

December 14, 2015

To: Michael J. O'Brien, Dean of the College of Arts and Science
Garnett S. Stokes, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Hank Foley, Interim Chancellor
Michael A. Middleton, Interim System President
Ben Trachtenberg, Chair of Faculty Council

We, the undersigned faculty of the University of Missouri, are writing in support of our colleague Melissa Click, who is currently under fire for her actions during the protests in early November that led to the resignation of Timothy Wolfe. On November 9, the day of Wolfe's resignation, Click was part of a group of faculty, staff, and students who temporarily sought to block journalists' access to the students who had been protesting the administration's handling of racial incidents on campus. Click subsequently issued a statement apologizing for her role in the incident, saying, "I regret the language and strategies I used, and sincerely apologize to the MU campus community, and journalists at large, for my behavior, and also for the way my actions have shifted attention away from the students' campaign for justice."

However, this did not end the controversy over Click's actions. Some of the coverage has focused on the issues raised by the tension between the rights of the press and those of the protesters, and we welcome discussion of these issues, believing that fostering such discussion is one of the roles of a public research university such as the University of Missouri. However, much of the commentary in the press and on social media has gone beyond legitimate debate to ad hominem attacks on, and harassment of, Click personally, and has even included calls for her dismissal from the University. In many cases, we believe, this commentary has been driven by outside groups with agendas external to that of the University.

We wish to state in no uncertain terms our support for Click as a member of the University of Missouri faculty who has earned her position through an outstanding record of teaching and research. We believe that her actions on November 9 constitute at most a regrettable mistake, one that came, moreover, at the end of several weeks during which Click served alongside other faculty and staff as an ally to students who were protesting what they saw as their exclusion from and isolation at the University.

We believe that Click has been wronged in the media by those who have attacked her personally and have called for her dismissal. We affirm our support of her as a colleague, a teacher, and a scholar, and we call upon the University to defend her first amendment rights of protest and her freedom to act as a private citizen.

Signed,

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Demetrio Anzaldo, Department of Romance Languages & Literatures
Alik Barnstone, Department of English
Cheryl Black, Department of Theater

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Wayne Brekhus, Department of Sociology
Richard J. Callahan, Jr., Department of Religious Studies
Nicole Campione-Barr, Department of Psychological Sciences
Heather Carver, Department of Theater
Elizabeth Chang, Department of English
Nancy Cheak-Zamora, Department of Health Sciences
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