

Subject: Recent Campus Events

Date: Friday, November 20, 2015 at 4:55:12 PM Central Standard Time

From: David Burrows

To: FACULTY-L, STAFF-L, STUDENT-L

Dear Members of the Lawrence Community:

The events of the past few days have made us all painfully aware of the consequences of racism in our society. Conflicts surrounding race have affected the entire Lawrence community, and have resulted in expressions of anger, hostility, and sorrow. It is imperative that we address these issues and act to resolve them in ways that honor our core values of justice, fairness, and mutual respect. We also want to act in ways that ensure constructive results. As we confront these difficult issues, we need to remember what we stand for.

We are an institution devoted to the advancement of learning. We believe in the free exchange of ideas, careful consideration of difficult issues of the human experience and the resolution of concerns through dialogue and discourse. This means that we need to be able to discuss problems that are often painful. In our courses, convocations and public discourse, each of us needs to feel free to present ideas and challenge the ideas of others. It also means that we need to respect each person's identity and support each person's ability to enjoy a life free from prejudice and bias.

As an institution devoted to values that include justice and mutual respect, we must have effective procedures for dealing with conflicts. When someone acts to limit the freedom of another or harm another, we have ways to address and resolve the conflicts that are involved. We strive to make these procedures as effective as possible. If a person or group has acted in a way that creates an injury, whether physical or emotional, we have ways of helping that person or group change. It is clear that many members of our community believe these procedures could be improved. We will spend the winter break considering these procedures

Recent anonymous accusations directed at members of the faculty and staff were presented in a manner not consistent with our existing procedures. Whatever the validity of the complaints, they will not be investigated unless they are presented in accordance with our established grievance procedure. The procedure is described in the Student Handbook, under the heading, Grievance Procedure. It is designed to maintain fairness. I urge everyone to respect it.

I am confident that as a community we have the intelligence, commitment to fairness and desire to resolve conflicts that will help us address issues of racism effectively. We have the ability to build a stronger community and to be a model for other communities in helping to overcome this significant social problem.

Sincerely,

David Burrows