CONTACT: Ed Rowe 814-880-8155 edrowe@psu.edu
Eric Patridge 814-574-7652 evp106@psu.edu
Darryl Watson 814-769-3065 darryl.jr@gmail.com

The Pennsylvania State University Invalidates Non-Discrimination Policy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, February 20, 2006

On Friday, February 9, 2006, the Pennsylvania State University, one of the largest employers in the region, filed its Brief in Support of their Motion to Dismiss the lawsuit of *Harris v. Portland, Curley, and the Pennsylvania State University*.

In the original lawsuit, Harris alleges that Portland did not uphold the university's non-discrimination policy, constituting a "Breach of Contract." Harris also alleges that Portland violated the university's statement on intolerance and its privacy statement.

To avoid accountability in the lawsuit, the university has moved to dismiss, arguing that "Mere administrative provisions in a personnel manual or policy handbook simply do not rise to the level of agreement by which an employer must abide." By this, the community interprets that the university holds no responsibility to support students of color, queer students, women, students of any religious affiliation, or any of the other classes supposedly protected by the non-discrimination policy.

We have extended several opportunities for the university to address these concerns, though the university refuses to publicly discuss their statements. Instead, the university has counter-offered to meet with select students in clandestine meetings, where the press and public were officially forbidden.

As the statements issued by the university hurt administrators, faculty, staff, and students, we do not consider this a private matter - the community deserves answers. To alleviate the current climate of fear among our students, staff, tenured and non-tenured faculty, and administrators, we the students insist on a forum to provide a venue for public discourse. This is the first step in an ongoing movement to build solidarity among all members of the community.

The Rainbow Roundtable is dedicated and committed to the well-being of the Pennsylvania State University and stands by our Alma Mater, which states "may no act of ours bring shame, to one heart that loves thy name."

As such, we will hold a public forum at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 24, 2006 in Room 304 of the Hetzel-Union Building (HUB). We are sending specific invitations to University Counsel Wendell Courtney and Vice President for University Relations Stephen MacCarthy, in his capacity as the AD Policy Steward. We ask everyone to attend this forum to discuss the statements appearing in the university's brief.