Notes from meeting with Ana Mari Cauce

24 February 2017 (Friday), Gerberding 301

**Attendance**: Dan Jacoby (UW Bothell IAS faculty, AAUP president), Lucy Jarosz (Arts and Sciences faculty, AAUP member), Amy Hagopian (Public Health faculty, AAUP secretary), Ana Mari Cauce (UW President), Norm Arkans (UW Associate VP for media relations and communications)

The meeting was called in response to a letter written by the AAUP board to Dr. Cauce regarding the November 15th assault on a Muslim student, Nasro Hasan. The AAUP expressed concern that the UW Police Department made no timely report of the assault, nor did it include the assault as a hate crime in its Clery report.

President Cauce explained some of the details of the case. She cited the delay between the incident and the calling of police, and the further delay in the diagnosis of a concussion as inhibiting the conclusions that the incident necessitated reporting as an ongoing threat.

The UWPD elected to make no campus-wide alert (“timely warning” under the Clery Act), nor did they classify it as a hate crime. The Clery Act requires campuses to report “listed crimes” (including sexual assault, domestic violence, aggravated assaults, burglaries, car theft, hate crimes, and more). Hate crimes can include theft, simple assault, intimidation, destruction, damage or vandalism of property and other crimes regarding bodily injury when the victim was selected based on gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability or religion. President Cauce noted that the FBI also elected not to classify this incident as a hate crime.

Lucy Jarosz noted the growing faculty anxiety and unease in the current political climate. It was unfortunate faculty only became aware of the Nov. 15 assault through a Seattle Times report, rather from our own administration. Jacoby noted the handling of this event appears incorrect in retrospect. President Cauce said she said it was a close call, but defensible. Now that increasing hate crimes and assaults on minorities and immigrants are being reported, Dr. Cauce believes it would be better to report borderline events

Dan Jacoby noted people on campus aren’t sure they can trust the police, and the failure to classify this incident as a hate crime, or make a timely report, doesn’t help. Are there things we can do to be sure people can call for assistance and know they’ll be treated well? Jarosz asked whether the police website include a pro-active message of encouragement to report hate crimes in this climate and also list some of relevant workshops that UWPD had undertaken given recent events. We were told that the UWPD has conducted a workshop on hate crimes and racism.

How can we better position our mechanisms to be more responsive and prepared to help? Amy Hagopian suggested the UW join the national Clery Center. <http://clerycenter.org/>

We were particularly concerned that the UW develop support and guidance policies for faculty and students who are attacked or threatened. Jacoby suggested faculty and students need to know the circumstances in which they can expect support and the types of support available. For example, what is campus policy regarding the ability to stop unwanted recordings and videos. Likewise, are there supports for those who have been doxxed experienced malicious internet publication of information about them). He suggested that these are areas of AAUP concern and that our organization would be willing to work with the administration on this;

Jarosz further noted notes that UW SafeCampus is currently severely understaffed, that Hall Health has insufficient staffing to meet increased student demand for mental health counseling in the current campus climate of fear and anxiety. President Cauce said in the short term the Safe Campus team and Hall Health counseling staff have been authorized to increase their staffing, and Student Life has sponsored stress management workshops.

Additionally, the UW has developed a “Bias Response Tool,” https://report.bias.washington.edu/ [Note: A “Bias Incident Advisory Committee” has been established to collect information and advise the vice president for Student Life (Denzil Suite) and the vice president for Minority Affairs and Diversity (Rickey Hall) on reports of bias-related incidents that may impact the University of Washington community. Website says: “Barring unexpected circumstance, reports received through the [Bias Incident Report Form](https://report.bias.washington.edu/submit) will be reviewed by a member of the committee within 2-4 business days.”]

Hagopian raised the question whether “hate posters” can be removed, and by whom. The technicality is that they can be taken down if they are “defacing” or “unapproved.” Posting hate messages can carry high penalties. The President stated her preference is for people to call the police to remove objectionable posters as there have been instances where poster removers were photographed and later were subject to harassment. All agreed the police quotes on recent objectionable posters were unfortunate (KOMO News [quote](http://komonews.com/news/local/neo-nazi-posters-found-on-university-of-washington-campus) by Maj. Steve Rittereiser: “Obviously, if you find it offensive you'll want to stay away from that.”) More police are patrolling on bikes to see if they can observe these Nazi poster putter uppers. Jarosz noted in her department someone had accessed the networked printer and printed out hostile posters.

The President met with the College Republicans. She has also scheduled a Shabbat dinner with Jewish students, and plans a dinner with Muslim students as well. Jarosz concurred that we should go the extra mile for Muslim, Jewish and students of color.

What can we do to support people who have been doxxed (had their identities revealed and besmirched on the internet)? We expressed particular concern for graduate students, like Alan Michael Weatherford who have been doxxed or slandered online. The President was not optimistic there was much to be done. Following up on a suggestion by Diane Morrison, we queried whether Doctoral Program Officers could be called upon to help clear prospective employee reputations. President Cauce indicated that some things along these lines are being done. She did say efforts were made to clean up the “Rate my Professor.com” site for Mr. Weatherford. (Indeed, a review of his page there today showed only positive reviews.)

Conclusions:

1. We are pleased that increased resources are being made available to support students who are stressed or who become victims in this newly hostile political climate towards immigrants, Jews, Muslims and people of color.
2. We are pleased that President Cauce indicates that an incident like that of November 15 (the Muslim student assault) would be handled differently in the future; it would receive a timely report.
3. We agreed the UW needs to get out in front of the events of the day. Police need to be viewed as allies in the defense against assault and hate, and the UW offices need to provide more support to our vulnerable students, staff and faculty. Police could start with better messaging, as well as making different choices. Administration messages need to be more proactive in advising where and when support can be provided and in defining boundary lines for permissible behaviors regarding speech. Ana Mari noted Jerry Baldasty was about to distribute such a message. Faculty also need more guidance about what can be said and what can’t be said in classrooms (which are treated differently than invited speakers). We made clear that AAUP is willing to partner in efforts that support and protect faculty and students in what appears to be an increasingly hostile climate.

**Note**: Campus Republicans announce they have weekly meetings on Wednesday at 6:00PM in Savery Hall, Room 136.

**Appendix:**

Here’s the letter we sent to Dr. Cauce that prompted the meeting:

Dear President Cauce,

Thanks you for your AAUP comment on November 29 in which you invited a small group of faculty to discuss the criteria for not reporting the November 15th assault on a Muslim student, Nasro Hasan while she was on the Seattle campus. We understand that you found there were circumstances that made timely notification of this event to the campus community unnecessary. Instead, as you know, students, faculty and staff learned of the assault through social media or the *Seattle Times* coverage that appeared more than ten days later on November 26th and 28th. We would like to take you up on your offer to discuss the reasons that this case was found not to meet the standard for reporting under the Clery Act. We would like to meet with you either before or at our next AAUP board meeting on Feb 1 at 3:30.

In response to concerns from faculty and organizations about the lack of notification, both your office and campus police suggested it had “not risen to the level” required to trigger a warning under the Clery Act. This is a difficult decision to understand as the facts of the case reported by the *Times*, appear unambiguously to meet the criteria for a classification of aggravated assault, as described in *The Handbook for Campus Safety and Security Reporting 2016 Edition*. This classification depends on the type of weapon (or object used as a weapon), the seriousness of the injury, and (or) the intent of the assailant to cause serious injury. This attack to the victim’s face with a bottle, reportedly resulted in significant bruising and a concussion and therefore appears readily to meet the threshold for a determination of aggravated assault on all three counts. We note that the determination of aggravated assault under the Clery Act is *separate from* the specific charge as determined by the local police jurisdiction.[[1]](#footnote-1) When an aggravated assault *under the Clery Act definition* is reported to campus police, our understanding is that event triggers a requirement to notify the campus community (*Handbook,* 6-12). In this framework, Maj. Steve Rittereiser’s assertion, quoted in the December 7th issue of *Real Change*, that the community wasn’t notified because the bottle hadn’t been broken before it was hurled at Hassan appears to be an irrelevant evasion on the basis of a technicality. (the *Campus Safety* *Handbook* does not at any point suggest that blood must be drawn to warrant a determination of aggravated assault. It does, however, dictate that assaults should be reported when the victim requires medical attention as in this case where Hassan was taken to Highline Medical Center for diagnosis of her concussion).

The purpose of Clery Act-mandated notifications is to aid in prevention of similar crimes by alerting people to risk and enabling them to protect themselves. Although this appears, thankfully, to have been an isolated incident, there was no way of knowing at the time of the assault that the perpetrator would not pursue similar violence against other targets, as he had fled the scene and was not apprehended.

The issue of hate crimes is a separate matter, but one that is obviously connected to our concerns. Major Rittereiser is certainly correct in asserting to the *Seattle Times* that there is insufficient evidence of the perpetrator’s intent to make any positive determination that the assault against this Muslim woman was a hate crime. But the *possibility* that the victim was targeted for wearing a hijab would seem to constitute a clear and present risk to other Muslim women on campus of which they should have been apprised. Had there been a timely notification that a victim wearing was Hajib assaulted with a bottle, that would have conveyed the essential message necessary to put potential victims on guard.

We know these concerns have already been raised by the Washington state chapter of the Council on American-Islamic relations, among others. As elected members of the UW AAUP Executive Board, we believe that academic freedom is imperiled if and when any university employees or students feel unable to move freely and safely on campus. In this context, it seems vital that there be absolute transparency in the handling of any danger or *potential* danger to members of the university community, and most especially those placed at risk in the current political climate of racism and xenophobia.

We understand that there is always, inevitably, some component of judgment in determining when timely warnings will be issued. We suspect you share AAUP’s concern that in the present social and political context even any *perception* that the safety of a vulnerable population is not the primary and overriding consideration sends a damaging message. Again we appreciate the opportunity you have offered to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

THE UW AAUP EB

1. “Be aware that assault cases might be categorized as assault and battery, disorderly conduct, domestic violence or simple assault *by some local jurisdictions*, even though a knife,

gun or other weapon was used in the incident. These *should be classified as*

*Aggravated Assault for Clery Act reporting purposes.*” (Handbook, 3-11, our emphasis). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)