

Embracing Our Differences (EOD) February 28, 2023

This is SCFs statement for the public record regarding our agreement with Embracing Our Differences. It appears that the media will not report this account as it is neither salacious nor apt to grab public attention.

Allow me to start by thanking our SCF District Board of Trustees for your support for the decision to withdraw as an exhibition site for Embracing Our Differences.

SCF signed an agreement with EOD in September 2022 that included our ability to choose to not display certain artwork on our campus and that a discussion regarding our concerns would be had with EOD.

We received the art selections from EOD in January and identified three that could be incendiary given the, at times, violent division in our country around particular topics. Already this year, the EOD exhibit in Sarasota has been vandalized.

We received a call from EOD on February 1st excoriating us for hosting the Governor on our campus after which we were informed that EOD was taking a "hard line" and would not even have a discussion with us about our concerns. Ironic that an organization named Embracing Our Differences would not even discuss our differences.

EOD breached our contract and "censored" (def: examine officially and suppress unacceptable parts) our agreement. As we were told it was "all or nothing", we opted to exercise our right to withdraw.

Despite agreeing to issue a joint press release when we notified EOD on of our decision, EOD again defaulted on an agreement, and chose to capitalize on our differences by going to the media, securing a headline that was a lie. We never had the chance to discuss our differences with EOD yet they chose to attribute a reason of their own to describe our withdrawal.

In their press release EOD attempted to tie the Governor's politics to our decision. Let me clearly state that the only pressure we received regarding our decision to withdraw as an exhibition site was from EOD themselves by way of their "all or nothing" position that was not in keeping with our agreement. This was simply a contract dispute where our differences were not embraced but instead exploited for political and/or monetary gain.

Again, I would like to acknowledge and thank the SCF Trustees for their support and for always keeping the best interest and safety of our entire college community in the forefront when making decisions. The right decisions aren't always the most popular.