

From: Joe Gow <jgow@uwlax.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2017 12:46 PM
Subject: Mea Culpa ("My Fault")

Dear students and colleagues:

On Monday, I sent all of you an e-mail message which has generated a response unlike anything I've seen during the 10 years I've been privileged to serve as our university's chancellor. And through the responses I've received I've come to realize that I erred in not writing the original message more thoughtfully. In particular, I wrote an opening paragraph that appears to have stifled discussion, rather than promoted it. That opening paragraph also should not have given the appearance that our university is taking a particular side in a political debate. Of course, all of you are free to do that; but as chancellor I am bound to represent our institution in a politically-neutral fashion. I hope you'll please forgive me for not being more careful about this.

With the exception of the initial paragraph, I stand by the remainder of the original message and am proud to say UWL remains firmly committed to the principles it outlines. Non-discrimination and internationalization remain at the core of our mission.

I know there are no "do-overs" in public life, a realm in which the diplomat Charles Maurice de Talleyrand once observed, "A blunder is worse than a crime," but if you can forgive my mistake I hope you'll accept the updated statement included below.

Thanks to so many of you for taking the time to write to me about this very important issue. I regret that I'm not able to respond personally to you all. But, as I hope you'll realize, your messages have a great impact on my thoughts and actions. Even though I've been in my UWL chancellor role for ten years, I'm still learning, and I'm deeply grateful for your assistance in this process.

Best wishes,

Joe

Joe Gow, Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse

Updated statement:

In light of recent changes in U.S. immigration policy, the UWL leadership team and I are writing to reaffirm our University's commitment to support our international students, faculty, and staff, and our commitment to the values of international collaboration and engagement. Our students, faculty, and staff from around the world are an integral part of our campus community, and play a crucial role in our educational mission.

Likewise, we want to reaffirm our commitment to ensuring a safe and inclusive campus environment for all individuals, regardless of their national origin, citizenship/immigration status, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, ability and other significant aspects of individual and cultural identity.

And we also want to let you know that our university will maintain the privacy of information about the citizenship/immigration status of all individuals, except where required by law or authorized by the individual. Please know that, except where required by law, UWL Police do not assist in immigration enforcement or deportation of any individual, and do not inquire about or record immigration status when performing their duties.

We will continue to monitor developments and do our best to provide guidance and support to affected individuals and the university offices providing relevant services to them. Our Offices of International Education and Engagement, Human Resources, and Counseling Services are available for those needing various kinds of support.

Sincerely,

Joe Gow, Chancellor

Nizam Arain, Director of Affirmative Action

Bob Hetzel, Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Paula Knudson, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Betsy Morgan, Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Greg Reichert, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement