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February 16, 2011

Timothy J. Swickard Esq.
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Dear Mr. Swickard:

Chancellor Katehi is traveling today and asked that I respond on her behalf to your letter of February 16, 2011. Thank you for bringing to our attention your concern about how the following information appearing on the website of the UC Davis Office of Campus Community Relations could be misinterpreted:

Religious/Spiritual Discrimination - The loss of power and privilege to those who do not practice the dominant culture's religion. In the United States, this is institutionalized oppressions toward those who are not Christian.

I see your point and share your concern. This web page (<http://occr.ucdavis.edu/poc/glossary.html>) has been taken down to permit further review of the terms used there and their continuing utility. This glossary term creates the potential for misinterpretation of the University's view towards religious discrimination. For this reason it is not in keeping with the aspirations of the campus community or our Principles of Community. A cornerstone of life at UC Davis, the principles affirm our commitment to being a learning environment that values diversity and one characterized by understanding and acceptance of all people. The principles uphold respect for personal dignity, affirm the right of freedom of expression within the highest standards of civility and decency, and stand against all manifestations of discrimination.

If the glossary returns, this definition will be appropriately revised. To be clear, no University of California policy, or UC Davis policy or procedure, addressing religious discrimination contains or references this definition of religious discrimination. To my knowledge, the information you have cited has never been relied upon by the University in addressing any allegation of religious discrimination. The information you have cited appeared in a "Glossary" of 77 terms related to community, diversity and identity, intended to educate our campus community on these issues. The preface to the Glossary indicates that it does not represent University policy". This glossary is not an exhaustive or definitive collection of definitions. Rather, it draws from academic sources used by other universities as a starting point to understand terms related to community, diversity and identity."

The Principles of Community are not University policy, but they are an aspiration to each member of our campus to strive to build a true community of spirit and purpose based upon mutual respect and caring.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,

Rahim Reed
Associate Executive Vice Chancellor
Office of Campus Community Relations
University of California Davis
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