

To the FSU Community,

Yesterday's demonstration on campus was unsettling for many of our faculty, staff and students.

First, and most importantly, our campus police ensured that the physical safety of the campus community was the number one priority at all times. Additionally, members of our Student Counseling Center, Student Affairs team and many other faculty and staff were at the event or on standby during this entire process. For those directly impacted, I want you to know that your mental health and well-being is always first and foremost on my mind. Thank you to our entire faculty and staff for being available to support our students.

Next, many of these demonstrators do not share our campus values regarding civil discourse and respect for alternative views. As a public university, our value statements and expectations of campus behavior must give way to the First Amendment which recognizes verbal behaviors, up to and including hate speech, that goes far beyond our campus values.

The majority of these groups who visit are professional demonstrators who come to campus with the intent of creating discomfort for our campus community members. Spectators at these demonstrations can choose to engage verbally with these individuals, realizing this is their goal, or they can choose to ignore them and avoid any interactions with them altogether.

Days like yesterday are always hard and emotionally difficult. I am proud of the behavior of our campus community. While I wish we could promise that we will not have similar emotionally charged days in the future, we fully expect there will be more. Please be assured that FSU has policies and procedures in place to keep the campus physically safe while abiding by the tenets of the First Amendment.

We encourage the entire campus to prioritize mental and physical health, support one another and look for ways to more fully understand the issues that we confront.

Thank you.

Ron