
COURAGEOUS MORAL ACTION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
A CALL TO ACTION

TO: UNIVERSITY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
FROM: CLAIRE E. STERK
DATE: FEBRUARY 20, 2017

CHARGE

Form a working group comprised of faculty, staff, and students to:

1. Propose activities in which the Emory community can engage during this semester that foster *community building* and *community self-care*.
 - Some examples might include common readings (e.g. Thoreau or MLK.Jr.), an inventory of relevant classes, the creation of academic learning communities, the development of a MOOC in which Emory invites others to join us in a dialogue about activism, social change, etc...
2. Gather information to produce an *inclusive assessment* of the wide range of views that exist within the community

PURPOSE

Beyond helping our community members respond to the immediate concerns raised by various recent executive orders and other disruptions, it likely will serve the community well to lift everyone's gaze to the long arc of history. We are likely to be enmeshed in this chaos for some time to come, and therefore it might be useful to find ways to remind ourselves that certain past movements did not necessarily have an inevitable outcome—the Civil Rights Act, for instance, was not foreordained. Nelson Mandela's release from prison was not a foregone conclusion.

Emory should be a laboratory for democracy where students and future leaders can learn and practice responsible social activism. The disciplines and arts of organizing which include intellectual conceptualization and framing, strategizing, communicating, influencing policy, and evaluating action are important for us to impart to our students. During these times, we will all need help with the ethics of discourse and arts of conversation.

NEXT STEPS

I hope that you will welcome conversations about how we find courage, patience, hope and respectful conversation in the midst of anxiety and fear. Fortunately, Emory has some remarkable faculty, staff and student resources to draw on to lead these efforts. I look forward to periodic updates about the working group's progress.