

Appendix B: Questions about the Treatment of Protestors

February 28, 2018

To: Dr. Jamie Washington, Sarah Carlsen, Working Group, Members of the Collective on the Hill, and Members of the Task Force on Institutional Racism

From: Joan Hepburn, English Department and Co-Chair of the Task Force on Institutional Racism

Re: The Protest Policy at St. Olaf College

Dear All:

Hopefully, you are enjoying your day, and you share a sense of the good meeting we had last Friday in the Art Barn, a gathering during which we shared honestly our feelings about the work we have done, are doing, and the work yet to be done to improve the climate at St. Olaf. We owe much thanks to the mediating role that Dr. Washington played in getting us talking.

Today I am writing this letter with an attachment because I just saw the "Protest Policy" on the webpage of the Dean of Students. First, let me say that the attachment consists of a series of queries that I generated for our meeting last Friday, not knowing the format for it. I never mentioned to the members of the Task Force for Institutional Racism the questions that I planned to disseminate. When there was no opening for formal presentations, I did not pass my questions out, but seeing this policy, I want to.

If I were to edit the questions that I listed, it would be to ask whether student protestors were asked to sign non-disclosure agreements to keep their punishments secret, or if they had to sign any other legal or extra-legal document without legal support that functions like a mandatory arbitration agreement. I want to see the policy that the Dean's Office generated to address the punishment of perpetrators of hate speech and hate crimes, and what verifiable data Deans have collected for years on the punishments issued to both perpetrators and protestors. These are questions that I began asking since June, but only now detect some interest in them. Finally, if Dean Roz is the chief author and implementer of the policy against protestors, then I have to ask if she can answer the

questions that President Anderson asked me last Friday about which student protestors were punished and how? In spite of the opening statement to the “Protest Policy” on line, did she oversee every stage of the punishments that likely occurred given missing students or missing degrees after students have met their requirements for graduation, let alone all the other pressures that it appears were exerted? If we can trace student troubles to their source, can we ameliorate their suffering in a timely fashion, say before May 2018? Then will we take time to discuss the cruelties or name the confusing allusion in the policy to “intimidating tactics” that seem to have occurred? Will we finally address the college’s handling of perpetrators, whether last spring or before? Such steps might help prevent past troubles from happening ever again and show how proactive St. Olaf has been in handling and documenting hate speech and hate crimes for years, whether last spring’s protest was or was not a hoax.

In asking these and the attached questions, I want to make clear that I am not presuming anyone’s intent because this is likely un-provable and from the standpoint of punished protestors irrelevant. Rather, I am anxious to gather data based on real actions or inactions over time at our Christian college.

Yours,

Joan E. Hepburn
English Department