

Aug. 27, 2020

Response in Support of The Bottom Line's Action

Last night, The Bottom Line's Executive Staff made the decision to remove one of its advisors following her provocative social media posts suggesting a vigilante response to an incident involving Black Lives Matter protesters. You can read their statement [here](#).

Dr. Travis and I recognize how difficult a decision this was for this organization, which is dedicated to the principles of the First Amendment, regarding a question of free speech and a group exercising its right to free assembly. We appreciate their measured response and affirmation of the University's and The Bottom Line's principles in their message, and we support their decision.

As for your University leadership, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering diversity and respect for difference and creating a campus environment in which all can thrive without fear of hate or bias. We also reaffirm our commitment to supporting those freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment, yet actions and words can have consequences. The Bottom Line's move has delivered a consequence.

In a much larger context, we must recognize the conflict gripping our country, and the difficult road we have ahead of us in navigating the coming months. The hurt and concern is so strong, and emotions are high. As an educational institution, we are in a unique position to build the bridges necessary to navigate that hard path. As we began with the "Can We Talk" event last semester, we will still embrace opportunities encouraging dialogue and understanding even during the pandemic crisis.

I have asked Dr. Travis to engage Ms. Robin Wynder, newly appointed as assistant vice president for Student Affairs, to plan training in recognizing and addressing bias, whether conscious or unconscious, for the Student Affairs Division. She will also work with the University Council of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (UCDEI) as we plan related programs for the larger campus community that continues to foster respect and dignity for all of our diverse communities at Frostburg State University.

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