

July 13, 2001  
22 Tammuz, 5761

Dr. Roy Saigo  
President  
St. Cloud State University  
720 - 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
St. Cloud, MN 56301-4498

Dear Dr. Saigo:

Attached is the final report of the environmental scan conducted by JCRC at the request of St. Cloud State University. As you know, the interview protocol was drafted and the interviews and data analysis were conducted by the Center for Evaluation Research.

The scan confirms and reinforces our previous understanding of the climate towards Jewish faculty, staff and students at SCSU: there is a strong perception of anti-Semitism on campus. Jewish and non-Jewish faculty members and students perceive a consistent and prevailing sense of discrimination and fear of reprisal. Many Jewish respondents feel threatened, ill at ease and in some instances unsafe.

There is a nearly universal perception that regulations are not being followed and that due process is hopelessly compromised. Current procedures for addressing and resolving these problems are seen as completely ineffectual. Existing processes are perceived as time-consuming, cumbersome, closed, unresponsive, often ignored, and even hostile.

In particular, these problems seem to occur disproportionately in the College of Social Sciences and in the History Department.

Based on these findings, we recommend that –

- Revise grievance procedures  
Procedures for handling discrimination complaints and other related grievances must be totally revised. A new, permanent office should be established to review and clarify existing anti-discrimination policies and procedures; promptly and thoroughly investigate all discrimination complaints; recommend steps to enforce anti-discrimination policies; and provide support for minority faculty and students. In addition, a completely independent ombudsperson should be appointed.
- Regain trust and credibility  
Establish the credibility of these new procedures by publication of this letter and recommendations along with the attached report. Consistent with – but not hiding behind -- existing data privacy statutes, past incidents should be addressed candidly and resolved publicly.

- Investigate and hold accountable  
Allegations of anti-Semitism, discrimination and retaliation in the College of Social Sciences, the History Department and elsewhere must be thoroughly investigated and problems identified. Individuals must be held accountable, and appropriate actions taken to discipline or remove them from positions of authority if found responsible for improper, negligent or wrongful conduct.
- Educate and sensitize  
Issues relating to insensitivity can and should be addressed immediately. For instance, Jewish and other religious or cultural holidays and celebrations should be considered when the academic or other school-related calendars are prepared, and winter holiday events should meaningfully reflect the diversity that exists on campus. Provide information to assist faculty, staff and administrators to enable them to better understand various religious, ethnic and cultural events and more sensitively handle scheduling or other conflicts.

Finally, we are concerned that even as this scan is being written and the EEOC is investigating, even in the face of all of the media attention, SCSU appears to be passive about new allegations of misconduct or mistreatment. This creates the perception that the situation on campus is deteriorating and it undermines all efforts to restore confidence in the institution and its processes.

This past spring, a female faculty member filed an EEOC complaint and there have been allegations that a recommendation to terminate (not retain) her was an act of retaliation by her superiors. In addition, according to a recent press report, the Minnesota Attorney General's office intervened to ensure that a student, who has spoken out about the situation on campus, receive a grade for a class. That student has since announced her intention to join the existing complaints filed against SCSU.

Without addressing the merits of pending complaints filed with federal authorities, the appearance of retaliatory action requires immediate and forthright leadership and action.

JCRC is ready, willing and able to assist SCSU in eliminating bias and promoting diversity on campus. We have publicly commended the SCSU request for an EEOC investigation. We appreciate the confidence you have shown in our agency, and we offer our continued cooperation in implementing the recommendations we have proposed.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Silberfarb  
Executive Director