

# UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – PLATTEVILLE

## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND EDUCATION

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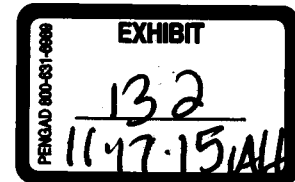
*Office of the Dean*

**TO: Faculty and Academic Staff of the Criminal Justice Department**

**FROM: Mittie Nimocks, Dean  
College of Liberal Arts and Education**

**RE: Departmental Conflict**

**DATE: 26 April 2010**



As all of you are quite aware, the faculty and staff within the Criminal Justice Department are experiencing ongoing conflict. After speaking privately with most of you I have concluded that for some of you this conflict is a mild peripheral annoyance, for others an uncomfortable situation not conducive to effective collaboration, and for others a hostile environment that is paralyzing and makes being at work frustrating and miserable.

Most of you perceive that the source of the greatest conflict exists between two highly competent leaders within the department, Department Chair Tom Caywood and On-line Director Cheryl Banachowski-Fuller. Human Resources Director Kate Kelley and I met with Drs. Caywood and Banachowski-Fuller together in an effort to mitigate the conflict between them. Dr. Caywood's complaint is that Dr. Banachowski-Fuller has removed herself and the on-line program from the department, making unilateral curricular and hiring decisions that should be a part of the department faculty governance process and that she is insubordinate. Dr. Banachowski-Fuller's complaint is that she feels harassed, is stymied in the performance of her job, and is treated in a discriminatory manner. In addition, she perceives that Dr. Caywood's leadership is overly authoritarian and that he is not sensitive to appropriate protocol in following university policies as well as legal process specifically in the workings of searches in the department. Because Dr. Banachowski-Fuller expressed that she was experiencing harassment, discriminatory behavior, and a hostile work environment I agreed to investigate this claim. Those I interviewed were: S. Burton, A. Dutelle, S. Elmer, S. Kratcha, J. LeFevre, J. Lomax, A. Nemmetz, D. Rice, and E. Ross.

I drew up an informal memo dated 26 March 2010 and stamped "Confidential Draft" in which I stated the conclusions of my investigation and my proposed directives. Kate Kelley and I met with Tom and Cheryl individually to go over this document and to get their feedback, corrections, additions, etc. Neither felt that the document was an accurate description of the problem. Tom remained concerned that Cheryl was acting unilaterally without communicating and collaborating with the rest of the department and specifically without communicating and collaborating with him as chair of the department in which the online program exists and in which Cheryl is a faculty member. Cheryl's concern was that Tom was suppressing her ability to direct the program and requested that she report to me rather than to Tom.

A related issue that was expressed by most of you in our conversations was that a more prevalent source of conflict within the department is the faculty's attitude toward the teaching academic staff. This group is just as committed, is present, and works as hard as the faculty for less pay. They feel that they should be given more respect and should have more input into departmental decision-making and governance.

I found no evidence that Tom was harassing Cheryl, however, it is clear that these two are having great difficulty communicating and working together. It is for this reason, that I am having Cheryl report to me for the next year. Tom will be privy to all reports, requests, and communications between Cheryl and me. This decision does not reflect on Tom's leadership of the department generally but is an attempt to create a buffer between Cheryl and him.

### Additional directives:

Department members should refrain from disparaging remarks about colleagues and their qualifications or credentials,

Conflict should not be avoided but should be conducted in a civil manner without raised voices or ad hominem argument,

Sensitive discussions, arguments, or decision making should be conducted face-to-face, never via email, The department as a whole needs to be intentional and courageous in attempts to alter the relational atmosphere; each person should make a point of speaking to others, not avoiding others, and taking opportunities to communicate and collaborate with one another,

In keeping with the directive above, the department including the academic staff should meet once a month in order to share information and participate in team building.

The online programs are a part of the CJ department and Dr. Banachowski-Fuller is a member of that department. She should share information regarding the program at regular intervals with the rest of the faculty and get input from them regarding curriculum, pedagogy, and personnel. At the same time the rest of the faculty need to support the online programs in any way they can and be appreciative of the revenue stream it creates.

One to two other faculty members should be cross-training with Cheryl so that someone could fill in for her if ever necessary. It is risky and unwise to have any vital program depend solely on a single individual.

I also charge Aric Dutelle with cross-training colleagues in the Forensic Investigation area.

Finally, I charge Dr. Caywood with inviting a speaker/workshop leader to conduct a workshop with department members on conflict resolution, civility, and team building to take place at some date before or near the beginning of the fall semester 2010. This will be a mandatory event for everyone in the department.

I wish to close this email by dwelling on the strengths of the Criminal Justice Department. Both Tom and Cheryl are competent and committed individuals serving the department. Likewise, Amy Nemmetz as director of the undergraduate online program and Aric Dutelle in his role in developing the Forensic Investigation major and laboratories are talented and committed; true assets to the program. Joe Lomax represents the department effectively and dynamically to various constituents across the state. New tenure line faculty and all teaching academic staff are invaluable to the success and mission of the

department. It is always the faculty in a department that makes it successful – not the students, not the facilities, not the courses. Program success or failure depends on the quality and commitment of the faculty and it is clear that Criminal Justice has a small but dedicated group with a wide variety of skills. I am convinced that you can alter the communication climate among you and hope that each of you will set this as a priority for the coming year.

Thank all of you for all your contributions to the department, college, university, and community.

C: *Kate Kelley, Human Resources*