

7:51 a.m. January 29, 2008

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

I am well aware that many of you are concerned about the investigatory process and outcome following a complaint by a student last semester against a member of our faculty. As a member of the faculty and as an administrator, I share with all of you the goal and expectation that our university policies reflect our core values of academic freedom, the right of our students to a learning environment that is free of harassment, and the right to privacy in personnel matters.

As you know, the University is legally required to have a non-discrimination and harassment policy. Our policy and investigatory procedures were substantially revised in 2006, following extensive discussions with the Faculty Senate. These procedures instructed the investigation conducted last semester and that case is now considered closed. Because of our obligation to ensure confidentiality, I have been unwilling to comment publicly about this case, despite the misrepresentations of the investigatory process and outcomes that are now widely circulated in the media.

Some of you have expressed confusion concerning what constitutes racially harassing speech and how the University conducts a legally required investigation. As a community, we can all agree that this confusion is not healthy and that we must work together to understand both our legal and academic responsibilities. I have been and will continue to work with the Faculty Senate Council regarding programs for the faculty that increase our internal capacity for understanding diversity issues.

I am saddened by the pain that our community has experienced recently and I want to open up channels for constructive dialogue. The spirit and specifics of our current policy reflects thoughtful discussions between the faculty and university administrators. I expect that such conversations will continue to inform this and other university policies in the future.

Sincerely,

Marty Wyngaarden Krauss  
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

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