

**Subject:** Re: Invitation to provided feedback on a document to address abrasive conduct in the work place.  
**Date:** Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 12:35:39 PM Mountain Standard Time  
**From:** Dean Saitta  
**To:** Corinne Lengsfeld, Jean McAllister, Deb Ortega, Debra Mixon Mitchell, Roberto Corrada, Claude d'Estree, David White  
**CC:** Therese Mashak, Theresa Hernandez, Allison Friederichs, Jean F. East, Ken Pinnock, McIntosh, Daniel, Scott Leutenegger

Hi all—

Thanks, Corinne, for the opportunity to weigh in on the draft document. Here are some thoughts:

-Paragraph 3, first page: I think any mention of the "central functions" of an academic community should include participation in shared governance of the institution. Our policies and pronouncements always mention teaching and research. They almost never mention shared governance. I think that abrasive conduct (and more general morale problems) can easily stem from the frustrations a community member feels when they are disenfranchised or otherwise excluded from meaningful participation in shared governance. Like all institutions DU has structures and policies regarding governance that could be changed, I think, to eliminate the conditions that give rise to low morale and abrasive conduct.

-in the next sentence of that paragraph, I suggest saying that we not only advocate for a work environment characterized by free expression, but also one that "guarantees freedom from retaliation, reprisal, or marginalization for responsibly exercised speech or expression", or something like that. We currently lack such guarantees, but I'm also not naïve enough to think that we could ever fully get them. Still, it's a nice ideal. It seems like the more one is liberated to speak freely (e.g., via accumulated experience, accomplishment, promotion, etc.), the more likely it is that they will be marginalized and even punished for speech or expression that superiors can far too easily deem "disrespectful" or "disruptive" to the functioning of the university.

-In the "Inclusivity" section I would refer to University "faculty and staff" rather than "employees". I believe the "declining professional conduct" that CAOs worry about almost certainly has something to do with the spread of business models (often enabled by the CAOs themselves) that de-professionalize faculty work, erode traditions of shared governance, and transform faculty into "employees" in the most pedestrian meaning of the word.

-I'm concerned that the document doesn't fully appreciate that "language" is rooted in class, culture, and heritage, and also functions as an important aspect of the identities that we claim to value (e.g., points 2 and 11 on the second page's numbered list). How much self-policing are speakers expected to do for fear of offending someone??

-Apropos #10 on that same list: community members should not only appreciate that alternative views may have merit, but that their own preferred viewpoint may have limitations.

-I think that there are some recommended standards on the numbered list (e.g., #16) that go a bit too far given the nature of an academic community. I don't think we want to regulate behavior to

the point that all productive tension drains away. This would also contradict the Chancellor's public call for more "clamor" in our campus dialogues.

-I do like #15. Each of us could probably stand to grow a thicker skin.

Cheers,  
Dean

Dean J. Saitta  
Professor and Chair, Department of Anthropology  
University of Denver  
Sturm Hall 146-S  
2000 East Asbury Street  
Denver, CO 80208  
Phone: 303-871-2680  
Blogs: [Intercultural Urbanism](#), [Planetizen](#)

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**From:** Corinne Lengsfeld <[Corinne.Lengsfeld@du.edu](mailto:Corinne.Lengsfeld@du.edu)>  
**Date:** Monday, February 8, 2016 at 11:59 AM  
**To:** Dean Saitta <[Dean.Saitta@du.edu](mailto:Dean.Saitta@du.edu)>, Jean McAllister <[Jean.McAllister@du.edu](mailto:Jean.McAllister@du.edu)>, Deb Ortega <[Debra.Ortega@du.edu](mailto:Debra.Ortega@du.edu)>, Debra Mixon Mitchell <[Debra.Mixon@du.edu](mailto:Debra.Mixon@du.edu)>, Roberto Corrada <[rcorrada@law.du.edu](mailto:rcorrada@law.du.edu)>, Claude d'Estree <[Claude.dEstree@du.edu](mailto:Claude.dEstree@du.edu)>, David White <[david.white@du.edu](mailto:david.white@du.edu)>  
**Cc:** Therese Mashak <[Therese.Mashak@du.edu](mailto:Therese.Mashak@du.edu)>, Theresa Hernandez <[theresa.hernandez@du.edu](mailto:theresa.hernandez@du.edu)>, Allison Friederichs <[Allison.Friederichs@du.edu](mailto:Allison.Friederichs@du.edu)>, "Jean F. East" <[Jean.East@du.edu](mailto:Jean.East@du.edu)>, Ken Pinnock <[Ken.Pinnock@du.edu](mailto:Ken.Pinnock@du.edu)>, "McIntosh, Daniel" <[dmcintosh@psy.du.edu](mailto:dmcintosh@psy.du.edu)>, Scott Leutenegger <[Scott.Leutenegger@du.edu](mailto:Scott.Leutenegger@du.edu)>  
**Subject:** Invitation to provided feedback on a document to address abrasive conduct in the work place.

I would like to extend you an invitation, from the Abrasive Conduct Taskforce, to provide feedback on the outcomes of our efforts this fall. The Provost in conjunction with Vice Chancellor Amy King convened this taskforce as a result of the Provost Conference last year. Our group was tasked with providing a document designed to help the campus climate in terms of abrasive conduct in the workplace. After a few months of collecting internal and external information the group developed the attached document.

From the beginning an essential element of our process was to gain input from a diverse set on individuals on the campus beyond the traditional of Faculty Senate, Deans Council and Staff Advisory Committee. We are hoping you would read the attached document and join us for a discussion this Friday (Feb 12) at 2:30pm in Anderson Academic Commons Room 152 for a 1 hour face to face feedback session. We would also appreciate your input on how to take this forward into the campus community to affect change.

If you cannot attend Friday due to a conflict, but would like to provide us written feedback please feel free to do so.

If you need further information please do not hesitate to reach out to me or one of the other members of this taskforce whom are copied on this email. Our invitation is warmly extended and we hope you will help us improve our approach.

Best regards,  
Corinne

Corinne Lengsfeld, PhD

Associate Provost for Research  
University of Denver  
Mary Reed Building, room 312  
2199 S. University Blvd  
Denver, Colorado 80208  
303-871-4843 (direct line)  
[Corinne.Lengsfeld@du.edu](mailto:Corinne.Lengsfeld@du.edu)  
[www.du.edu/research-scholarship](http://www.du.edu/research-scholarship)

Professor  
Mechanical and Materials Engineering  
[www.du.edu/secs/mme/facultyandstaff/corinne.html](http://www.du.edu/secs/mme/facultyandstaff/corinne.html)