

On Wednesday, April 6, 2016, President Tuajuanda C. Jordan called the entire campus community together to discuss recent negative events on campus that mirror national unrest. The notes that follow capture the essence of the meeting, entitled “A Time to Pause.”

A Time to Pause

Wednesday, April 6, 2016

Michael P. O’Brien Athletics and Recreation Center

9:45 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Meeting Notes

The notes reflect the essence of what the note takers captured and are not intended to be verbatim transcripts.

President Jordan’s Opening Remarks

I am without words (*in response to hundreds and hundreds of faculty, students and staff in the MPOBARC*). We have all been able to come here today to discuss what is important to us as a community. Thank you for making the effort to participate. We are at a turning point. We are mirroring events that are occurring nationally. These are not positive things we are mirroring. Looking around we see these bad acts are stressing us out. They’re not representative of the majority. This gathering indicates we are strong and united. We are a strong community. We have been talking this year about “isms”: sexism, racism, vandalism, anti-Semitism. Ugliness. And now we have thrown in arson. We are going to work hard against these things. The fires set in Dorchester Hall are being treated as a criminal investigation and will continue to be handled that way.

As a community we need to start to work against all of these negatives. We need to have respect for each other and the environment. We are losing our way. Today we are announcing that we are finding a path to move beyond the negativity. The Wellness Center has extended hours this week if you need to talk. To those that just want to ignore what is happening around us, I do not think that that is going to work this time. I want you to know that we are all responsible for fixing this in this community.

This morning we need to talk about what we are encountering on this campus and how we feel. What things should we not change about this College? What should we change and what is the way forward? We have had groups working on inclusivity, diversity and equity for about 16 months. These groups are trying to move us toward a different place.

There are student, faculty and staff leaders on stage with me today. Some of you believe that we are not doing anything. You do not understand how united we are. The faculty is here in this audience as are students, staff, alumni, and the community. WE are all here. Today we will engage in civil and respectful discourse. We need to get a perspective and then we must act as a community to move forward.

So let us get started. We have three people that are going to be runners, each with a microphone. We have note takers and they are going to capture the essence of what we say. Some of our

thoughts and ideas are going to go to the work groups. Some will be transformed into action steps. Some will serve as teachable moments for later discussion in your classrooms or small group settings. Speak and tell us how you are feeling about the events transpiring on this campus. It is important right now to let your peers know how you are feeling.

Campus Community Speaks Out

The first action of the two hours provided students, faculty and staff with the opportunity to access microphones around the room to offer personal reflections.

What should we not change about St. Mary's?

Following the sincere and candid remarks shared by the campus community, President Jordan asked the audience to form small groups with those around them to discuss "What should we not change about St. Mary's College?"

Audience members were given time to share thoughts from their group discussions. Next, audience members were encouraged to share next steps and aspects of St. Mary's College that we should work to strengthen or change. Note takers captured the ideas in the bullets below.

What are the next steps? What should we change?

Bullets points represent the main ideas of thoughts shared.

- Increase diversity and race training among campus leaders (orientation leaders, RAs, etc.)
- Civil, respectful, discourse
- Inclusivity among campus minority groups
- Increase student conversations with faculty and administration, for example, in The Great Room.
- More large-format forums and smaller scale discussions (classrooms, residences ...).
- Education on the history of the College, the place, and its people.
- Diversity and inclusivity training for all members of the campus community.
- Hold people accountable for messages, words, and actions.
- Increase interaction between St. Mary's COLLEGE and the St. Mary's COMMUNITY.
- Smile, say hello, and acknowledge others on campus.
- Increase diversity of faculty to better reflect our nation. Increase diversity of counselors.
- There needs to be consequences and accountability for people not following the St. Mary's Way.
- Stronger connection between administration and students.

- Reflect deeply on what is at the core of our issues rather than the resulting actions.
- If you see an offensive action – say something about it, do something about it.
- Don't marginalize progressive mindsets, freedom of expression.
- In race conversations, don't minimize the issue with other issues.
- Acknowledge opinions of others.
- Have small, organized small group discussions.
- Talk to administration, faculty, et al.
- Report progress being made.
- Give timeline of community efforts.
- Integrate the athletic teams into the community more.
- Extend the conversation past just our community.
- Fifth hour program during orientation should be going to different diversity groups on campus.
- Faculty should have the awkward [tough] conversations with students.
- Lean into the multicultural groups as resources more.
- This is only the beginning, not an end.

President Jordan's Closing Remarks

We have a wide range of different opinions and we needed to express them, but be respectful. We must be humane. We lose sight of that all too often. We talk about the St. Mary's Way as a need to work together. Today is not the end of this conversation. Those who feel that you could not speak because time ran out, there is going to be a box by the Information Desk where you can post your comments.

These actions will continue. They fall under the purview of the Inclusion, Diversity and Equity work groups and they need to get out to you. Continue the dialogue in organized or spontaneous groups, large or small. Talk to each other. Talk to us. You have to think about why you think something about someone and then work on it. We will be making progress. We are working on strategies already. We expect you to do something. Find your voice.

I bid you all peace for the remainder of the semester. As you go home, I expect reflection. This is not the end, only the beginning to get us to a better place.