

Subject: [Hc-staff-broadcast] Message to the community

From: Daniel Weiss - To: hc-faculty-broadcast, hc-staff-broadcast, hc-students-broadcast - Date: May 20, 2014 at 5:24 PM

Friends:

We have been through a difficult period together over the past few weeks. At a time of year we reserve for celebration, we have been working through a very challenging set of issues, provocative in any context and further exacerbated by the scrutiny of the media and the general public. I have heard from many of you, as well as from many beyond our campus, with wide ranging views on our commencement controversy and its aftermath. As you know, it has elicited strong feelings on all sides.

From the onset of this episode, I have tried to make sure that all voices in our community can be heard and that our commitment to the thoughtful exchange of ideas, even when they are difficult to hear, has been supported by the institution. I for one come away from these discussions with respect and empathy for a number of perspectives that I had not fully appreciated beforehand.

Regardless of one's positions on the various issues raised, it would be difficult for anyone to be fully satisfied with all that has occurred. Indeed, when free and open speech rules the day comfortable outcomes are rare. But there is also much in which we should take pride. Our community—faculty, staff, and most significantly students—faced squarely a complex set of ethical quandaries and did its best to navigate an honorable course.

One of this community's great strengths is the quality of our students and their commitment to live out their values. I am often asked why I came to Haverford, and the answer I always give is the students, and the community they help create. I celebrate you and appreciate greatly your good work. Your energy and activism are needed here at Haverford and in the world.

As we look to the future, I am confident that we will be able to make positive changes to our honorary degree selection process to make sure that it is more reflective of the views of the community and especially the students whose achievements we celebrate. In the year ahead, I hope that we will also have an opportunity to reflect on our recent experiences to learn from them and to strengthen our community. In so doing, let us dedicate ourselves to reaffirming our shared values and sense of common purpose. I wish you all an enjoyable and productive summer.

Dan Weiss

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