UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EAU CLAIRE
STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION

IN CONDEMNING GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION WITHIN OUR UNIVERSITY’S CHANCELLOR’S EXECUTIVE TEAM

WHEREAS, Student Senate is the official voice of the student body at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC); and

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire is committed to promoting and supporting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) efforts; and

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire states on its website for EDI “It is the policy of UW-Eau Claire to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, discriminatory harassment, and retaliation for all students and employees.”; and

WHEREAS, on February 12th, the UWEC student newspaper, The Spectator, published a story titled; “Investigation Launched After Allegations of Discrimination”; and

WHEREAS, in this article, incidents are described between Vice Chancellor Enrollment Management, a member of the Chancellor’s administrative team, and female-dominant departments that are overseen by the Vice Chancellor Recruitment and Retainment; and

WHEREAS, the article continues by stating at least five employees, all female identifying, have resigned after making complaints to the UWEC administration and other faculty members; and

WHEREAS, a follow up article states that eight individuals have come forward and have resigned from their position due to negative interactions with the former Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management; and

WHEREAS, these complainants consisted of work-place bullying, belittlement/condescending interactions, misogyny, and other hostile workplace harassment; and

WHEREAS, the deplorable actions highlighted in this newspaper article brings to light the institutional structures of power; and

WHEREAS, these structures of powers that are benefited by the exploitation from the relationship between privilege and oppression of identities is being exhibited within our own administration at UWEC; and

WHEREAS, these forms of power and interactions exhibited by key members of administration, are ones that are contradictory and hindering to our EDI initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the Affirmative Action Office was notified February 3rd, with an investigation to follow within the next two weeks; and
WHEREAS, the student body was not notified until the February 12th article, meaning students were not given a chance to file a formal complainant if they themselves have had a similar experience; and
WHEREAS, courage from those that stepped forward originally would have inspired and secured others to step forward and allow their voice to be heard sooner; and
WHEREAS, due to the handling of the communications between Administration and the Student Body, including the Student Senate Body, we were uninformed on the abuse of power occurring within our own University until this article broke; and
WHEREAS, any act of discrimination, in this case gender-based, should be communicated to the Student Body, and a response of condemnation of misogyny issued; and
WHEREAS, with the February 12th article, there were mass backlash from Faculty, Staff, and Students; and
WHEREAS, we, as the voice of the student body, should follow suit with
other representative organizations within our institution; and
WHEREAS: “[Dr. Peter Hart-] Brinson, who also is the president of the United Faculty and Staff of UW-Eau Claire, said he condemns Colom’s treatment of university employees”1; and
WHEREAS, members of University Staff Council, University Senate, Commission on the Status of Women, and other members of Faculty and Staff expressed their disappointment and anger towards the behaviors described in the reports and the overall investigation; and
WHEREAS, on February 24th, The Chancellor talked at a press conference, not condemning these acts nor mentioning the nature of the investigation; and
WHEREAS, due to this lack of condemnation, it is up to us, the Student Senate, to publicly condemn these actions and demand we, as an institution, will try to do better; and
WHEREAS, the Vice Chancellor is working remotely and is still employed by the University until the fall; and
WHEREAS, The Vice Chancellor’s contract is still in affect; and
WHEREAS, there is no clause in current UW-System contracts that nullify the signed upon agreement if conduct of this matter occurs; and
WHEREAS, this lack of proactive measures to ensure the Administration are held accountable if they blatantly break code of conducts and anti-discrimination policies is contradictory to the UW-System message of Diversity and Inclusion; and

WHEREAS, many of the Universities of Wisconsin Schools have departments in some variation of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity such as Lacrosse, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Green Bay, Madison, Eau Claire, and many more; and

WHEREAS, the actions documented do not contribute to UWEC’s EDI initiatives, but also the whole UW-System’s Inclusive Excellence; and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, Student Senate condemns these behaviors and will continue to fight discrimination; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Student Senate will continue to call out unjust institutional power systems in the University; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Student Senate demands our administration, primarily the Chancellor and his executive team, make a long-term plan on reacting to incidents such as this one; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, these plans should include key members beyond the Chancellor’s executive team and include student voices as well. Such as non-executive student senators or a student-at-large; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Student Senate will advocate and rally for the UW-System to work on a larger-scale issue of institutional power to prevent these behaviors through legal measures; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that upon passage of this resolution, President Johnson will transmit a copy to Dr. James Schmidt, Chancellor; Dr. Warren Anderson, Vice Chancellor, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Student Affairs; LaRue Pierce, Dean of Students; Dr. Patricia Klein, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Dang Yang, Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Chris Jorgenson, Director, Gender and Sexuality Resource Center; Teresa O’Halloran, Director, Affirmative Action; Albert Colom, Former Vice Chancellor of Recruitment and Retainment Kristin Schumacher, Director, University Centers, Evan Weiher, University Senate, Vicky Thomas, Director, Services for Students with Disabilities, Kim Wellnitz, Co-Chair, Commission on the Status of Women, Rose-Marie Avin, Co-Chair, Commission on the Status of Women; Kelly Holzer, Staff Council; Miranda Ricci, Student Body President, UW Eau Claire - Barron County; Raymond Cross, President, UW-System;

SUBMITTED BY:
Jackie Buttafuoco, Off-Camps Student Senator