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Diversity & Embracement

Fellow Faculty and Staff:

The response to the message I sent out a week ago regarding campus tolerance has been both gratifying and encouraging. Numerous individuals have reached out to me and others in personal conversations, through email, and on social media. The thousands of “likes” and comments tell me that we have a campus community that cares, and that fully intends to ensure that we sustain an environment which embraces diversity and exudes caring and respect for one another. With the help of Provost David Lee, Vice President for Public Affairs, Robbin Taylor, and Dr. Lynne Holland, our Chief Diversity Officer, and her team in our campus Intercultural Student Engagement Center, I am approaching the weeks and months ahead with two goals. Generally, it is our intent to calmly make sure our positive institutional values are pervasive across our campus. Specifically, we want to make sure that our faculty and staff effectively educate our students who harbor thoughts of racial prejudice about the constructiveness of tolerance, embracement, and love of those different from them.

In pursuit of these two goals, we will take action to ensure that these goals are achieved:

- We will create a President’s Committee on Diversity and Embracement. This will be an ongoing oversight group which focuses on strengthening campus civility and respect and addresses issues of racial intolerance which might occur in the future. While we will do all we can to ensure that recent incidents do not happen again on our campus, we must be mindful that each year we bring in nearly 4,000 new students whose higher educational process is only just beginning.
- We will identify and secure the services and knowledge of leaders outside of the WKU community who can bring constructive messages to us. These visitors make take the form of friends, consultants, guest speakers, etc. Our team in the Intercultural Student Engagement Center will help coordinate this effort.
- We will also call on our Intercultural Student Engagement Center to help set up multiple agendaless conversations with various campus groups. These conversations will embrace the theme of civility, respect, and embracement of everyone in our campus community.
- We will engage in an ongoing marketing effort with our website and social media networks to convey that there is no room for hate or disrespect on our campus.

There may be other things that we choose to do or create going forward, but these particular steps will facilitate a helpful conversation about the embracement of differences among us and create a campus culture steeped in civility and human respect.

I appreciate the input of numerous people these last several days, and will value the guidance of anyone in our campus family in the months ahead. Thank you!

Gary A. Ransdell



Dr. Gary A. Ransdell | President