

From: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2014 10:03 AM
To: Soniat, Karen <Karen.Soniat@law.lsu.edu>; Roche, Jennifer <jennifer.roche@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: Diversity Task Force

Good morning,

The Civilian is planning on doing a small issue for November to be released sometime during the week of November 10. I would like to do a piece on the new diversity task force. I was wondering if the Chancellor had any time in the next two weeks to meet and discuss it. We can also discuss other Civilian business and upcoming news. I just wanted to learn about the origin of the task force and how Kyle Algood's actions affected it, etc.

Thanks,

--

Julie Faulk
J.D./D.C.L. Candidate 2015
Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Louisiana State University
Phone: (318)-355-9006
E-mail: juliefaulk@gmail.com

From: Soniat, Karen </O=LSULAWCENTER/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=KAREN.SONIET>
Sent: Friday, October 24, 2014 5:49 PM
To: Julie Faulk <julieifaulk@gmail.com>; Roche, Jennifer <jennifer.roche@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: RE: Diversity Task Force

Julie,
Happy to arrange that..Let me get with Christina next week.

Karen

Sent via a the Samsung GALAXY S® 5, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Julie Faulk <julieifaulk@gmail.com>
Date: 10/24/2014 10:03 AM (GMT-06:00)
To: "Soniat, Karen" <Karen.Soniat@law.lsu.edu>, "Roche, Jennifer" <jennifer.roche@law.lsu.edu>
Cc:
Subject: Diversity Task Force

Good morning,

The Civilian is planning on doing a small issue for November to be released sometime during the week of November 10. I would like to do a piece on the new diversity task force. I was wondering if the Chancellor had any time in the next two weeks to meet and discuss it. We can also discuss other Civilian business and upcoming news. I just wanted to learn about the origin of the task force and how Kyle Algood's actions affected it, etc.

Thanks,

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Julie Faulk
J.D./D.C.L Candidate 2015
Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Louisiana State University
Phone: (318)-355-9006
E-mail: julieifaulk@gmail.com

From: Hood, Christina <Christina.Hood@law.lsu.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2014 11:52 AM
To: Julie Faulk (juliefaulk@gmail.com)
Cc: Soniat, Karen <Karen.Soniat@law.lsu.edu>; Roche, Jennifer <jennifer.roche@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: meeting with Chancellor Weiss

Julie, Jennifer Roche indicated that you had requested a meeting with the Chancellor re: the Diversity Task Force, and that you would need to meet this week to meet your deadline. Do you still need to meet, and if so, do you have anytime between 10 am and 2 pm on Wednesday, or perhaps tomorrow at 4:30?

Christina H. Hood
Executive Assistant to the Chancellor
LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
(225) 578-8491
(225) 578-8479 (direct)
(225) 578-8202 (FAX)
www.law.lsu.edu

From: Hood, Christina <Christina.Hood@law.lsu.edu>
Sent: Monday, November 3, 2014 1:00 PM
To: Julie Faulk <julieifaulk@gmail.com>
Cc: Soniat, Karen <Karen.Soniat@law.lsu.edu>; Roche, Jennifer <jennifer.roche@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: RE: meeting with Chancellor Weiss

Works for the Chancellor.

Christina H. Hood
Executive Assistant to the Chancellor
LSU Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Baton Rouge, LA 70803
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(225) 578-8479 (direct)
(225) 578-8202 (FAX)
www.law.lsu.edu

From: Julie Faulk [mailto:julieifaulk@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 03, 2014 12:37 PM
To: Hood, Christina
Cc: Soniat, Karen; Roche, Jennifer
Subject: Re: meeting with Chancellor Weiss

Tomorrow at 4:30 would be best. Let me know if that will work with everyone's schedule.

Thanks,

Julie

On Nov 3, 2014, at 11:51 AM, Hood, Christina <Christina.Hood@law.lsu.edu> wrote:

Julie, Jennifer Roche indicated that you had requested a meeting with the Chancellor re: the Diversity Task Force, and that you would need to meet this week to meet your deadline. Do you still need to meet, and if so, do you have anytime between 10 am and 2 pm on Wednesday, or perhaps tomorrow at 4:30?

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(225) 578-8202 (FAX)
www.law.lsu.edu

From: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 5, 2014 7:09 PM
To: Somat, Karen <Karen.Somat@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: Civilian response to recent publications
Attach: Response to Recent Publications.docx

Mrs. Somat,

I have attached my response to Kyle's Huffington Post article and The Daily Reveille's article. I was hoping you wouldn't mind reading it before publication just to review the content. I worry that I may be personally attacking Alagood and will make the situation worse, but I feel like it needs to be said.

Thanks for being willing to read over this for me.

Julie Faulk

In Response to Recent Publications on Diversity at the Law Center

The Article Posted on the Huffington Post

3L Kyle Alagood and 2L Andrew Hairston each contacted Chancellor Weiss concerning the lack of diversity at the Law Center via email on October 20. Chancellor Weiss responded to both individuals that same day around 4pm stating he needed time to address their concerns but would respond. Chancellor Weiss then emailed the students and faculty on October 23 around 4:40pm announcing the appointment of a Diversity Task Force. However, without regard to the administration's swift three-day response to the concerns expressed, Alagood next posted "Breaking the Code of Silence on Race in Law School" to the *Huffington Post* on October 23 at 9:00pm (updated at 9:59pm). The article, co-written by Hairston, describes an encounter with a member of the faculty that students interpreted as a "microaggression." The article also refers to the "unspoken rule that has prohibited them [students] from openly discussing race at the LSU Law Center," and expresses hopes that students will begin to ask for more diversity.

Alagood mentions that the lack of diversity of the Apprenticeship Week faculty resulted in the forming of a coalition of students. The coalition hopes to discuss race openly and demand change from the administration.¹ However, neither Alagood nor Hairston ever made any attempts to contact the Law Center's administration concerning the diversity of the Apprenticeship Week applicant pool. Instead in his article, Alagood states "[w]hen the LSU Law Center selected an almost all-white group of practicing lawyers to teach intersession, the school denied students and faculty an educational benefit" suggesting the Law Center made no attempts to diversify the volunteers for the intersession. Alagood has no personal knowledge of which Law Center alums were contacted about teaching for Apprenticeship Week and which declined the offer. He merely assumes that because the majority of the teachers are white, the Law Center has no commitment to diversity and did not attempt to diversify its Apprenticeship Week staff.

Another unfortunate part of the *Huffington Post* article is its lack of reference to Chancellor Weiss's response. Chancellor Weiss appointed a diversity task force three days after Alagood and Hairston's concerns were expressed showing that the administration at the Law Center is indeed committing to providing a diverse community of faculty and students. The article suggests that race is a subject that cannot be discussed at the Law Center while in reality it seems the administration is happy to respond to any concerns. Perhaps Alagood submitted his article to the *Huffington Post* before Chancellor Weiss had the chance to send out his email. In which case, it appears as if Alagood prefers to attack the administration without giving it a time to respond. Chancellor Weiss asked for time to adequately address the expressed concerns, and instead Alagood felt it would be best to take his

¹ Alagood has been contacted for information about this coalition including its number of students, any scheduled meetings, etc. but has not responded. As of now, the only two public members of the coalition are Alagood and Hairston.

concerns public.² While he appears to ask for open communications concerning diversity, publicizing his distaste of the community at the Law Center without waiting for or referencing any response by them is probably the last way to achieve this goal. If the Law Center refused to entertain any conversations about its diversity, then going public to force the conversation may be necessary. However, this refusal to respond was not the case.

Fostering diversity at a specific school is a conversation that needs to happen within that school with the community working together and talking openly with each other. Posting complaints to the general public is unlikely to bring about any change when you are unwilling to even wait for a response. An anonymous Law Center student stated that articles like this one “are perpetuating stereotypes of Louisiana that are highly offensive and damaging to this school’s excellent reputation for producing attorneys, jurists, and scholars who harbor no hate in their heart for others, especially based on the color of their skin, religion, creed, sexual orientation, etc. Generating unnecessary media buzz is no way to have a reasonable and necessary discussion about diversity.” Furthermore, nothing will discourage diverse faculty and students from working at or attending the Law Center than promulgating the idea that race cannot even be discussed among its community.

The Daily Reveille’s article

On November 3, *The Daily Reveille* published an article entitled “Law Student on Diversity Task Force Experienced Racial Slurs During Time at Law Center” written by Brittany Clark. The article details SBA President Ken Barnes’ encounter with a former student. *The Daily Reveille* reported on the issue without contacting the Law Center for a comment. As a result, the message of the article was that the Law Center stood passively by while one of its students was verbally attacked with racial slurs. The Law Center is also portrayed as lacking in diversity without any reference to the evidence behind this statement. The allegations are simply false and could have been rebutted if *The Daily Reveille* took the time to reach out to the administration.

The Student Ethics Committee decided that under the Code of Student Professional Responsibility they could not pursue the Halloween party incident. Even though the Student Ethics Committee did not find the student to be in violation of the student honor code, this decision does not mean the Law Center administration did not take this encounter seriously and react appropriately. In fact, on November 20, 2012, Chancellor Weiss emailed the entire student body addressing the occurrence. He stated that he could not override the Committee’s decision and instead suggested working to change the Code of Student Professional Responsibility to prohibit this type of behavior. However, to ensure his stance on the matter was clear, Chancellor Weiss stated “[b]oth as a Chancellor and as one member of this law school community, I condemn unequivocally the use of this hateful word in the circumstances of the Halloween party incident.” In fact, the Chancellor stated the use of this racial slur in this context constituted “fighting

² Alagood was contacted concerning when he submitted his article to the Huffington Post, but no response has been received.

words” which are afforded no constitutional protection. He expressed the Law Center’s “determination to continue building a law school community, and a world, that reflects the better angels of our nature, not the demons of the past.” Unfortunately, *The Daily Reveille* felt no need to contact the Law Center for comment on the incident described. As a result, the open disapproval of what occurred was not included in the article portraying the Law Center as passively tolerating this type of behavior.

Secondly, the article references a “clear lack of diversity” at the Law Center in its first paragraph. However, based on the most recent data available, the Law Center’s percentage of African-American students is higher than either of the law schools at Tulane or Loyola. In addition, when compared to the average number of African-American students at all SEC law schools, the Law Center continues to have a higher percentage. When contacted about this falsity in *The Daily Reveille*, Chancellor Weiss stated “neither I nor the Law Center faculty claims perfection in our efforts to create a Law Center community that fully embodies a culture of tolerance and mutual respect. I truly hope that the Task Force will make constructive suggestions for progress in that regard.”

Regardless of what *The Daily Reveille* suggests, the Law Center did take the altercation between Barnes and a former student seriously and expressed public disapproval of the encounter. The available data also suggests the Law Center is more diverse than neighboring schools. While increasing the percentage of diverse students and faculty should continue as a goal, no evidence has been presented to suggest the administration is not committed to this goal other than unsupported accusations.

From: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 6, 2014 10:36 AM
To: Somat, Karen <Karen.Somat@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: Re: Civilian response to recent publications

Okay great I will stop by and pick them up Thank you for taking the time to do this

> On Nov 6, 2014, at 10:34 AM, Somat, Karen <Karen.Somat@law.lsu.edu> wrote

>

> Julie,

> I have an appt outside the building I'm leaving my comments with Tiffany Pucheu in a folder She's right next door to the Chancellor's Conf Room

>

> KAREN

>

> Karen M. Somat, Ph.D.

> Director, Communications and External Relations

> LSU Law Center

> 225/578-8645 direct

> 225/938-7763 cell

> 225/578-0733 office

> Suite 400

> Mailing Address

> LSU Law Center Office of Alumni Relations

> 110 LSU Union Building

> Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106

>

>

>

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Julie Faulk [mailto:juliefaulk@gmail.com]

> Sent: Thursday, November 06, 2014 10:26 AM

> To: Somat, Karen

> Subject: Re: Civilian response to recent publications

>

> Thank you!

>> On Nov 6, 2014, at 10:07 AM, Somat, Karen <Karen.Somat@law.lsu.edu> wrote

>>

>> Julie,

>> Sorry this went to my junk mail Reading now

>> Karen

>>

>> Karen M. Somat, Ph.D.

>> Director, Communications and External Relations LSU Law Center

>> 225/578-8645 direct

>> 225/938-7763 cell

>> 225/578-0733 office

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>> 110 LSU Union Building

>> Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106

>>

>>

>>

>>

>> -----Original Message-----

>> From: Julie Faulk [mailto:juliefaulk@gmail.com]

>> Sent: Wednesday, November 05, 2014 7:09 PM

>> To: Somat, Karen

>> Subject: Civilian response to recent publications

>>

>> Mrs. Somat,

>> I have attached my response to Kyle's Huffington Post article and The Daily Reveille's article I was hoping you wouldn't mind reading it before publication just to review the content I worry that I may be personally attacking Alagood and will make the situation worse, but I feel like it needs to be said

>> Thanks for being willing to read over this for me

>> Julie Faulk

>>

From: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 7, 2014 8:05 AM
To: Somat, Karen <Karen.Somat@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: Civilian

Dr. Somat,

I wanted to inform you that Alagood got back to me and stated he would not comment on 1. The coalition members or 2. When he submitted his Huffington Post article. His reason, which I will partly quote in the Civilian, is as follows: "I cannot and will not comment until the Chancellor and administration agree to meet with student leaders and faculty, as I requested in my initial letter. The Chancellor's refusal to acknowledge my substantive concerns and unwillingness to engage professionally is an inappropriate position for a public university administrator." I wanted to share this with you to give y'all a chance to respond. I can hypothesize that it is along the lines of the diversity task force is better equipped to handle these concerns than one man, etc. but would love to have a response. I understand, however, if you don't want to respond to his attacks.

I will also add that my article that Alagood has never asked for a private meeting with the Chancellor as he admitted to me.

Thanks,

Julie

Sent from my iPhone

From: Soniat, Karen </O=LSULAWCENTER/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=KAREN.SONIET>
Sent: Friday, November 7, 2014 8:19 AM
To: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Subject: RE: Civilian

Will get back to u asap.

Sent via the Samsung GALAXY S® 5, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----
From: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Date: 11/07/2014 8:05 AM (GMT-06:00)
To: "Soniat, Karen" <Karen.Soniat@law.lsu.edu>
Cc:
Subject: Civilian

Dr. Soniat,

I wanted to inform you that Alagood got back to me and stated he would not comment on 1. The coalition members or 2. When he submitted his Huffington Post article. His reason, which I will partly quote in the Civilian, is as follows: "I cannot and will not comment until the Chancellor and administration agree to meet with student leaders and faculty, as I requested in my initial letter. The Chancellor's refusal to acknowledge my substantive concerns and unwillingness to engage professionally is an inappropriate position for a public university administrator." I wanted to share this with you to give y'all a chance to respond. I can hypothesize that it is along the lines of the diversity task force is better equipped to handle these concerns than one man, etc. but would love to have a response. I understand, however, if you don't want to respond to his attacks.

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Thanks,

Julie

Sent from my iPhone

From: Somat, Karen </O=LSULAWCENTER/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=KAREN SONIET>
Sent: Friday, November 7, 2014 10:33 AM
To: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Bcc: Pucheu, Tiffany <tiffany.pucheu@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: RE: Civilian

Julie,
Do you have a minute to talk?? Cell is 938-7763 Desk 578-8645
Karen

Karen M. Somat, Ph.D.
Director, Communications and External Relations
LSU Law Center
225/578-8645 direct
225/938-7763 cell
225/578-0733 office
Suite 400
Mailing Address
LSU Law Center Office of Alumni Relations
110 LSU Union Building
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106

-----Original Message-----

From: Julie Faulk [mailto:juliefaulk@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, November 07, 2014 8:05 AM
To: Somat, Karen
Subject: Civilian

Dr. Somat,

I wanted to inform you that Alagood got back to me and stated he would not comment on 1. The coalition members or 2. When he submitted his Huffington Post article. His reason, which I will partly quote in the Civilian, is as follows: "I cannot and will not comment until the Chancellor and administration agree to meet with student leaders and faculty, as I requested in my initial letter. The Chancellor's refusal to acknowledge my substantive concerns and unwillingness to engage professionally is an inappropriate position for a public university administrator." I wanted to share this with you to give y'all a chance to respond. I can hypothesize that it is along the lines of the diversity task force is better equipped to handle these concerns than one man, etc. but would love to have a response. I understand, however, if you don't want to respond to his attacks.

I will also add that my article that Alagood has never asked for a private meeting with the Chancellor as he admitted to me.

Thanks,
Julie

Sent from my iPhone

From: Soniat, Karen </O=LSULAWCENTER/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=KAREN.SONIET>
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 4:51 PM
To: Linda H Bonnin <lbonnin@lsu.edu>
Cc: fka@lsu.edu; sbell@lsu.edu; drovaris@lsu.edu; Weiss, Jack <jmweiss@law.lsu.edu>
Bcc: Hood, Christina <Christina.Hood@law.lsu.edu>; Pucheu, Tiffany <tiffany.pucheu@law.lsu.edu>; Roche, Jennifer <jennifer.roche@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: Articles in today's LSU Law Civilian newsletter
Attach: November 2014.pdf

Dear Linda,

Chancellor Weiss wanted to be sure that you, Dr. Alexander, Dr. Bell, and Mr. Rovaris, were aware of two articles published in today's *Civilian*, the Law Center's newsletter.

The two stories (Cover story -- *In Response to Recent Publications on Diversity at the Law Center*, pp. 1 – 2, and *Another Perspective*, guest columnist, p. 7), present a far more balanced picture of the state of our efforts on diversity at the Law Center. I have attached a PDF of the newsletter.

Most sincerely,
Karen Soniat

Karen M. Soniat, Ph.D.

Director, Communications and External Relations

LSU Law Center

225/578-8645 direct

225/938-7763 cell

225/578-0733 office

Suite 400

Mailing Address:

LSU Law Center Office of Alumni Relations

110 LSU Union Building

Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106

LSU LAW
*Far more
than a common law school*

From: Weiss, Jack <jmweiss@law.lsu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 5:02 PM
To: Somat, Karen <Karen.Somat@law.lsu.edu>
Cc: Linda H Bonnin <lbonnin@lsu.edu>, fka@lsu.edu, sbell@lsu.edu, drovaris@lsu.edu
Subject: Re: Articles in today's LSU Law Civilian newsletter
Attach: image001.gif

Just to clarify: The Civilian is the student-written and student-edited newspaper of the Law Center. These articles represent the student authors' responses to the Reveille articles and related developments.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Nov 12, 2014, at 5:51 PM, "Somat, Karen" <Karen.Somat@law.lsu.edu> wrote
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> Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106
>
> [cid:image001.gif@01CFFE952A19F480]
>
> <November 2014.pdf>
> <image001.gif>

From: Stuart R Bell <sbell@lsu.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 5:09 PM
To: Weiss, Jack <jmweiss@law.lsu.edu>, Soniat, Karen <Karen.Soniat@law.lsu.edu>
Cc: Linda H Bonnin <lbonnin@lsu.edu>, F King Alexander <fka@lsu.edu>, Dereck J Rovaris <drovaris@lsu.edu>
Subject: RE: Articles in today's LSU Law Civilian newsletter

Thanks Jack! - Stuart

-----Original Message-----

From: Weiss, Jack [mailto:jmweiss@law.lsu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 5:02 PM
To: Karen M Soniat
Cc: Linda H Bonnin, F King Alexander, Stuart R Bell, Dereck J Rovaris
Subject: Re: Articles in today's LSU Law Civilian newsletter

Just to clarify: The Civilian is the student-written and student-edited newspaper of the Law Center. These articles represent the student authors' responses to the Reveille articles and related developments.

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> Most sincerely,
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> Karen M. Soniat, Ph.D.
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> 225/578-0733 office
> Suite 400
> Mailing Address
> LSU Law Center Office of Alumni Relations
> 110 LSU Union Building
> Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106
>
> [cid:image001.gif@01CFFE952A19F480]
>
> <November 2014.pdf>
> <image001.gif>

From: Soniat, Karen </O=LSULAWCENTER/OU=FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=KAREN.SONIET>
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 11:54 AM
To: Dereck J Rovaris <drovaris@lsu.edu>
Subject: RE: Articles in today's LSU Law Civilian newsletter

Dereck,

Thank you for your comments. We're very encouraged with the articles....and the Chancellor and I feel that a much truer reflection of the Law Center is presented via these stories.

I neglected to introduce myself at the Houston luncheon. I was with the Chancellor...and didn't realize who you were. My apology! Look forward to meeting you again at some point in the future.

Best,
Karen

Karen M. Soniat, Ph.D.

Director, Communications and External Relations
LSU Law Center
225/578-8645 direct
225/938-7763 cell
225/578-0733 office
Suite 400

Mailing Address:

LSU Law Center Office of Alumni Relations
110 LSU Union Building
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106

LSU LAW
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than a common law school*

From: Dereck J Rovaris [mailto:drovaris@lsu.edu]
Sent: Thursday, November 13, 2014 10:18 AM
To: Soniat, Karen; Linda H Bonnin
Cc: F King Alexander; Stuart R Bell; Weiss, Jack
Subject: Re: Articles in today's LSU Law Civilian newsletter

Thank you Chancellor Weiss and Dr. Soniat. I read both articles with hereat interest and am encouraged by their clarity on these issues. These are excellent responses to the issues at hand. I too have spoken with several law students and faculty since first receiving the email from Mr. Alagood. My assessment is very similar to the positions taken in these two articles and that of Chancellor Weiss.

D. Rovaris

--

Dereck J. Rovaris, Sr., Ph.D.
**Vice Provost for Diversity &
Chief Diversity Officer**
Office of Diversity

135G Thomas Boyd Hall
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803
(225) 578-5736 Office
(225) 252-1183 Cell
(225) 578-5980 Fax
drovaris@lsu.edu



From: <Soniat>, Karen <Karen.Soniat@law.lsu.edu>
Date: Wednesday, November 12, 2014 at 5:51 PM
To: Linda H Bonnin <lbonnin@lsu.edu>
Cc: F King Alexander <fka@lsu.edu>, Stuart R Bell <sbell@lsu.edu>, Dereck Rovaris <drovaris@lsu.edu>, Jack M Weiss <jmweiss@law.lsu.edu>
Subject: Articles in today's LSU Law Civilian newsletter

Dear Linda,

Chancellor Weiss wanted to be sure that you, Dr. Alexander, Dr. Bell, and Mr. Rovaris, were aware of two articles published in today's *Civilian*, the Law Center's newsletter.

The two stories (Cover story -- *In Response to Recent Publications on Diversity at the Law Center*, pp. 1 – 2, and *Another Perspective*, guest columnist, p. 7), present a far more balanced picture of the state of our efforts on diversity at the Law Center. I have attached a PDF of the newsletter.

Most sincerely,
Karen Soniat

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Mailing Address:
LSU Law Center Office of Alumni Relations
110 LSU Union Building
Baton Rouge, LA 70803-0106

Archived: Tuesday, June 16, 2015 10:14:27 AM
From: [Weiss, Jack](#)
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2014 5:53:56 PM
To: [Soniati, Karen](#)
Subject: Re: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center
Importance: Normal

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 21, 2014, at 4:55 PM, "Soniati, Karen" <Karen.Soniati@law.lsu.edu> wrote:

Fyi

Sent via the Samsung GALAXY S® 5, an AT&T 4G LTE smartphone

----- Original message -----

From: Julie Faulk <juliefaulk@gmail.com>
Date: 11/21/2014 4:23 PM (GMT-06:00)
To: "Soniati, Karen" <Karen.Soniati@law.lsu.edu>
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center

I thought you might be interested to see this. I'm still not sure what their issue with my article is...

Have a great weekend,
Julie

From: Tyson, Chris
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2014 3:50 PM
To: 'editor@lsureveille.com'; 'thecivilianlsu@gmail.com'
Cc: Carroll, Andrea; Carter, Elizabeth; Church, John; Coenen, Michael; Devlin, John; Hackney, Philip; Lancaster, Robert; Lockridge, Lee Ann; Lonegrass, Missy; Sautter, Christina; Thomas, Maggie; Williams, Beth
Subject: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center

Mr. Rome and Ms. Faulk,

Attached please find a Letter to the Editor we offer for publication in both The Reveille and The Civilian. Thank

you in advance for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have any questions or require any further clarification.

Thanks,

Christopher J. Tyson
Newman Trowbridge Distinguished Associate Professor
of Law

Paul M. Hebert Law Center

Louisiana State University

2255786967

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<Letter to the Editors Reveille Civilian.pdf>

Archived: Monday, June 15, 2015 12:57:30 PM
From: Julie Faulk
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2014 4:23:23 PM
To: Soniat, Karen
Subject: Fwd: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center
Importance: Normal
Attachments:
[Letter to the Editors Reveille Civilian.pdf](#);

I thought you might be interested to see this. I am still not sure what their issue with my article is.
Have a great weekend,
Julie

From: Tyson, Chris
Sent: Friday, November 21, 2014 3:50 PM
To: 'editor@lsureveille.com'; 'thecivilianlsu@gmail.com'
Cc: Carroll, Andrea; Carter, Elizabeth; Church, John; Coenen, Michael; Devlin, John; Hackney, Philip; Lancaster, Robert; Lockridge, Lee Ann; Lonegrass, Missy; Sautter, Christina; Thomas, Maggie; Williams, Beth
Subject: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center

Mr. Rome and Ms. Faulk,

Attached please find a Letter to the Editor we offer for publication in both The Reveille and The Civilian. Thank you in advance for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have any questions or require any further clarification.

Thanks,

Christopher J. Tyson
Newman Trowbridge Distinguished Associate Professor of Law
Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Louisiana State University
2255786967
View my research on my SSRN Author page:
<http://ssrn.com/author=1644394>

November 21, 2014

Via E-mail

Mr. Chandler Rome
Editor, The Daily Reveille
editor@lsureveille.com

Ms. Julie Faulk
Editor-in-Chief, The Civilian
TheCivilianLSU@gmail.com

RE: Response to: "From the Editor: Previous stories erroneously portray Law Center," *The Daily Reveille*, November 7, 2014; "In Response to Recent Publications on Diversity at the Law Center" and "Another Perspective," *The Civilian*, November 2014.

Dear Mr. Rome and Ms. Faulk,

We submit this commentary in our individual capacities and not as official representatives of the LSU Law Center. Recently *The Reveille* and the Law Center's *Civilian* publications have featured articles on the racial climate at the LSU Law Center. After profiling a law student's personal experience with allegedly racially-charged violence, *The Reveille* subsequently repudiated its initial article and questioned the validity of the student's account. The current issue of *The Civilian* features articles further undermining the student's credibility and criticizing him for, among other things, sullyng the public image of the Law Center.

These developments and the opportunities they present are very timely. The Law Center has recently established a Diversity Task Force in the wake of a number of incidents in which race, gender and sexuality-based animus have revealed themselves in troubling ways. Despite the progress the Law Center has made with female and minority enrollment, troubling incidents continue to happen within our community. These challenges are not unique to LSU. They reflect how historic inequality and discrimination continues to affect us all. They force us to reconcile the truth of our past with the inevitability of our future. These and other matters underscore the importance of a meaningful institutional approach to diversity.

Many are uncomfortable discussing diversity, much less acknowledging that discrimination remains a problem worthy of our collective concern. Some prefer only to highlight the progress made to date - too often as a way to downplay present claims of discrimination. Others lament the rise of "political correctness" and the demise of "personal responsibility." These responses stifle any rigorous engagement with how historically marginalized identities operate in institutions.

In such an environment a student's willingness to speak up about his experience with discrimination is a very risky affair. The consequences are many and potentially devastating for the student's future. The risks of being branded a "trouble-maker" or being accused of "embarrassing the institution" are high. Those who speak up are often quickly silenced. Consequently, the discrimination they experience is compounded and institutionalized. The fear of retribution chills any possibility for an open, deliberative and humane discussion.

The Reveille's repudiation of its initial reporting and the *Civilian* articles in many ways contribute to this pattern.

Here at the Law Center we prepare the nation's lawyers, jurists, advocates, legislators and others who will inevitably be on the front lines of building a more perfect union. We have failed them if – when confronted with allegations of racism, sexism or homophobia – their first concern is with the airing of “dirty laundry.” We do them a disservice if they leave here ill-equipped to have tough conversations about the ongoing work of creating a more inclusive society.

Issues of racism, sexism or homophobia have never been solved by closing ranks and marginalizing the messengers. Laudable progress with diversity should never be used to muffle or silence inquiries into the extent to which there remains hostility towards members of the institutional community based on their identity.

The mark of an open and inclusive community is not how few incidents of discrimination occur, but rather what happens when they do. A true commitment to increasing diversity recognizes that culture must change and marshals the institution to create spaces where disclosure and deliberation can occur. Indeed, we have work to do.

Respectfully,

Professors Andrea Carroll,
Elizabeth Carter,
John Church,
Michael Coenen,
John Devlin,
Phillip Hackney,
Robert Lancaster,
Lee Ann Lockridge,
Missy Lonegrass,
Christina Sautter,
Margaret Thomas,
Christopher Tyson,
Beth Williams

On Fri, Nov 21, 2014 at 3:49 PM, Tyson, Chris
<Chris.Tyson@law.lsu.edu<<mailto:Chris.Tyson@law.lsu.edu>>> wrote:
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Thanks,

Christopher J. Tyson
Newman Trowbridge Distinguished Associate Professor of Law
Paul M. Hebert Law Center
Louisiana State University
2255786967<tel:2255786967>
View my research on my SSRN Author page:
<http://ssrn.com/author=1644394>

From: The Civilian

[<mailto:thecivilianlsu@gmail.com><<mailto:thecivilianlsu@gmail.com>>]

Sent: Friday, November 21, 2014 5:04 PM

To: Tyson, Chris

Cc: Carroll, Andrea; Carter, Elizabeth; Church, John; Coenen, Michael; Devlin, John; Hackney, Philip; Lancaster, Robert; Lockridge, Lee Ann; Lonegrass, Missy; Sautter, Christina; Thomas, Maggie; Williams, Beth

Subject: Re: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center

Thank you all for your Letter to the Editor. It always great to receive input and to see faculty so involved with student life at the Law Center. Unfortunately, the Civilian does not publish an issue in December due to exams. The next issue will not be distributed until January, and I hate that this letter may not be published until months later. I am considering posting the letter in the LSU Law Facebook group since students frequently check the page for information; however, I know Mr. Barnes has begun circulating the email to students after he received it from the faculty, so it may be disseminated on its own. I will let you know which course of action will be taken when I and my fellow editors decide.

On a more personal note, after reading your letter, I am still unsure which specific statements in my article downplayed Mr. Barnes's experiences or his credibility at the Law Center since I mainly wanted to make the point that the school did not ignore the incident as the Reveille had initially insinuated. I understand if you do not have the time to write a more specific letter detailing my alleged criticisms of Mr. Barnes, but I would greatly appreciate it if you do so I can improve upon my writing to ensure the message I desire comes across. On that same note, I would like to state that I am disgusted by what happened to Mr. Barnes and simply wanted to ensure that the Chancellor's public response to the entire student body was noted.

Sincerely,
Julie Faulk

Julie Faulk
Editor in Chief, The Civilian


thecivilianlsu@gmail.com<<mailto:thecivilianlsu@gmail.com>>

On Sun, Nov 23, 2014 at 3:53 PM, Tyson, Chris
<Chris.Tyson@law.lsu.edu<<mailto:Chris.Tyson@law.lsu.edu>>> wrote:
Ms. Faulk,

Thanks for the quick response and I certainly understand the inability to publish the commentary before next year given where we are in the academic calendar.

Your question is a fair one and I can only speak for myself in how I read it and why I felt compelled to respond. Perhaps we could discuss in person. I know this is a hectic time for all of us, but please let me know if you are available for the two of us to meet.

Thanks again,

Prof. Tyson

From: The Civilian [thecivilianlsu@gmail.com<<mailto:thecivilianlsu@gmail.com>>]
Sent: Sunday, November 23, 2014 5:37 PM
To: Tyson, Chris

Subject: Re: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center

Professor Tyson,

With the approach of Thanksgiving and exams, I do not think meeting before the end of the semester will be possible for me. In addition, I would prefer a written response, so I can concretely identify which statements in my article criticized Mr. Barnes. Having it in writing will allow me to spend time comparing your thoughts with my article. Also, I would like to be able to share it with my staff to show them how my words were misinterpreted as criticism to ensure this does not occur with their writing.

Sincerely,
Julie Faulk

Julie Faulk
Editor in Chief, The Civilian


thecivilianlsu@gmail.com<<mailto:thecivilianlsu@gmail.com>>

On Sun, Nov 23, 2014 at 6:16 PM, Tyson, Chris
<Chris.Tyson@law.lsu.edu<<mailto:Chris.Tyson@law.lsu.edu>>> wrote:
Ms. Faulk,

I completely understand the time constraints as I too am juggling Thanksgiving and the end of the semester. As for a written response to your article, I think both the commentary I penned on behalf of a cohort of the faculty as well as Professor Carter's very detailed response cover my concerns and sentiments with regards to all of the articles. I thought that the additional insight you are seeking would be best expressed in a conversation. I'm still willing to have that conversation as I think it is important. Let me know when you have time and I'll certainly make myself available.

Thanks!

Prof. Tyson

From: The Civilian

Date: 11/23/2014 6:27 PM (GMT-06:00)

To: "Tyson, Chris"

Subject: Re: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center

Professor Tyson,

Professor Carter's letter to the Reveille only addressed Mr. Rome's writings. In her email to me, she stated I personally attacked students and that my reasoning was built on a faulty foundation. However, no one has yet to point out to me any factual inaccuracies in my statements. Also, no one has pointed out specific ways I criticized Mr. Barnes. I feel almost at a loss since no one has told me what the specific issue with my article is.

If you do not have a time to write a response, I understand, but it is very difficult to receive negative feedback without receiving the basis for the feedback.

Thanks,

Julie Faulk

Julie Faulk

Editor in Chief, The Civilian

[REDACTED]

thecivilianlsu@gmail.com<<mailto:thecivilianlsu@gmail.com>>

From: The Civilian [<mailto:thecivilianlsu@gmail.com>]

Sent: Sunday, November 23, 2014 3:19 PM

To: Tyson, Chris

Cc: Carroll, Andrea; Carter, Elizabeth; Church, John; Coenen, Michael; Devlin, John; Hackney, Philip; Lancaster, Robert; Lockridge, Lee Ann; Lonegrass, Missy; Sautter, Christina; Thomas, Maggie; Williams, Beth

Subject: Re: Letter to the Editor RE: Diversity at the LSU Law Center

I am sorry to bother you on a Sunday. However, I wanted to let you know that a letter from me will be attached in the SBA email that goes out today. I have included that attachment to this email for your viewing. This email is sent to the entire student body, but it is not sent to faculty. Therefore, feel free to share it with whomever else you may like.

Have a great day.

Julie Faulk

Editor in Chief, The Civilian



thecivilianlsu@gmail.com

Hello all,

I have received many communications regarding the *Civilian's* November issue. Unfortunately, the next issue of the *Civilian* will not be published until January; however, I wanted to share these responses with you all now.

On November 14, 2014, I was carbon copied in the following email to Chandler Rome, the editor of *The Daily Reveille*:

Dear Mr. Rome,

Attached for your consideration you will find a letter addressing your recent Nov. 7 article. Please feel free to publish it if you decide that it is appropriate to do so. I am also attaching two recent articles from *The Civilian* which are referenced in my letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Carter

The attachment was as follows:

Re: Response to: "From the Editor: Previous Stories Erroneously Portray Law Center," *The Daily Reveille*, November 7, 2014.

Dear Mr. Rome,

Your recent Editor's letter discrediting Ms. Clark's reporting of events at the LSU Law Center is disappointing. I appreciate this opportunity to express my concerns to you, your staff, your faculty advisors, and the LSU community. I am a professor at the Law Center, but I am writing this letter in my personal capacity and not as a representative of the Law Center.¹

When I saw Ms. Clark's articles, I was excited to see that the *Reveille* had decided to begin an investigation into what, in my mind, are some very serious problems faced by the LSU Law Center. I had hoped that Ms. Clark's articles were the beginning of an important and frank discussion. Your letter effectively discredited the meaningful work she had begun. Quite simply, your letter is irresponsible, poorly researched, and detrimental to Ms. Clark, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Alagood, and the LSU Law Center community. I expect a higher standard of journalistic integrity from the *Reveille*.

I will address your discussion of each of Ms. Clark's articles in turn.

(1) *The Oct. 28 Article: Law Center Appoints Diversity Task Force to Combat Lack of Diversity.*

¹ See Article VII, Section 1 of the Bylaws of the LSU Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Clark's first article reported on two letters. The first letter, written by third-year law student R. Kyle Alagood, openly questioned the Law Center's commitment to diversity. Chancellor Weiss responded with a letter memorandum announcing the formation of a "Diversity Task Force" charged with addressing the concerns raised by Mr. Alagood. It appears that both Chancellor Weiss and Mr. Alagood were interviewed in connection with Ms. Clark's article.

Yet, you claim that Ms. Clark's article "failed in a cardinal tenet of journalism—providing both sides of a story." You go on to explain what the author should have included in the story to satisfy this lofty goal—namely, a number a diversity statistics from the letter written by Chancellor Weiss. By simply parroting these numbers without any context or skepticism, you violate that very journalistic tenet you claim to support. You have done no better than the staff member whom you have elected to publicly shame with your unconvincing *mea culpa*. The only difference, by your own admission, is that you should know better.

(a) Misrepresentation of Chancellor Weiss' Statistics. In his letter, Chancellor Weiss wrote, "the Law Center employs 36 tenured and tenure-track faculty members; 8 (22%) are women and 4² are minorities (11%)." From this, you conclude that, "12 of the 36 current Law Center tenured or tenure-track faculty are *either* women (8 faculty members) *or* minorities (4 faculty members)." But your analysis is flawed. Incredibly enough, a person can be both a woman and a minority. She is still one person. A simple fact check would have confirmed that there are not 12 members of the Law Center faculty who qualify as diverse. Fact checking, incidentally, is another cardinal tenet of journalism.

(b) Your Failure to Investigate the Statistics Provided. The Chancellor of the Law Center – like any other leader – has an inherent incentive to portray his institution in the most favorable light possible. As a journalist, your job is to recognize this and to view his statements with an appropriate measure of skepticism. Real journalists ask hard questions and question assumptions. They do not reprint press releases.

You have cited statistics showing that non-Caucasian student enrollment (21%) is comparable to other law schools (23%) in the Southeastern Conference. Yet you have failed to question why the Law Center should be compared to schools simply because they play one another in football. The Law Center is a law school, not a football team. Did you consider that comparing our student enrollments to that of other SEC schools— which, by definition, are located in a part of the country notorious for racial and gender inequity—shows the Law Center in a more favorable light than other possible comparisons? For example, according to the American Bar Association, the non- Caucasian enrollment at all 202 accredited law schools for the 2013-2014 academic year was 26.9%. Moreover, you failed to ask why the Chancellor did not provide similar comparative data regarding female student

² I am only aware of three racial minorities on our tenure or tenure-track faculty. That, however, is a discussion for a later day.

enrollment. Had you done so, you would have discovered that female student enrollment at the Law Center lags behind that of other law schools.

Despite the various other comparative statistics provided by the Chancellor, you neglected to ask why those numbers were not provided with respect to faculty composition. Had you done so, you would have discovered that the Law Center lags behind other schools with respect to faculty diversity. The American Association of Law Schools (AALS) Statistical Report on Law School Faculty³ indicates that 37.3% of all law school faculty members are women and 14.9% of all law school faculty members are non-Caucasian.

(2) The Nov. 3 Article: Law Student on Diversity Task Force Experienced Racial Slurs During Time at Law Center.

Ms. Clark's second article simply followed up on her first article by showing that Mr. Alagood was not alone in his concerns. Although the Law Center has made improvements in its numerical diversity in recent years, as Mr. Alagood explained, "the Law Center is not actively providing much-needed structural resources to foster diversity and encourage success once students enter law school." Numerical diversity does not tell the full story. The article chronicled the unfortunate experience of a task force member who claimed he was physically and verbally assaulted by another student at a Law Center function. I cannot understand why you would describe this article as your "worst error." You have minimized Mr. Barnes' experiences, discredited him, and made him the object of further harassment by members of the Law Center community. You seem to have forgotten that, in addition to the racial slurs, a fellow law student allegedly threw an arrow at Mr. Barnes and punched him in the face. Ms. Clark's article made this clear, and made it clear that these events occurred at a Law Center function. Your article does not. Mr. Barnes was the victim of a crime, and he did not feel (nor do I) that the procedure pursued by the Law Center adequately addressed that issue. The racial slurs compounded his injuries.

Your claim that the *Reveille* – i.e., Ms. Clark – did not reach out to anyone affiliated with the Law Center for comment is simply untrue. Ms. Clark asked for comments regarding Mr. Barnes' experience, as well as the experiences of other students and faculty members. When she reached out to me, I explained to Ms. Clark that she could not use my name in her article because I feared retaliation by the Law Center faculty and administration. I regret that my initial reaction was reticence. Unfortunately, I am not the only person who expressed that sentiment to her. I understand that Ms. Clark received similar responses from several students and faculty members. I personally witnessed another faculty member willingly talk to Ms. Clark, extensively, "off the record." What more would you have Ms. Clark do?

³ The 2008-09 data is the most recent data available. You can find it here: <http://aalsfar.com/statistics/2009dlt/race.html>

(3) The Overall Effect of Your Letter.

Our words can be more powerful than we realize or intend. I fear that your words have caused harms that you did not anticipate.

The Law Center's recent accomplishments with respect to numerical diversity are commendable. The work to be done, however, is far from complete. In failing to question the comparative statistics provided by the Chancellor, your letter gives readers the false impression that the Law Center has already attained the ideal numerical diversity. Moreover, your letter gives readers the overall impression that because we have attained ideal numerical diversity—which we have not—then allegations of racial and gender discrimination at the Law Center are either erroneous or unusual. It discredits victims before they even have the opportunity to speak. I cannot imagine this was your intent.

Two LSU law students at *The Civilian*—Julie Faulk and Neal Favorite—latched on to your article and compounded the harm it caused. I am enclosing copies of their articles for your reference and I will be composing a separate letter specifically addressing their articles. In some instances Ms. Faulk and Mr. Favorite simply reiterated the errors you made. In other instances they (and Ms. Faulk in particular) compounded your errors by adding additional errors and misrepresentations of their own. Your letter gave the Chancellor's opinions and statistics the imprimatur of truth and served as a springboard for unwarranted personal attacks against two of their classmates and your former staff member.

I hope that you will consider correcting your mistakes and that we can all learn something from this experience. Please govern yourself accordingly.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R. Carter

On the same day, I responded to Professor Carter with the following email:

Professor Carter,

Thank you for including me in the email to the Reveille. I look forward to your letter concerning my article, and the Civilian would be happy to publish retractions as it deems necessary.

As I stated in the first paragraph of the article, I was expressing my personal viewpoints on the previous two articles. Since I am neither an experienced journalist nor the brightest person, I am open to having flaws in my reasoning pointed out.

Additionally, I hope it was clear in my article that I do not think the Law Center's job is done in terms of creating a diverse community. Instead, I advocate for spending our time and energy crafting solutions that we can offer to the Diversity Task Force. I hope you have a great weekend, and thanks again for allowing me to read your letter.

Julie Faulk

To which Professor Carter replied on the same day:

Dear Ms. Faulk--

I understand that you were expressing your opinions and that you are not a journalist. You are, however, training to be a lawyer. That means that you should question everything and do thorough research. That was not the case--and I doubt it is related to your intellect.

As I have explained to Mr. Favorite, you are both entitled to your opinions and I respect your right to express them. I am confident that you, like Mr. Rome, did not intend for your article to have the effect that it did. But, as I said to him, the written word can be powerful--and as lawyers--our words are our tools. We must choose them carefully.

What you wrote came across as a personal attack on Mr. Barnes, Ms. Clark, and Mr. Alagood--which was, hopefully, not your intent. You criticized Ms. Clark and Mr. Alagood for failing to support their conclusions and I believe that accusation is without merit--as I will explain more fully in my letter. Nor did you appear to do any research on your own to discover the truth of the matter. I expect more from our students.

I understand that, in some respects, you were simply relying on what Mr. Rome wrote in his article. But as I explained to him, his entire article was built on a faulty foundation. You should have been able to recognize that for yourself and you should have conducted your own independent research. That is part of what we are trying to teach you while you are here and it was disheartening to see that we have done such a poor job.

--ERC

I did not respond to this last email and decided instead to give Professor Carter time to compose her letter that specifically addressed my article. At this time, I have yet to receive the letter.

Then, on November 21, 2014, Mr. Rome and I received the following email:

Mr. Rome and Ms. Faulk,

Attached please find a Letter to the Editor we offer for publication in both The Reveille and The Civilian. Thank you in advance for your consideration and please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you have any questions or require any further clarification.

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In such an environment a student's willingness to speak up about his experience with discrimination is a very risky affair. The consequences are many and potentially devastating for the student's future. The risks of being branded a "trouble-maker" or being accused of "embarrassing the institution" are high. Those who speak up are often quickly silenced. Consequently, the discrimination they experience is compounded and institutionalized. The fear of retribution chills any possibility for an open, deliberative and humane discussion.

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Missy Lonegrass,
Christina Sautter,
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Beth Williams

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Sincerely,
Julie Faulk

At this time, I have yet to hear back from any of the above professors, understandably so since it is the weekend and I did not reply until after 5pm. Also, sorry for the grammatical errors in my response; my brain was full of Successions by that point.

Firstly, I want to state that I wrote my article before Mr. Rome's was written. I simply added a paragraph referencing his Letter From the Editor a day or two before sending the issue to the printers. Secondly, I will continue to update the student body as needed, but due to the imminence of exams, further communications may not occur until after the semester has ended.

Sincerely,
Julie Faulk