

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

October 27, 2016

Dear Spartan community:

On different occasions I have expressed concern about the impact of words or conduct that debase our community and call our core values into question. A deeply offensive recent social media post that has gained national attention is a reminder of the significant and broad impact these kind of actions can have.

Today the damage inflicted by degrading images and words posted on social media becomes irreparable very quickly. We can condemn, and regret, but hurt and anger can't be erased by simply deleting a post.

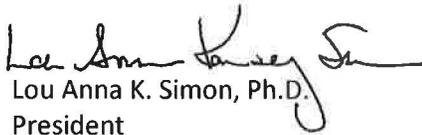
This is an anxious time for Spartans, indeed all Americans: a bitter national election; disturbing injustices and the outrage they provoke; wanton violence; and all of it brought to us immediately and unfiltered though social and traditional media.

It's an unsettling mix, and this weekend we host what is always an emotional football contest against a longtime rival, where excessive drinking and other risky behavior can turn exuberance into embarrassment or tragedy. And finally, we have Halloween approaching where attempts to be clever too easily can transform into demeaning characterization of people or groups.

So I'm appealing to Spartans simply to pause and reflect. This weekend is a time for celebration and fun. Let's take care to keep it that way for everyone. Midterms might be over but the stress of coursework and other pressures, combined with a pervasive social anxiety and converging events all tend to influence our better judgment. There always is a reckoning, and life is too short to live it with regret.

Make the effort to recognize inconsiderate or reckless behavior in yourself and others, and take responsibility for it. The work of building the sort of community we would like to see in the world doesn't take a holiday. Part of joining the Spartan community is becoming part of something bigger than yourself, a network with enormous power for positive impact. Our campus must be one where individuals are respected and core values are defended.

Sincerely,


Lou Anna K. Simon, Ph.D.
President



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