

Email to a Colleague

Dusty Harrington Case, October 2025

From: Dr. Elaine Mercer
To: Dean Patricia Keller
Subject: Concern regarding Dusty Harrington
Dear Dean Keller,

I wanted to bring something to your attention. I recently received an email from Dusty Harrington asking me to review a few paragraphs of his writing. While I respect his intellect, I found both the tone and content troubling. The writing was highly inflammatory and blurred the line between academic critique and agitational rhetoric. I was uncomfortable with the intensity of his message.

What also gave me pause was his invitation to meet for coffee or a drink to discuss his draft. Dusty and I are not close colleagues, and such a request felt unusual and inappropriate given our professional relationship.

I am forwarding his email below so you can see the full text. I am not sure how best to respond to him at this point and would appreciate your guidance.

Sincerely,
Elaine Mercer

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Dusty Harrington
To: Dr. Elaine Mercer
Subject: Request for your feedback on a draft
Dear Elaine,

I have always respected your voice and the depth of your scholarship. I know that you share many of my political commitments, and I believe you will understand the urgency behind what I am trying to say.

Here are two paragraphs I have been working on for a forthcoming piece:

"The academy's refusal to confront the complicity of Western institutions in sustaining settler colonial violence is itself an act of violence. Every sanitized syllabus, every cautious department statement, every neutral gesture, amounts to collaboration. The blood of Gaza stains not only the hands of politicians but also of professors who remain silent behind the safety of tenure."

"Neutrality is no shield but a weapon wielded against the oppressed. To teach without demanding justice is to abandon scholarship's highest calling. If our words do not unsettle, if they do not provoke discomfort and rupture, then we are nothing more than scribes for power."

I would value your perspective immensely. Would you be open to grabbing coffee or perhaps a drink one evening to talk this through? I think you would help sharpen the edges of the argument.

Warmly,
Dusty