

Summary of Meeting with Dean Keller

Dusty Harrington Case, October 2025

From: Dean Patricia Keller

To: Office of Academic Affairs – Faculty File (Harrington, D.)

Subject: Summary of Meeting with Department Chair and Dr. Harrington

I met with Dr. Martin Ellsworth, Chair of the Department of Social Sciences, and Dr. Dusty Harrington on October 8, 2025, to review several student concerns regarding classroom climate in Dr. Harrington's course. Multiple reports have indicated that recent class sessions have focused extensively on current political issues, particularly international conflicts, creating discomfort for some students.

Dr. Harrington was articulate but combative during the discussion. He framed the concerns as "an attempt to silence academic freedom" and stated that "free inquiry is under siege." When asked to consider how students might experience his approach, he responded in broad philosophical terms rather than reflecting on his communication choices or teaching methods.

I emphasized that while the university supports robust intellectual dialogue, it is also responsible for maintaining learning environments where all students feel respected and able to participate. Dr. Harrington maintained that he would not "censor" his views and questioned whether higher education still values independent thought.

A follow-up meeting is scheduled for October 22, following a planned classroom observation. Referral to Faculty Development for additional support in managing classroom dialogue and tone is under consideration.

Patricia Keller, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Arts and Human Sciences