December 2, 2019

TO: Corey Benbow
FROM: Dr. Joanne Smith
SUBJ: Student Government Legislation
S.R. 09 “Administrative Apology Resolution”

There are many facets to the contents of the Resolution. We are all aware that Texas State has been targeted by groups whose purpose was to create disruption and conflict since 2016. As a university, we have been working to contain any disruption, take appropriate actions as possible, and has developed several protocols to help students feel safe on campus. While we have had success in some areas, we have been working over this time to support students and keep them safe, to prevent any disruption from becoming violent, to take appropriate actions when disruptions are planned versus when they happen with no warning, and to develop protocols to help students engage their free speech rights.

While we have had success in some areas, the work is never done. We have to continue working together as a campus community to develop appropriate guidelines for all stakeholders to engage civilly and to help everyone understand civil disobedience and what crosses the line into illegal behavior. We certainly acknowledge that everything we have attempted to do to date is not enough and has not always been perfect, but we continue to listen, to research best practices, to acknowledge feedback, and to work on policies and procedures that will help students, faculty, and staff feel safe and good about our efforts and what we have put into place.

We have worked and continue to work with outside resources such as the Anti-Defamation League, the International Association of College Law Enforcement Administrators, the Austin Regional Intelligence Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other local enforcement agencies to guide our actions. We have constant conversations and continue to research the best ways to communicate these efforts and results to the campus community and the appropriate times and ways to do so.

As you are aware, the President has denounced white supremacy and all forms of racism. Texas State University has no place for hate within our campus community. Specifically, as the 2019-2020 academic year began, the President directly addressed this during the University Convocation and General Faculty Meeting on August 20, 2019 and did so again in the opening of the year message to the campus community. She continues to speak directly to these issues. It is incumbent for everyone in the campus community to be aware of the commitment of the administration to stand against and denounce all forms of bigotry and hate, including white supremacy and to do what we can to deal with it within the confines of the free speech protections afforded even racists and bigots by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.
Through our efforts, several new policies and pieces of information for the university have been developed. These include the following:

1. Building Capacity—this document outlines the numerous continued efforts to address this issue. This document can be found on the Inclusion and Diversity website and can be found at https://inclusion.txstate.edu.
2. A Demonstrations on University Property Policy and University Guidelines for Protesters and Demonstrators was developed. This new UPPS policy can be found at https://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-04.07.html
3. Immigration FAQs are posted for reference at www.sdi.txstate.edu in the Diversity Connections section.
4. A Free Speech website is scheduled to launch before the end of the semester to answer frequently asked questions about First Amendment protections.
5. The Bias Response Protocol became active October 1, 2019 and gives the campus community opportunities to report concerns about bias incidents that make them feel uncomfortable. The site can be found at www.txstate.edu/report-it.
6. Administrators and police officers have attended several training sessions on Implicit Bias, Title IX, and the Anti-Defamation League training. Faculty and Staff are also being encouraged to attend training on these topics.

We are aware that some in our community are extremely passionate about these issues and this passion manifested itself on May 1, 2019. With the threat of an outside white supremacist group coming to the San Marcos campus, some students decided to—“wait”—for the group to appear. Over the course of that morning, as the outside group failed to appear, a minor theft between students escalated into several students being arrested. All of us regret that students ended up under arrest for violations of the law. Our campus police were correctly on alert that morning in case the outside group did appear, and their primary concern was to keep our students safe. Chief Laurie Clouse has already stated publicly that while the actions taken that day did not violate police protocol or the law, some of the tactical details surrounding the student arrests could have been handled better. Our police officers have undergone additional training in de-escalation techniques and implicit bias in the wake of the May 1st events.

In the future, we will strive to better plan and coordinate anytime that outside law enforcement agencies are part of our on-campus events and to work more closely with Student Affairs staff to help manage issues and disciplinary processes.

We are all aware that continued work on everyone’s part is paramount. We are committed to these efforts and certainly want to work with Student Government and the entire campus to ensure the most effective practices and policies are in place for the campus community.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

cc: Dr. Margarita Arellano, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
    Kathy Weiser, Advisor