

Talking Points from Dean of Students, Travis T. Apgar

Good morning,

Below are talking points you may use in response to inquiries on judicial matters from the campaign launch event. The talking points were sent to us from SCER. Below is what was shared by Travis Apgar with The Poly last week. They didn't print his full statement (leaving out the first two sentences) but you can find his full statement below.

The Poly article: <https://poly.rpi.edu/2017/11/09/dean-of-students-office-begins-judicial-inquiries-into-protest-participation/>

From Travis:

Here is the full statement, which you can use to inform your responses should you have students or alumni contacting you.

“It would be inappropriate for me to comment on any individual student’s situation related to the incident on October 13, 2017 in which individuals breached security barriers as part of an unauthorized demonstration which took place near the VCC. There is ample information to show that persons who have since been identified as current students, were participants in the conduct. The area was partitioned off to accommodate an event that was taking place in multiple buildings in that area of campus on that evening. It is our duty to address such violations, and to determine the extent to which there may have been violations of Institute policies and standards. One of our goals in doing this is to educate our students, using every interaction as a growth and learning opportunity; and to respond with any appropriate consequences for the type and magnitude of the infraction. There are times that we accomplish these goals with simple non-judicial meetings and dialogue, and there are times when the conduct is serious enough that it is managed by the Rensselaer judicial process.

In this particular situation, I had several conversations prior to the 13th in which I shared that if people were to gather that day and comply with security procedures, including staying behind the partitioning, there would be no action necessary. That is not what transpired when the group made the decision to push through the partitioning and walk to the area of the event. I am incredibly thankful that no physical harm resulted from any of this group’s actions. There were highly tense moments during the time those individuals took the previously described actions as it was unclear what they would do next. Thankfully, the Rensselaer Public Safety Officers, Troy Police, and other Rensselaer staff on the scene handled the matter with commendable calmness in the face of a crowd that did not seem to respect the boundaries.”

Additional talking Points

- It is our responsibility to enforce our policies. In this case, we gave multiple and specific notices to the community that barriers would be established, only those authorized can enter the partitioned area and that we will enforce the perimeter. (See my statement above, and October 12, 2017 email from Strategic Communications Re: Safety for Reunion & Homecoming)
- The follow up with individuals identified as being present in the demonstration crowd is not likely to reach the level of judicial, these are educational conversations
- Those leading the unapproved demonstration, or encouraging the crowd to cross the barrier and enter the event area will face appropriate judicial action

- Those who hide behind anonymity or have an ulterior motive have grossly twisted information to deliver a disinformation campaign
- **The Union is not running any differently than it was two or five or ten years ago**
 - Students have and will continue to be central to hiring of staff, including the Director position
 - The process the Union Executive Board uses to put forward the candidates they find acceptable, in other words, make a recommendation...is no different than the days when Rick Hartt was here (See: https://poly.rpi.edu/2017/11/08/former_union_director_interviewed/) It was a recommendation then, it is a recommendation now.

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