From: Faculty Senate
To: faculty
Subject: October 8 Incident
Date: Thursday, December 2, 2021 8:36:00 AM

Dear colleagues,

As many of you are aware, on October 8 of this semester the head coach of the Mines football team repeatedly disrupted a scheduled class taking place in one of the Marv Kay stadium classrooms. Faculty Senate, along with most others on campus, first learned about this incident from an article published in the Denver Post on November 9.

We find the details of this event as reported deeply troubling. We express our support for the students and faculty member impacted. The behavior described is completely inappropriate. It falls far short of what we would expect from a member of the Mines community. Faculty Senate opposes all forms of harassment and intimidation in our classrooms and workplaces. All faculty and students have the right to a safe and supportive campus environment. All members of the campus community have a right to have grievances heard in a fair and transparent manner.

We have received numerous communications from faculty and students expressing concern and frustration over both the event itself and the lack of an official response. We brought these concerns to the Provost's attention at our meetings on November 9 and November 23. You can see the details of these discussions in our minutes, are posted at https://www.mines.edu/faculty-senate/minutes/ once they are approved at the following Senate meeting.

Since learning of the incident, Senate leadership has been in communication with students and faculty impacted by the event in order to hear their perspectives. We have also been in dialogue with senior university leadership including the President and Provost, in order to make them aware of the concerns expressed by faculty and students. In response to these concerns, the President and Provost indicated that following university policy and state law, they cannot release the specific details of the investigation and response to the public. They have informed us that in their view the administration handled the matter promptly and appropriately, and that the investigation resulted in a suitable disciplinary action.

Based on our inquiries into this event, we have identified several initiatives and reforms that we believe will help to prevent such incidents in the future.

1. This incident shows the potential value of establishing an ombudsperson's office to help guide faculty and student grievances through Mines policies and procedures toward a fair and transparent resolution. Senate created an ad hoc committee to investigate this possibility last year, and we have received reports from this committee outlining the justification for this office and recommending next steps. We expect to vote on a recommendation to this effect in coming weeks. We have also discussed this possibility with the President and Provost, both of whom expressed support.

2. We believe that it is important for the administration to take proactive efforts to ensure that all faculty are aware of the various options and procedures related to conflict resolution and the grievance processes, and familiar with their rights as members of the faculty. The routes of grievance response need to be more transparent. We will work with Academic Affairs to ensure that these objectives are met. Additionally, we emphasize to all faculty that they can bring concerns related to the campus culture, norms, work, and experience to Senate after exhausting other options. We received over a dozen comments expressing alarm and frustration at the incident on October 8, and we have used these comments to guide our dialogue with the involved parties. We encourage you to express or keep expressing your concerns to us. You will be heard.

3. We have identified persistent and unaddressed problems with classroom access in the stadium building as a contributing factor in this incident. To help resolve this, we have requested that Academic Affairs arrange for access to all classrooms to be available through Blaster card access to buildings and/or classrooms. We will continue to work with Academic Affairs and the Registrar's Office to identify solutions to the current classroom shortage on campus, in order to minimize or eliminate the need for faculty to teach in sub-optimal classrooms such as those located at the stadium.

We are committed to pursuing these efforts, and we welcome your insight, involvement, and support as we strive to ensure that events like this do not happen again.

We wish you a safe and joyful end to the semester and look forward to the start of the Spring semester.

Sincerely,

Your Faculty Senators