

August 25, 2016

President Fritz J. Erickson
Northern Michigan University
Office of the President
602 Cohodas Hall
1401 Presque Isle Ave.
Marquette, Michigan 49855

Sent via U.S. Mail and Electronic Mail (ferickso@nmu.edu)

Dear President Erickson:

The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to defending liberty, freedom of speech, due process, academic freedom, legal equality, and freedom of conscience on America's college campuses. Our website, thefire.org, will give you a greater sense of our identity -2(e)0_40 Tef9t4[d[(si)3nd1 -aise Fo1lib3ec5

of having) thoughts of self-harm that they are forbidden from communicating with other students about such thoughts.

For example, in the spring semester of 2015, NMU student Katerina Klawes was receiving counseling after being sexually assaulted in July 2014. Although she reportedly had not expressed suicidal ideations to anyone, she nonetheless received the following email from Associate Dean of Students Mary Brundage on March 25, 2015 (with emphasis added):

Dear Kat,

I received a report that others are worried about your well-being. I'd like to meet with you to discuss your options for support and see what I can do to help. . . .

Our self-destructive policy is currently under review, as stated on top of the policy, so it is important that you know a couple of thing [*sic*]. First, you will not be removed as a student for seeking help from the appropriate resources. You



administration has yet to announce an end to the practice of preventing students from speaking with their peers about self-harm. Moreover, at least one incoming NMU freshman for the 2016–2017 academic year, attending a First Year Student Orientation Session, reported that her group of orientees was told they could face negative consequences if they discussed thoughts of self-harm with other students.

We write today to express our deep concern regarding the illegality and potential harm of such a restriction on student-

Leaders in the field of suicide prevention and collegiate mental health identify peer support as

