



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Katherine Bergeron
President

March 4, 2015

Dear Members of the Campus Community,

On Monday, March 2, our campus newspaper published three open letters expressing dismay over an entry posted some months ago by a member of our faculty on a personal Facebook page. The entry has since been taken down, and conversations about it have continued on social media and in classrooms. These exchanges have raised important questions about the nature of free speech, our responsibilities as a community defined by the Honor Code, and our status as a College aspiring to uphold the value of inclusive excellence.

I am writing to let you know about the steps the College has taken and our recommendations for continued dialogue in the coming weeks.

At the core of the issue is the acceptability of a type of speech that can make people feel unwelcome in a place they call home. We take this issue very seriously. Since this has been raised, members of the senior administration have been meeting with those who have brought forward concerns, and have been working to facilitate face-to-face dialogues that will bring greater understanding on both sides. These conversations have made it clear that the concerns reach far beyond a single post to larger questions of the behaviors, practices, and values that bind us as a diverse community.

We are a campus that has recently embraced inclusive excellence as an aspirational value. We are committed to supporting the kind of learning that will foster new forms of equity and respect. This does not mean that there will never be disagreement. But it does require us to engage in disagreement in a productive way, not just to build greater forms of understanding but also to deepen our sense of individual commitment to a better and more just world.

The conversations of the past few days – including some anonymous comments on Yik Yak – are evidence of how much work we have to do to reach our aspirations. Tomorrow, a group of students, faculty, and staff will begin planning a series of events to enable the campus to continue a constructive conversation in the coming weeks. We will begin with two events immediately following the spring break:

- An all-campus forum on free speech, equity, and inclusion on Wednesday, March 25, from 7-8:30 p.m., in Palmer Auditorium.
- An open meeting of the working group on inclusive excellence on Thursday, March 26, from 4-6 p.m., in Hood Dining Room.



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Both of these meetings are intended to provide a space for continued meaningful dialogue and appropriate action. I sincerely hope you will come and let your voice be heard.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine".

Katherine Bergeron