



October 31, 2016

Dear FGCU Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumni, and Friends:

The past week at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) has been a difficult one for many people, and for that I am deeply sorry. I want to acknowledge the anger, fear, disappointment and outrage that many in our campus community have felt over the racial slur and drawing found on a whiteboard and the University's response to it. Feelings have run deep, and expressions have been raw and frank. We have challenged ourselves to better understand each other and also ourselves, and while our conversations at times have been emotionally charged, they have been respectful and authentic.

Most importantly, we are talking.

Together, we are talking about our feelings, and our aspirations *and* our expectations for a campus culture of diversity inclusion and acceptance. We are talking about the responsibility that each of us holds in that culture, and why it matters so much regardless of your skin color, your religion, your sexual orientation, your ideas, or anything else that distinctly makes you who you are at FGCU.

We have a lot more talking to do, and I remain deeply committed to fostering an environment that not only respects but actively encourages the conversation.

On Friday afternoon, FGCU's Student Government sponsored a panel discussion for dialogue with students. I participated on the panel, and others participating in the forum were Vice President for Student Affairs Mike Rollo, Dean of Students Michele Yovanovich, Director of Institutional Equity and Compliance Brandon Washington, University Police Department Lieutenant Jim Slapp, Ombuds Monique McKay, United Campus Ministries President John Roth, Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Tony Barringer, and Director of Student Involvement Julie Gleason. Students expressed their concerns, and I felt it was a productive discussion.

Also on Friday, Director of Institutional Equity and Compliance Brandon Washington and I sat and talked with Student Government President, and FGCU Trustee Thieldens Elneus; Black Student Alliance President Ashakeen Sterling; Coalition of Black Organizational Leaders (C.O.B.O.L.) President Keturah Pongo; and A Step Above

Perfection (ASAP) member Imani Hilton. These student representatives want to move forward, and we talked about how to do just that.

Some of you may know that in August I appointed members, including students, to an **FGCU Diversity and Inclusion Committee**, and tasked the Committee with the following:

- Review and analyze our campus in relation to diversity and inclusion;
- Create, develop and implement workshops, training programs, and strategies to address areas that need improvement; and
- Recommend ways to establish a sustainable inclusive campus environment for all students and employees, that will result in greater student success (retention and graduation rates), especially for historically underrepresented students (i.e., low-income, minority and first generation college students).

Mr. Elneus, Ms. Sterling, Ms. Pongo and Ms. Hilton agreed that this Diversity and Inclusion Committee can play an important role moving forward, including with some of the items on the list of student demands presented on Thursday at the meeting of the FGCU Board of Trustees and Board of Governors. I'll respond here to the demands on that list:

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- **University Police Department (UPD) to reopen incident investigation.**

Our University Police Department (UPD) first became aware of the racial slur and drawing on the whiteboard by a call from a faculty member who had noticed it in her building. The words and drawing had been erased, but a photograph had been taken, and it was provided to UPD. The information obtained by the Sergeant who was assigned the call immediately was provided to Chief Moore, who increased UPD patrols in the hopes of catching, deterring, or gaining additional information about the person involved.

Unfortunately, no additional information has developed, and we do not know who is responsible for the words and drawing. Although no threats or other such incidents have been reported, UPD encourages anyone with information about the whiteboard to come forward. The members of the University Police Department are diligently committed to ensuring the safety and security of our entire campus community, and will continue to actively work toward this end.

In addition to UPD's presence, I encourage members of the University community to report inappropriate conduct and threats to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance, and the Dean of Students Office. Our staff follows up on all reported incidents to determine if individuals or groups can be identified as responsible, and directs student judicial proceedings where applicable.

- **Make amendments to Student Code of Conduct.**

The FGCU Code of Student Conduct is reviewed each year to maintain compliance with state and federal law. Our students always are included in the review process, and this includes representatives of Student Government and other student leaders.

The review process on the Student Code of Conduct currently is under way, and representatives of the Coalition of Black Organizational Leaders (C.O.B.O.L.) will be invited to participate in these discussions and review meetings.

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- **Explain UPD's protocol for informing the campus community of an incident, and why this incident was not included in the report provided to Eagle News.**

The University Police Department (UPD) informs the campus community of incidents which pose a credible threat. The whiteboard drawing and words, while clearly hateful and hurtful, was not deemed as such. As I said in my letter to you on Thursday, when informed about the whiteboard I made the best decision I could with the information I had. There was no cover-up. However, in retrospect, given the understandable emotional reaction of our community, my decision about notification in this matter would have been different.

UPD runs a weekly press report that is distributed to the Eagle News and other media, and the report is generated through the University's Crystal Reports software program. As automatically generated, the weekly press report does not include various signal codes, including "Signal 62 – Request Officer," and "Signal 14 -- Information Call." A signal code is a system of numbers used by law enforcement to represent certain activities or conditions.

On October 12 when the faculty member contacted UPD about the whiteboard, the call was logged by UPD dispatch as a "Signal 62 – Request Officer," and thus it was not later included in the computer-generated Crystal Reports weekly press report since it was a Signal 62 request. UPD did not intentionally exclude this report and information from Eagle News, and when a public records request for it was made of the University, the report and picture were provided that same day to the requester.

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- **University Administration to apologize and own the impact of the delayed response.**

As the President of Florida Gulf Coast University, I make many decisions every day. And I make the best decisions with the information I have at the time. I have acknowledged, earlier in this letter as well as in my written and spoken messages last week, that in retrospect, I would have made a different decision about notifying the campus community.

The decision I made resulted in pain to those I care most deeply about – our students – and for this I am truly sorry.

- **Fund a University-wide security assessment.**

Earlier this year, in August, the University contracted with a security consultant to review the number and current locations of our security cameras on campus. This process was initiated after some reported thefts in the spring semester, and also after discussions by the Safety and Facilities Committee of the University's Planning and Budget Council.

The consultant currently is reviewing the placement of our security cameras, and will recommend at the conclusion of the process if additional cameras are needed and the best locations for any new cameras on campus.

While security protocols prevent us from indicating the specific locations of cameras and other such law enforcement measures, it is important to note that there are cameras on our campus inside and outside of buildings in various locations. Upon receipt of the consultant's report, we will study the recommendations in our ongoing process of doing all we can to ensure a safe and secure campus.

- **Fund a research initiative on FGCU's social and cultural climate.**
- **Add a cultural and ethnic awareness/diversity and sensitivity class as mandatory requirement for graduation.**
- **Implement mandatory cultural awareness/diversity and sensitivity class for all professional staff yearly.**
- **Establish a student-selected committee which meets monthly with UPD and Student Affairs Vice President, and Dean.**

As indicated earlier in this letter, the FGCU Diversity and Inclusion Committee, which includes students, will be asked to consider various recommendations that have been made in response to the whiteboard incident. I will meet with the Committee, and will include review of these four items as part of an updated charge to the Committee.

In addition, I am asking the Office of Academic Affairs to add a diversity/inclusion component to our annual New Faculty Orientation, and also for the Deans of the Colleges to work with Director of Institutional Equity and Compliance Brandon Washington on opportunities within the Colleges. And, we will enhance this subject's presentation in our New Student Orientation sessions each year for students and their parents.

Mr. Washington and I will encourage the Committee to not only review the effectiveness of our many programs already in place, but also to make recommendations on new and

enhanced initiatives that support a campus culture of diversity inclusion and acceptance for all.

- **Address the diversity of the FGCU Board of Trustees.**

Florida Gulf Coast University does not appoint the members of the FGCU Board of Trustees. The Board per Florida Statute is comprised of 13 members, with appointments made as follow:

- 6 appointed by the Governor of the State;
- 5 appointed by the Board of Governors;
- 1 Student Government President; and
- 1 Faculty Senate President.

I have and will continue to encourage minorities to apply for vacant positions on the FGCU Board of Trustees, and emphasize the importance of having a governing board that is representative of the diversity of the FGCU community.

- **Create a full-time staff member position (and graduate assistant position) for race relations of minority students.**

The Assistant Dean of Multicultural and Leadership Development (MLD) is housed in the Dean of Students Office within the Division of Student Affairs. FGCU has had in place an Office of Multicultural and Leadership Development since opening in 1997.

Additionally, the Office of Multicultural and Leadership Development is staffed by three full-time professional positions with Masters or Doctorate level training; a graduate assistant; an executive secretary; and student assistants. Located in the Cohen Center for students' convenient access, the Office provides wide ranging support and programs for our students. For the 2016-2017 academic year, these programs are:

Summer 2016:

Frosh Mosh Multicultural and Leadership Institute – Workshop sessions on Exploring Social Identities, Single Story; What is Diversity; and Social Justice in Action.

Orientation Session – Education on microaggressions to incoming students and parents attending orientation.

Step Ahead Program – Two workshops on exploring social identities, privilege, and microaggressions.

Resident Assistant (RA) Diversity Training Day – Full-day diversity training workshops for all resident assistants including the following topics: what is diversity; privilege; social identities; microaggressions; single story; and social justice.

Campus Recreation – Workshop on exploring social identities and how to promote an inclusive environment on the job and with clients for Campus Recreation student staff.

Fall 2016:

Emerging Eagles – Diversity education workshop component for cohort.

LEAD Team - Diversity training workshop component for members.

Leadership Summit – Diversity workshop session.

Hispanic Heritage Month Culture Shock – Education about the Hispanic community.

Campus Recreation Diversity - Diversity Perspectives and Empowering the FGCU Community workshop.

One Book One Campus Diversity Session – Exploring Social Identities workshops.

New Professional Institute Presentation – Workshops on Multicultural Competence for new professionals at FGCU.

Noche de Cultural – Celebration of Diversity.

Prevention and Wellness Peers - Presentation on Multiculturalism and Diversity.

Spring 2017: (Scheduled to Date)

DEFAMATION - Courtroom Drama on race, religion, class and gender.

Black History Month – Various activities.

Attain to Retain Conference – Presentation on Social Justice.

Beyond the Lines Diversity and Social Justice – Retreat.

The Division of Student Affairs provides numerous opportunities to its staff to assist with multicultural concerns through workshops, training, retreats, and leadership development experiences. The Dean of Students Office has received two federal grants for \$2.3 million to support first generation and historically underrepresented students. In September of this year, the Office received an additional federal grant for \$1.2 million to provide outreach to low income and underrepresented groups to promote higher education.

Throughout the Division of Student Affairs, staff in all units contribute to programs and services that promote diversity and civility in our community.

In addition to these programs from our Office of Multicultural and Leadership Development, there are relevant diversity and inclusion initiatives also in place through our Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance. Mr. Washington and his staff have implemented the following programs during the past year:

Diversity, Inclusion and Discrimination Prevention Trainings:

Programs and trainings to educate faculty, staff and students on the different federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination and that are applied at FGCU. These presentations and trainings also cover how to understand the concepts of diversity and inclusion and how to better apply this knowledge to our everyday interactions at the University.

The trainings and presentations include “Race, Disability, Sex and Age Discrimination: Understanding and Preventing Discrimination and Harassment;” “Unchecking the Box: Towards an Understanding of the Concepts of Race and Ethnicity;” and the two-part series, “What is Diversity? What is Inclusion?”

“Meet Someone New” for Faculty and Staff:

A gathering held twice a semester for faculty and staff to provide a space for guided interaction among colleagues from departments that might not usually have contact with one another. During this gathering the Office prepares short presentations on promoting diversity and inclusion and fostering a climate of camaraderie and respect among the FGCU community. Among the activities are presentations on race, ethnicity, and the roles of different departments on campus, and exercises to promote and encourage interaction between the participants, as well as to increase their appreciation for diversity and multiculturalism.

Creation and Display of Anti-Discrimination Materials:

A poster for display on campus, and which focuses on reporting cases of discrimination, and provides FGCU’s Non-Discrimination Statement.

Diversity/Inclusion and Discrimination/Bias Sections on Website:

Update to the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance’s website to include two new sections, one on Discrimination and Bias, and one on Diversity and Inclusion. These sections include important definitions; information on the different laws that prohibit discrimination; a complaint form to report incidents of discrimination; educational materials such as posters and PowerPoint presentations; and resources available both on and off campus.

Creation and Implementation of a Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Certificate Program for Faculty and Staff:

A program in which faculty and staff can earn the certificate by participating in a number of activities throughout the year. Renewal of the certificate will be available every year through the completion of a set number of activities. A total of 10 events, workshops, and sessions was offered for the Fall 2016 semester, with more sessions planned for the upcoming Spring semester. The sessions and events focus on increasing inclusivity on our campus; promoting diversity and multicultural efforts; and providing cultural knowledge about different aspects of diversity and inclusion. The topics to be covered

each semester are selected taking into account the needs and interests of the FGCU community, with offers beneficial for new Certificate participants, as well as faculty and staff who are more experienced in these themes.

This D&I Certificate Program contributes greatly to diversity and inclusion efforts at FGCU by providing a space where people can not only learn more about diversity and inclusion, but also find ways to apply that knowledge to their departments on campus. Last week I asked Mr. Washington to explore ways that aspects of this Program can be made available for student participation, in addition to our faculty and staff.

In closing, I will return to where I started this letter. It has been a difficult time for many in our campus community, and I understand the reasons why. We have outstanding initiatives for diversity and inclusion in place at Florida Gulf Coast University, as described in this letter, but if even one person at even one time feels less than valued and respected, we need to do more. I will keep listening. Let's keep talking.

Sincerely,



Wilson G. Bradshaw, Ph.D.
President
Florida Gulf Coast University

c: Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees
Florida Board of Governors, and Chancellor Marshall Criser