

October 4th, 2013

To JoNes VanHecke & The Gustavus Community:

In consideration of recent events within our Gustavus community, the Diversity Leadership Council would like to issue a statement. The Diversity Leadership Council is a committee of individuals representing 18 diversity related organizations on our campus. It is our intent with this statement to voice the concern expressed by the Council regarding our communities' climate and safety.

The Diversity Leadership Council as a whole stands with the mission of the College in that we aspire to be a community of persons from diverse backgrounds who respect and affirm the dignity of all people. The recent hate crime and all expressions of hate on our campus directly violate that mission. The following summarizes our concerns:

- We caution the Gustavus community against considering this as an isolated incident. This is not the only time that we have seen or heard hateful expressions on our campus. This is not the only time Physical Plant has had to cover or clean up these expressions. The Diversity Leadership Council recognizes the severity of this crime, but we believe that this incident should not minimize the severity of other forms of hateful expression on our campus.
- Gustavus has defined a hate crime as, "A criminal offense committed against person(s) or property that is motivated by the offender's bias against a person's or group's actual or perceived race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, age, or sexual orientation." According to the information the student body received, the severity of this incident meets the threshold to be classified as a hate crime.
- We are concerned about the manner in which the Gustavus community was informed of this incident. While recognizing the sensitive nature of the incident, we are disappointed in the level of communication regarding the College process in identifying incidents as hate crimes.
- The Diversity Leadership Council wants to recognize that this incident has negatively affected the perceived sense of safety and security for students, faculty, and staff within our community, and that individual actions directly affect our community as a whole.

This incident is a challenging and unsettling moment in the fabric of Gustavus. It is a grotesque and painful reminder that the mission of the College has yet to be fulfilled. The Diversity Leadership Council encourages our Gustavus community to enter into a dialogue both as individuals and a collective that is committed to confronting the human stain of hate in all forms.

Respectfully,

The Diversity Leadership Council

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