

From: **Office of the President** <office_of_the_president@emich.edu>

Date: Wed, Sep 21, 2016 at 5:20 PM

Subject: Update on racist graffiti incidents

To: emu-students@emich.edu, emu-employees@emich.edu

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

The EMU Police Department continues to aggressively investigate the racist graffiti that was painted on an exterior wall of King Hall in the overnight hours of Monday night and Tuesday morning. Once we learned about the graffiti it was quickly removed. As part of the investigation, EMU personnel have been inspecting other campus facilities to make sure no other graffiti of this nature is present. During that process, early this morning, a racial slur was found on a wall in a stairwell of Wise Hall and was also removed.

However, removal of these racist messages does not eliminate the impact of such hateful and intentional actions. I want to reiterate that I, along with hundreds of people in the University community whom I have heard from, strongly condemn these criminal acts, which are completely counter to the values and welcoming environment of our highly diverse campus.

The full resources of the University are being directed to identifying the individual or individuals involved so that they can be brought to justice. The primary efforts by the EMU Police Department at this time are directed to reviewing campus security camera video to see if there is any indication of who might have been involved. Additionally, police have received some calls from people who have information to share. Police officers are meeting with them as those calls are received. I am extremely hopeful that these pieces of the investigation lead to the apprehension and arrest of the individual or individuals involved. Our campus community can help. If you have any information that will help us solve these crimes, please contact the EMU Police Department at [734-487-1222](tel:734-487-1222).

In hopes of obtaining further information about the incidents, we are announcing a reward of \$2,500 for information that leads to the arrest of the person or people responsible. We are determined to do everything possible and leave no stone unturned as we work to solve these cases. Please contact EMU Police at the number above or its tip line at [734-487-4847](tel:734-487-4847).

The racist graffiti targeted the black community, and we as collective members of Eastern Michigan University and the larger world community find the use of this language and its intent to harm both deeply offensive and unacceptable. Further, it is contrary to the mission and core values of our University, which as stated in our core values includes: Inclusiveness – We create an environment that supports, represents, embraces and engages members of diverse groups and identities.

As the police investigations continue, it is important that we as a community come together to address the broader issues behind incidents such as these. Our Academic and Student Affairs leadership teams had considerable dialogue with members of the campus community throughout the day yesterday to determine appropriate next steps to address these issues and their aftermath in the immediate and longer term.

Last night, as part of this process, I met with more than 100 students at University House who had marched there hoping for answers and to express their fear, concern and anger. I was joined by University administrators Calvin Phillips, associate vice president for student affairs; Chiara

Hensley, assistant vice president for student affairs; and EMU Police Chief Bob Heighes. We listened to students' concerns and shared with them the utmost priority with which we investigate and address these matters. We were asked directly if this would be "swept under the rug" and we assured those who attended, and I assure all of you reading this message, that it will not.

The University has committed to both immediate, short-term actions, as well as a long-term action plan to address issues of race and diversity at EMU. We want to take this opportunity to share with the EMU community the immediate, short-term action steps the institution has committed to:

Increased police presence

The University President and Chief of DPS have committed to increased police presence to ensure a sense of safety and security for the entire campus community.

Anonymous Electronic Institutional Feedback Form

Every member of the campus community will have the opportunity to submit their questions, concerns, and requests for institutional action related to issues of race and diversity at EMU. Please click on the Anonymous Electronic Feedback Form to participate.

A forum will take place as soon as possible, but no later than early October

Members of the campus community will have the opportunity to engage with senior leaders regarding these issues and to further express questions, concerns and requests for institutional action related to issues of race and diversity at EMU. We are committed to continuing to take tangible actions to ensure a safe, inclusive and welcoming campus environment.

These discussions are ongoing and I encourage anyone that would like to participate in the dialogue to contact Calvin Phillips at [734-487-0035](tel:734-487-0035) or by email at cphill34@emich.edu. In addition, if you have any questions about safety, please contact Chief Heighes at [734-487-0892](tel:734-487-0892) or by email at rheighes@emich.edu. Students can also contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at [734-487-1118](tel:734-487-1118) if they would like to talk with a professional.

I want to remind our campus community that the University encourages students to engage in peaceable demonstration and civil discourse. When organizing an on-campus event or gathering at Eastern Michigan University, indoors or outdoors, there are a number of policies and procedures to follow and several people on campus who can help. Please visit the [Campus Life website](#) to find University policies or procedures that may apply.

Finally, as I conclude this message, I wanted to share a message with you on behalf of the Black Student Union and EMU Student Government, who asked us to share a statement to campus on behalf of their respective organizations following yesterday's incident. Their message is below.

Sincerely,

James Smith, Ph.D.

President