Update and Message From the President

Dear Members of the Campus Community:

As some of you prepare for Spring Break I wanted to provide an update to recent campus events and concerns.

The investigation into the identity of the persons who posted hate speech and a specific threat in the StuComm document continues. We are hopeful that the Kalamazoo Department of Public Safety and the FBI can determine the perpetrator(s), and we are mindful that sufficient evidence to pinpoint with certainty the individual or individuals responsible may not be discoverable.

Throughout the week I have had an opportunity to talk with many of you regarding your thoughts on how effectively we have handled the most recent threats. Your feedback has been extremely helpful, and the campus crisis management team will make changes in light of your comments and suggestions.

Many of you have also offered suggestions regarding the various ways K might move forward in light of the multifaceted reality of students who feel marginalized at K. This will be difficult work and everyone on campus must play a part.

Very early in spring term I will outline the process—a process co-developed with a small group of students, faculty, and staff—that we will use to address the marginalization that some of our students experience. That process will allow us to get to work quickly and to enlist the minds and hearts and actions of everyone at the College in productive and creative ways. The work will be demanding, and some of the changes will be structural and fundamental. The work will yield actions, some of which we hope to implement very quickly.

I thank you and hope that each of you find some time for rest and reflection during the Spring Break. Several of you requested possible resources to consult. I can think of none better than “In Their Own Words” (a report in the voices of K students from the K student focus groups of April and May 2013) and an article referenced in that report: “Talking About Race, Learning About Racism: The Application of Racial Identity Development Theory in the Classroom,” by Beverly Daniel Tatum. The report is available on our website (at https://reason.kzoo.edu/eqa/eqq/14/ under the link “Final Report”). The article by Tatum is available at http://ets.mnsu.edu/darbok/ETHN201/race.pdf.

At K, we share many things in common, and we differ from one another. Engaging fully with those truths, with compassion and empathy, will get us where we need to be as a larger community.

Eileen Wilson-Oyelaran