

Open letter to members of the St. Olaf Community from President David Anderson

As I read Ellen Ogihara's resignation letter, I was disappointed to learn of the disturbing descriptions she provided about how she has been treated by students and colleagues during her time at St. Olaf.

St. Olaf strives to be a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and anti-racist institution. We have [clear policies](#) prohibiting discriminatory or racist conduct. In order for those policies to work, we must make sure that everyone is given the knowledge, understanding, and tools to comply with those policies. I hope that most members of our community were able to participate in the campus-wide [anti-racism training](#) for that purpose.

We have a clear method for reporting, investigating, and sanctioning behavior that violates these policies. Our [bias incident reporting system](#) works to swiftly address reported incidents of bias, harassment, or hate crimes. This reporting system is in place for everyone on campus, and I encourage all students, faculty, and staff to submit incidents so that we can fully investigate each one.

Unfortunately, the concerns outlined in this letter were not submitted through the bias incident reporting process. I wish they had been, so that the college could have investigated the report and responded appropriately at the time. However, we are still investigating what Ellen has shared, and we will act swiftly and appropriately as warranted. Every experience that we know about creates an opportunity for us to learn how to improve as an organization.

[Work is underway on several fronts](#) to create a college where everyone — students, faculty, and staff — feels valued and can do their best work to flourish personally and professionally.

We continue to hear from members of our community about experiences that illustrate that our work is not done. This is not an easy task. Each member of the campus community will need to commit to and engage with this process in order to realize real, lasting change.

Systematic and cultural change takes time. There is no easy fix, but we're committed to doing it right.