

Philip L. Dubois

To: UW Trustees + ex-officios
Subject: FW: Bullets

Colleagues: Below is a compendium of information re: to the University's handling of the Shepard incident. I hope this is helpful to you as you answer questions in the days and weeks (and years) ahead. Information is contained below or in the attachment in Microsoft Word.

Phil



Bullets re Matthew
Shepard.doc...

University of Wyoming Efforts Responding to the Death of Matthew Shepard (10/15/99)

- Critical commentary regarding Matthew's death is only marginally being directed at the University of Wyoming; criticism is mostly being directed at Wyoming and the Laramie community. In all efforts, UW must continue to include the community as it addresses issues surrounding this crime.
- Matthew's parents and other well-informed persons recognize that the act of two persons does not reflect the values or conduct of UW students or Wyoming in general.
- Only one of the four alleged perpetrators of the crime (charged as an accessory after the fact) is a UW student. The other three are not nor have been UW students.

Ongoing education/training at the University of Wyoming

- In 1990, the University released its official "Anti-Discrimination Policy," which denounces, within First Amendment rights, expressions, in word or action, on campus that reflect prejudice or hate based on gender, color, disability, sexual orientation, religious preference, national origin, ancestry, or age.
- For the past three years, the Safe Zone training project has been in place. During that time, more than 155 students, staff, and faculty have been trained in awareness and providing a safe environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered members of the campus and Laramie communities.
- Since its inception in 1991, the curriculum of UW's required "Introduction to Freshman Life" course has included mandatory diversity training.
- Under the auspices of the University of Wyoming's Minority Affairs Office, a series of programs on diversity has been offered each year since 1990.
- For the past four years, the Men Against Violence program has been active.
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered Association (LGBTGA) has been a formally recognized and supported student organization for the past six years.

Immediate response to the Matthew Shepard incident:

- The University of Wyoming became aware at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 8, that a UW student, Matthew Shepard, had been the victim of a vicious beating, which, following police investigation, appeared to be a hate crime. As facts developed, Vice President for Student Affairs Jim Hurst convened a meeting at 4 p.m. of the UW Crisis Intervention Team and other campus leaders to provide direction for support for Matthew and campus response to the crime. The group was convened again the next day to ensure that all areas were being covered and communication was accurate.
- At a press conference on the afternoon of Friday, October 9, UW President Philip L. Dubois released a statement offering support to Matthew Shepard and his family, denouncing the deplorable act of violence, and expressing UW's support to the community in its pursuit of the matter. At the time of the release, it was not known for certain that Matthew's sexual orientation might have been a factor in the attack. Accordingly, the statement only made indirect reference to that possibility.
- That evening at the traditional Homecoming Sing, a representative of Cardinal Key expressed sentiments on behalf of the student body against prejudice and violence and in support of Matthew and his family. A moment of silence also occurred.
- At that same event, the Associated Students - University of Wyoming's United Multicultural Council (UMC) distributed yellow armbands decorated with green circles. The yellow background is a symbol of rejecting violence, in the tradition of the response to the Oklahoma City bombing; the green circle represents the international symbol for peace. The armbands reflected solidarity in representing the unified, nonviolent values of UW students and the UW community against all acts of violence and disrespect toward any other human being. The armbands were distributed again at the annual Homecoming parade on Saturday morning.
- At the Homecoming parade, faculty, staff, and students marched in demonstration against violence. As the parade progressed through the streets of Laramie, community members joined in the march. By the end of the parade, the size of the group had grown significantly. The march was greeted with outward displays of support.
- President Dubois directed that a moment of silence for Matthew be observed at the beginning of Saturday's football game.
- On Saturday afternoon, Jim Hurst traveled to Ft. Collins in hopes of meeting with Matthew's parents to express the sentiments of the University and provide information on UW's availability to assist. Because of concerns for the privacy of the Shepard family, Hurst was unable to meet with the parents but was able to leave a written message of support from UW to the parents; this message was to be hand delivered to the parents.
- On Sunday, Jim Hurst convened another meeting to discuss and plan the coordination of programming on campus for the following week and beyond to assist students, faculty, and staff as they address the incident. President Dubois and Governor Geringer (by telephone) participated in this meeting.
- Two vigils were held on Sunday evening - one at 7 p.m. at the Laramie Newman Center and one at 8 p.m. at the Laramie Unitarian Church. Campus and community leaders were in attendance at both well-received events.

- In lieu of setting up a separate fund, UW will support the Fund for the Benefit of Matthew Shepard already established in Ft. Collins. Donations from campus community members and members of the greater Laramie and Wyoming communities can send their donations to the President's Office in Old Main, and the donations will then be forwarded to the fund in Ft. Collins. President Dubois and Vice President Hurst intend to discuss the family's wishes with respect to the disposition of the funds donated. The address for the fund is:

Fund for the Benefit of Matthew Shepard
 C/O First National Bank
 Fort Collins, CO 80522
 Reference Account #1926083

- Books of support/remembrance are available in three locations for any person interested in leaving a message for Matthew's parents. The books are available in the Union, at Washakie Center, and at City Hall.
- Upon receiving word of Matthew's death on Monday morning, President Dubois consulted with Governor Geringer and received the Governor's approval for campus flags to be lowered to half staff. They will remain at half staff until after Matthew's funeral in Casper on Friday, October 16.
- The events already scheduled for Gay Awareness week have and will move forward as planned.
 - "Straight but Not Narrow" buttons and stickers are available at a table in the breezeway of the Wyoming Union. Additional "Straight but Not Narrow" buttons and stickers were obtained through the sources at CSU.
 - Additional armbands in support of Matthew are available at the "Straight but Not Narrow" table as well as at the Multicultural Resource Center in the Wyoming Union. Campus and community leaders are encouraged to pick up an armband to wear throughout the week. Armbands will be made available to the Laramie community at City Hall.
 - Leslea Newman (author of the book *Heather Has Two Mommies*) gave a scheduled presentation at the A&S auditorium. She opened her presentation with 5 to 10 minutes on this recent act of violence. At Ms. Newman's request, she was provided with security by the University of Wyoming Police Department. Unfortunately, the event was not well attended.
 - Representatives from national gay/lesbian organizations are on campus to lend support to the LGBTQA. Campus police will be available to ensure that civility is maintained during all events in accordance with normal operating procedures.
 - A number of gay/lesbian celebrities (Ellen Degeneres, Anne Heche) have offered to come to Laramie to lend their support. LGBTQA will explore the viability of the invitation. It was emphasized that the decision to whether to pursue the presence of these celebrities rests with the student organization.
- On Monday evening, a service "Remembering Matthew" was held on Prexy's Pasture at the flag pole. This event, coordinated by LGBTQA and the Campus Activities Center, was well attended and was designed to help the campus community start the healing process.

- On Monday, the Associated Students - University of Wyoming (ASUW) met with the presidents of UW's recognized student organizations (including fraternities and sororities and the Residence Hall Association) to discuss a consolidated effort to express the UW students' position on this incident. A number of organizations and students have contacted ASUW asking what they can do. The students are focusing on appropriate activities to assist in long-term education, as well as short-term reaction, to this event. In addition, an invitation will be made to the Greek community to perhaps identify another opportunity for that group to make a statement about its values. Greek communities on college campuses are often targeted when incidents such as this occur.
- The executive council of the Faculty Senate met Monday to discuss how to be supportive of UW students and fellow faculty members. Topics included in this discussion were:
 - developing a number of discussions/presentations/lectures (a "teach in") for noon on Thursday, October 15, on the topics of prejudice, violence, and hate crimes
 - notifying faculty of the availability of arm bands and pins/stickers at the "Straight but Not Narrow" table
 - developing handouts based on the Safe Zone training to distribute to faculty
 - developing a resource list of faculty and others who can speak on issues of violence and hate crimes to classes
 - encouraging faculty who feel comfortable to take advantage of a teachable moment in class during the week. Contact has already been made with the instructors of "Introduction to Freshman Life" courses to address issues of violence and hate crimes in their classes.
 - reminding/encourage faculty to be sensitive to First Amendment rights
 - identifying support for the faculty teaching, and students enrolled in, courses in which Matthew Shepard and Chastity Pasley (the one UW student implicated in the crime) are enrolled. It was noted that staff in the University Counseling Center and the Office of Student Life continues to be available to assist faculty and students.
 - cataloging resources available to assist faculty and students
- A meeting was convened on Monday afternoon to begin the planning of a formal university/community memorial service for Matthew. Mary Meyer, executive staff assistant in the College of Education, is chairing a committee comprised of campus and community representatives. The event is scheduled for Monday, October 19, at 7 p.m. in the Arts and Sciences Auditorium.
 - It was the unanimous decision of UW athletes to display the green circle on the yellow background on uniforms throughout the fall season. Athletes involved in football, volleyball, soccer, swimming and diving, and cross country will in some way display the symbol during competition.
 - The Physical Plant will be vigilant to immediately eradicating any expressions of an inflammatory nature that appear on campus.
 - The same services that always have been available to students continue to be available during this crisis.

The University Counseling Center (UCC) will have table tents in the Union during the next week supporting Gay Awareness Week and advertising their phone number for anyone with concerns or questions. It was noted that UCC staff have been ready for an increase in crisis contacts since the story broke on Thursday, and the number of crisis calls have been minimal. It is believed that student responses are within a normal range of emotion, and they are dealing well with the anger and disbelief.

- Diversity education has been a standard at UW for a number of years, and this incident provides us with an enhanced opportunity to provide additional educate. This education will not occur within the next week but will be an ongoing process in the months ahead.