



November 23, 2013

The Winona State University *Women's and Gender Studies Program* stands with professor Shannon Gibney and the many students, faculty, and staff who need a campus and a larger MnSCU system that seeks to dismantle systemic racism, not one that models it. No student should have to learn in an academic environment where systemic racism goes unquestioned and unchallenged by administrators, or where instructors are undermined by their administrators for their efforts to address some of the most complex, difficult problems in our society.

According to Chancellor Rosenstone's, "Charting the Future for a Prosperous Minnesota," as a system, "we serve more students of color – nearly 62,000 – and more low-income students – nearly 103,000 – than all of the other higher education providers in Minnesota combined. The diversity of our student body is one of our greatest assets and provides all students with the real life experiences of learning side-by-side with students who mirror the global society we aim to prepare them for."

MCTC's egregious treatment of Professor Gibney thwarts efforts to dismantle systemic racism and instead signifies to students and faculty nationwide that:

1. White male students' comforts are at the center of the MCTC and MnSCU system's educational priorities, and as such, *they* will dictate the curriculum.
2. Current standards of education are no longer based in methodologically sound data, which strongly supports the historical and contemporary existence of structural inequality based in racism, sexism, and classism.
3. Female faculty of color's authority can be undermined and violated in the classroom and it will be condoned and reified by institutional responses; thereby, upholding structural inequality in higher education (a painful reminder and example of the very lesson that Professor Gibney is being chastised for).
4. MCTC and MnSCU offer sites for further investigation of the rampant institutional inequality in higher education. Not to mention, in such a timely manner, as the 2012 release of *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* so cogently offers the necessary data to point to the REAL problem at MCTC and our educational systems nationwide:

"...the percentage of full-time faculty positions held by people of color increased only slightly—from 13 percent in 1997 to 17 percent in 2007 (Ryu 2010). Women of color, in particular, continue to be under-represented. In

2007, women of color held only 7.5 percent of full-time faculty positions. Moreover, the percentage of women of color declined steadily with rising academic rank. Women of color comprised 10.4 percent of instructors and lecturers, 9.9 percent of assistant professors, 6.6 percent of associate professors, and only 3.4 percent of full professors (Ryu 2010). In addition to being concentrated in the lower academic ranks, women of color are also overrepresented in less prestigious academic institutions, such as community colleges (Jayakumar et al. 2009; National Center for Education Statistics 2009)" (Angela P. Harris and Carmen Gonzalez "Introduction," 2-3).

As Faculty in the MnSCU system, we call on Chancellor Rosenstone to stand by his commitments to diversity and hold campus administrators accountable for providing a safe learning environment for students of color as well as for white students; for providing safe and respectful working conditions for all faculty and staff; and for protecting the academic freedom of all faculty on MnSCU campuses.

In solidarity with Professor Gibney and more democratic educational standards,
Winona State University Women's and Gender Studies Program