

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN SENATE

Equal Opportunity and Inclusion
(Final; Action)

EQ.17.01 Resolution on Inclusive Campus Climate

Recent events have highlighted the existing as well as potentially growing vulnerability of a variety of groups on campus, including immigrant students, faculty, and staff, both documented and undocumented, as well as members of our African American, Latinx, Asian American, Native American, Muslim, LGBTQ, international student/scholar, Jewish, and disabled communities. These vulnerabilities arise in part from the implied authorization of hate and intolerance that has accompanied recent political events. They arise as well from incidents involving campus law enforcement, including a recent one in which campus police entered a classroom during a class session of a course attended by predominantly African American students.¹ Though there have been many encouraging statements about the campus's commitment to diversity from the Chancellor, Provost and Deans, these conditions produce uncertainty on the part of students, faculty, and staff about university policies on such issues as:

1. sanctions for acts of intolerance especially against underrepresented groups;
2. agreed-upon best practices for law enforcement on campus;
3. university commitment to a robust academic freedom that does not disavow the varied needs for contingent safe spaces and trigger warnings;
4. university commitment to offices and resources committed to the needs of students, staff and faculty whose full inclusion in the university community may be compromised by these conditions.

The Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign recognizes that such uncertainty compromises the climate mandated by the many statements that have been passed by the Senate and other bodies to confirm the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion. This includes the Diversity Values Statement endorsed by the Senate as Resolution EQ.13.01 in November 2012. The statement affirmed in part that "we demonstrate our values and appreciation of the perspectives and contributions of the wide spectrum of people reflected in our community...., we provide opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and administrators to establish meaningful relationships across differences and we actively encourage the campus community to participate in programming and events to create, develop and sustain those relationships. As such, we aspire to create a truly pluralistic environment, free of barriers associated with identity, in our pursuit of academic and scholarly excellence." In order to commit our shared governance processes to initiatives that will advance these values, the Senate endorses the following resolution:

¹ The incident referred to is described in Appendix 1.

Whereas, our campus and nation have witnessed a range of incidents of aggression, hatred, and intimidation aimed especially at immigrant students, faculty, and staff, both documented and undocumented, as well as members of our African American, Latinx, Asian American, Native American, Muslim, LGBTQ, international student/scholar, Jewish, and disabled communities; and

Whereas, a recent Campus Police classroom intervention raises questions about policies and procedures regarding law enforcement intervention in classrooms and other campus spaces, and

Whereas undocumented and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) students who already face difficulties with application, affordability, and consultation about their status are threatened with even greater uncertainty in continuing their studies and maintaining their ties with family members and communities, and,

Whereas potential changes in U.S. border and visa policy and escalation of aggression against underrepresented groups, may potentially impact international student and faculty visa status and security on campus, and,

Whereas these vulnerabilities are contrary to the commitment to the aspiration stated in EQ.13.01 “to create a truly pluralistic environment,” therefore

Be it resolved, that the Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign calls upon campus and university administration to reaffirm its commitment to a campus climate free from hostility, aggression, and acts of hate, maintained through reporting mechanisms and clear indications of sanctions associated with such incidents; and

Be it further resolved, that the Senate shall regularly receive from the administration summaries of campus reporting and actions on incidences of aggression, hate, and bullying; and,

Be it further resolved that the campus will proactively work to maintain a campus climate conducive to continued recruitment of a diverse student population, faculty, and staff, including respecting and enhancing cultural houses, ethnic studies, and gender and women’s studies units that have been produced by the hard political and intellectual work of underrepresented students themselves; and

Be it resolved, that the Senate requests a review of incidents, including that of Oct. 10, 2016, involving campus police entering a classroom, and report of the review; and

Be it further resolved, that there be a campus review and/or development of documents outlining best practices for the Campus Police and other law enforcement officials entering classrooms, dormitories, and other spaces of education and student life in non-emergency circumstances, that takes into consideration histories and ongoing issues of racial profiling on campus; and

Be it further resolved, that the document developed on best practices for law enforcement on campus be the subject of an open, campus-wide discussion of the relation of race to campus,

community, state and federal law enforcement as they impact UIUC students, staff, and faculty;
and,

Be it further resolved, that the Senate urges campus affirmation of policies and procedures that protect undocumented students' privacy and security; and

Be it further resolved, that the campus cultivate public and private sources of financial aid and resources for confidential counseling support to assist DACA and other undocumented students in addressing challenges to their status as residents of the U.S. and students at the University; and

Be it further resolved that the UIUC campus support international students to retain visas necessary to their continued study and will make needed counseling and advising available to them; and

Be it further resolved, that the Senate shall receive during Spring Term 2017 reports from appropriate campus officials and offices regarding progress on the initiatives listed above.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND INCLUSION

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Appendix 1: Account of Recent Incident in AFRO 383

At approximately 4:20pm on October 10, 2016, the AFRO 383 class of Prof. Erik McDuffie in Lincoln Hall was visited by two campus policemen in search of a stolen cellphone. Two African American male students volunteered that they were in possession of cellphones resembling the stolen phone. The two students were questioned. Prof. McDuffie dismissed the class and observed the interaction between the two students and police, which was conducted in a professional manner. There was no violence, but the two students, Prof. McDuffie, and the class as a whole experienced the visit of the police as a racial incident. Moreover, the incident frightened, shocked, alarmed, and infuriated students from all walks of life in Prof McDuffie's class.

Prof. McDuffie and members of the Senate Committee on Equal Opportunity and Inclusion see the incident as raising a number of questions that provisions of this resolution are intended to at least partially address: When can the Campus Police interrupt a class in a non-emergency situation? What is the Campus Police policy on such interruptions? Who are the members of the Campus Police force? What is their jurisdiction, and how do they compare to the police forces of Champaign and Urbana? Are they armed with tasers, spray, and/or guns? How are they trained to conduct themselves on a multicultural campus? What kind of surveillance capabilities do campus authorities have over students, staff, and faculty?

We note that although there are university policy documents outlining student obligations in relation to obeying "reasonable requests" by the UIUC Campus Police, there is no readily available documentation that outlines the obligations of the UIUC Campus Police to the UIUC community, or that would assist in answering the questions above.

Subsequent to this incident members of the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion committee met with Prof. McDuffie, the Associate Chancellor for Diversity, and Campus Police Chief Jeffrey Christensen, and discussed the incident and possible paths forward. Chief Christensen explained the responsibility the Campus Police have to the campus community at large to retrieve stolen property as prompting the classroom visit. He suggested that the officers entered the classroom mainly because students noticed them outside the room, prompting Prof. McDuffie to inquire as to their purpose. He noted that such classroom interventions were not standard practice and were rare, but also acknowledged the need to look into best practices in this area. He said he would immediately start reaching out on a listserv of campus law enforcement units to ascertain best practices. He has subsequently communicated that he has discussed current practice and policy about respecting classroom space with Campus Police Command Staff. In the last couple of days we have heard that members of the staff who are attending a Big Ten Law Enforcement Conference this weekend are intending to inquire further into issues of policies and practices of entering classrooms. We expect that all these efforts will help inform whatever review process may develop from this resolution.