

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

October 19, 2009

Dear Students:

I have been reflecting quite a bit on our meeting Wednesday, and will share some thoughts with the MSU community on my "From the President's Desk" website at www.president.msu.edu. First I wanted to communicate those reflections with you. As I told you, I always am concerned when heated, name-calling interactions too often challenge civility, impose a chilling effect on discourse, and impede understanding of and appreciation for community-developed policies and processes that exist "away from" any given issue or set of issues. At our meeting we listened to each other; we generally respected our roles; we agreed on some things; and we remained in disagreement based on what I termed an "understanding gap" because I thought your understanding was incomplete or based on misinterpretation.

I often discuss the MSU "power of we." It is essential that we all support the tenet that at a university academic programs do not have singular "ownership" by any individuals or groups. Chicano/Latino Studies at MSU is not only mine or only yours; it is not only the Provost's or the deans'. Chicano/Latino Studies resides in the "now," but we must recognize its obligations to the future and to the past. I reiterate:

- I have read all materials you have provided me, and discussed issues raised with appropriate administrators;
- The University has a commitment to Chicano/Latino Studies;
- I expect that when formal allegations are made or grievances are deemed necessary, relevant University avenues for resolution be used;
- I support the principle that student success relies upon access to appropriate opportunities for mentoring from a broad range of university faculty, staff, and students;
- There is an expectation that Chicano/Latino Studies be a program that reflects the scholarly rigor and continuous improvement demanded of all academic programs;
- The reputational strength of Chicano/Latino Studies will reflect contributions from and to the overall MSU academic community, avoiding silo-like approaches that can position any program apart from—not a part of—the "collective;"
- I support the direction being pursued by the Provost and relevant deans;
- I await results of the Faculty Policy Advisory Committee established by Dean Baba to establish by-laws that will govern Chicano/Latino Studies;
- I support the continued leadership of the current director of the CLS program, with the expectations and accountability requirements expected of all academic leaders; and



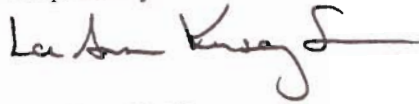
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Michigan State University
450 Hannah Administration
Building
East Lansing, MI
48824-1046
517/355-6560
FAX: 517/355-4670

- I expect that future discourse will not include innuendo, hearsay, personal attacks, or mischaracterization of issues already resolved through proper channels.

Once again, I expect you to use existing formal processes for addressing charges against individuals, rather than making those charges in other ways. As I told you, I hope you want to provide others—even those with whom you have vehemently disagreed—with the same due process procedures rightly available to you. And I also want you to take advantage of the “rules of engagement” in this intellectual marketplace, where civility, facts, evidence, and respect are expected no matter how heated the debate, no matter how wide the understanding gap.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lou Anna K. Simon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Lou Anna K. Simon, Ph.D.
President