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*Educating for Lives of
Thoughtful Inquiry, Service,
Leadership and Care*

Dear Deans, Department Chairs, Directors of PLU Offices,

We are writing this letter because we are asking you to support the student participation in the Veteran's Day Celebration. This process has been supported by staff and faculty in the past and we want to continue to work together as this is an issue that concerns the PLU community as a whole. Students are encouraged to have conversations with their professors and employers before taking part in the Veteran's Day Celebration. We ask that you also consider participating in these conversations and listening to your students as they both hear the call to action and take steps to support the entire PLU veteran community.

Since 2008, there has been a push from the student body to have a recognized block of time in the class schedule that would allow students, staff, and faculty to collectively acknowledge the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families on Veteran's Day. PLU, organized by the Administrative/Staff Council, has traditionally hosted a Veteran's Day Celebration. However, it always occurs during class time which prevents many of those who would wish to participate from doing so. Recently, there have been numerous student-led petitions, a resolution from the Residence Hall Congress, and a resolution from ASPLU calling for an opportunity to recognize Veteran's Day without experiencing conflicts with class schedules. These petitions have resulted in hundreds of signatures from across the PLU community. And yet, in the face of this request not being met time and time again, the voice of the student body is still asking to be heard.

This year, ASPLU is working with the Veteran Student's Association and will be encouraging students to actively participate in the Veteran's Day Celebration, even if it results in their absence from class. PLU has continued to make a substantial commitment to student veterans and their families through programs such as the Yellow Ribbon Campaign and Green to Gold. Along with these programs, we recognize that many faculty and staff have either served or have family ties to the military. And, while ASPLU recognizes the importance of class and work attendance, we believe that this arrangement should extend beyond the commitment to provide education to veterans in order to better support these members of the campus community. Veterans of all types and their family members provide a unique perspective to the increasingly diverse population at PLU. Along with these programs, which have been established in order to bring veterans to our campus, we are actively seeking ways that both ensure support and provide opportunities for collective learning. Having this time on Veteran's Day will help move PLU's commitment to one of both active contribution and visible solidarity.

We deeply appreciate your partnership in an opportunity that means so much to so many. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this course of action, please contact Alexis Ballinger, ASPLU President or Elizabeth Ginsberg, ASPLU Diversity Director. Thank you for your time and we look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

Alexis Ballinger, ASPLU President
Elizabeth Ginsberg, ASPLU Diversity Director



Re: Veteran's Day

1 message

Steven P. Starkovich <starkovich@plu.edu>

Fri, Oct 28, 2011 at 10:47 AM

To: Alexis Ballinger <ballinaj@plu.edu>, Elizabeth Ginsberg <ginsbeem@plu.edu>
Cc: Loren Anderson <anderslb@plu.edu>, Jan Lewis <lewisjp@plu.edu>, Chris Ferguson <ferguscd@plu.edu>, Laura Majovski <majovslf@plu.edu>, Eva Johnson <johnsoer@plu.edu>, Patricia Roundy <roundype@plu.edu>, Kristin Plaehn <plaehkh@plu.edu>, Tom Huelsbeck <huelsbt@plu.edu>, Sheri Tonn <tonnsj@plu.edu>, Karl Stumo <stumoka@plu.edu>, Steve Olson <olsonsj@plu.edu>, Robert Riley <rileyrk@plu.edu>, Lauralee Hagen <hagenl@plu.edu>, Gregory Brewis <brewisgw@plu.edu>, Neal Sobania <sobaninw@plu.edu>, Laurie Turner <turnerll@plu.edu>, Leslie Foley <foleylj@plu.edu>, Maxine Herbert-Hill <herberam@plu.edu>, Greg Premo <premogv@plu.edu>, Nancy Connor <connornj@plu.edu>, Dennis Sepper <sepperdg@plu.edu>, Ruth Rogers <rogersrd@plu.edu>, Mark Anderson <andersmm@plu.edu>, Erin McGinnis <mcginnem@plu.edu>, Ruth Tweeten <tweeteri@plu.edu>, Angie Hambrick <hambriaz@plu.edu>, David Kohler <kohlerdl@plu.edu>, Amanda Hawkins <hawkinab@plu.edu>, Matt Freeman <freemama@plu.edu>, Teri Phillips <phillitp@plu.edu>, Francesca Lane Rasmus <lanerafr@plu.edu>, Susan Drake <drakesm@plu.edu>, Layne Nordgren <nordgrle@plu.edu>, Jennifer Smith <smithjb@plu.edu>, Norris Peterson <petersna@plu.edu>, Laura Klein <kleinlf@plu.edu>, Lynn Hunnicutt <hunnicl@plu.edu>, David Ward <warddb@plu.edu>, Gina Hames <hamesgl@plu.edu>, Maria Chavez-Pringle <chavezml@plu.edu>, Michelle Ceynar <ceynarm@plu.edu>, Teresa Ciabattari <ciabatta@plu.edu>, JoDee Keller <kellerjg@plu.edu>, Cameron Bennett <bennetcd@plu.edu>, Spencer Ebbinga <ebbingsk@plu.edu>, Michael Bartanen <bartanmd@plu.edu>, David Robbins <robbindp@plu.edu>, Matthew Smith <smithmf@plu.edu>, Ann Auman <aumanaj@plu.edu>, Craig Fryhle <fryhlecb@plu.edu>, David Wolff <wolffda@plu.edu>, Jill Whitman <whitmaj@plu.edu>, Richard Louie <louiern@plu.edu>, Jeffrey Stuart <stuartjl@plu.edu>, James Brock <brockjl@plu.edu>, Frank Kline <klinefm@plu.edu>, Michael Hillis <hillismr@plu.edu>, Terry Miller <millertw@plu.edu>, Karen McConnell <mconnke@plu.edu>, James Albrecht <albrecjm@plu.edu>, Rona Kaufman <kaufmard@plu.edu>, Eric Nelson <nelsoned@plu.edu>, Gregory Johnson <johnsogc@plu.edu>, Marit Trelstad <trelstma@plu.edu>, Paul Manfredi <manfrepr@plu.edu>, William Teska <teskawr@plu.edu>, Callista Brown <carltosb@plu.edu>, Carmina Palerm <palermca@plu.edu>, Jennifer Jenkins <jenkinjl@plu.edu>, Lisa Marcus <marcusls@plu.edu>, Anna Leon-Guerrero <guerrey@plu.edu>, Wendelyn Shore <shorewj@plu.edu>, LeAnn Evey <eveyld@plu.edu>

Dear Alexis,

I have read and have carefully considered your letter of yesterday wherein you state that ASPLU "...will be encouraging students to actively participate in the Veterans' Day Celebration even if it results in their absence from class."

I found that sentence offensive, and I consider these proposed actions to be a show of disrespect for me, for the faculty of this university and for the process by which the academic calendar is established. Further, in an email exchange earlier in the semester, you assured me that ASPLU's actions would present no conflict with classes. I see now that your earlier statement was not true. Incredibly, you have succeeded in alienating me from your cause, which I find ironic, since I indicated to you in my earlier email that I would support an effort to amend future academic calendars to declare Veterans' Day as a school holiday. Also, I did not appreciate the "spam" nature of the emailing (although you left out the faculty chair and vice-chair), forcing me now to reply in kind. A more proper approach would have been to come through my office to do the email, as is the usual practice. I can only speculate as to why you did not do so.

The academic calendar is adopted by the faculty assembly, and class time is precious. Already, we routinely must fight off attempts to use class time for a variety of extracurricular activities (surveys, fire drills, lock down drills, more surveys). Generally, those of us in the academic division have tried our best to cooperate in these endeavors, but rarely have I seen the kind of "fiat" as what was put forth by your letter. Your proposed actions are an "end run" around current procedures for adopting the academic calendar.

Further, your actions may be placing many of your fellow students unwittingly at risk, as attendance polices in some classes may cause some students to be marked down in their grades if they skip class.

Faculty are not obligated to cancel class or excuse students for this event, though some may elect to do so.

Faculty have always worked well in trying to accommodate the various required obligations of our students. But this is not a required event, and all in all, I think that your plans, though well-intended to support our veterans, have set back the cause. More significantly, your actions have served to diminish the standing of ASPLU in the eyes of many of us in the academic administration and faculty leadership.

I see that you and I have a previously arranged meeting for next Tuesday. Hopefully at that time we can discuss how ASPLU might begin a "reclamation project" of your organization's stature in the eyes of many of us in the academic division, for that, and not the Veterans' Day event, is the more pressing problem.

With Regards,

Steve

On Thu, Oct 27, 2011 at 10:45 AM, Elizabeth Ginsberg <ginsbeem@plu.edu> wrote:

Please see the attached letter. We are asking for your support in an important upcoming event.

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Steven P. Starkovich
Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Professor of Physics
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