

Email message send to President Gast
December 22, 2008

Alice,

As you know, some on campus have expressed concern over proposed plans to reduce Lehigh's current level of grounds care and custodial support as part of the way we prepare for the recession in which we now find ourselves. Members of the CEC have also received messages and had conversations with concerned Lehigh community members who view this as equivalent to unilaterally laying off or reducing the salaries of our lowest paid employees, most of whom are underrepresented minorities.

The members of the CEC know that there are many variables that must be taken into consideration in making these difficult decisions. However, we also echo the sentiments expressed by Judy Lasker that "If we are indeed a community as a university, and part of a larger community in the Lehigh Valley, then how we respond to severe financial strains as a community and in an equitable way is a very important statement about our values." We know you share this concern as well.

Therefore, as the budgetary process proceeds, the CEC recommends that, once the positions of current faculty and staff have been secured, the costs associated with the outsourced members of our community also be considered in spirit of supporting "our greatest institutional asset, Lehigh's faculty and staff." To the extent that is not possible, we recommend that the University be sensitive in its communications about the lives that will be affected by making cuts in those areas.

Thank you for considering,

The Council for Equity and Community