

8/29/2022 Response to protest supporting queer students

EMU community,

Campus leaders are aware there is a gentleman protesting along Park Road in response to EMU support with members of the LGBTQ+ community. The protest is occurring on the public sidewalk of our campus.

We realize this surfaces an array of emotions amongst our community members. Living in a democracy means that we respect the right of others to peacefully protest, even those who have values and beliefs that contradict ours.

We stand in solidarity with all of our LGBTQ+ community. This is what we strive for at EMU: to be in community with each other, embrace difference, respect others, and affirm our values of inclusivity.

If the protester verbally or physically engages in behavior that disrupts your safe movement around campus, call campus safety at 540-432-4911.

Jackie Font-Guzmán, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Shannon Dycus, Dean of Students

8/29/2022 Subsequent email:

Subject: Solidarity and compassion

Students, your counterprotest responses today embodied solidarity, courage and respect for one another. In simple and hard ways, you showed compassion towards the protestor. You confronted hatred with love and non-violence.

We value and acknowledge how much of an effort this was for some of you. As campus leaders, we recognize our responsibility to create brave spaces for everyone on campus and are committed to living into these priorities.

Thank you for being witnesses of the values that we hold together. The Christian faith we are rooted in reminds us that love guides our responses to one another, not judgment or harm.

It is likely that his presence will continue into the coming days. As our semester formally begins tomorrow, we want to encourage your attention toward classes and engage one another across campus activities. Here are some ways we can continue through the week in the same spirit of today, strategically and sustainably:

- Check in with your peers who are members of the LGBTQ+ community, providing support to walk to class or meals together. Listening and presence with one another is care.

- Care for your own energy and capacity. Remind yourself of permission to completely disengage this presence - finding other driving or walking paths around campus.
- As the protestor remains, reducing our collective attention lessens any power in his presence.
- Ground yourself in the commitment you have to your own learning and growth. Your EMU education will strengthen your skills as a leader for lifelong response to injustice.

Campus Safety, 540-432-4911, will continue to be vigilant and offer communication if our response practices need to change.

Jackie Font-Guzmán, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Shannon Dycus, Dean of Students