



Should Diversity Officer Be Fired For Signing An Anti-Gay Petition?

By Maura Cullen

“Gallaudet University announced (October 30th) that it will try to make amends with its chief diversity officer, Angela McCaskill, who was placed on leave last week because she had signed a petition circulated by those campaigning against gay marriage rights in Maryland.” (Inside Higher Ed)

Initially, I had reasoned that an individual has a right to sign a petition as a citizen outside of their job. No one can dictate what politics another supports. However, there are consequences for every choice we make and I now believe that Ms. McCaskill has to live with the choice she has made.

After all, McCaskill is the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) and therefore she should have seriously considered what the ramifications might be before signing a public petition acknowledging her anti-same-sex marriage position. I am not suggesting that she cannot cast her vote against same-sex marriage. However, I am suggesting that the University consider replacing her as CDO as she has now created an unsafe and chilly climate for GLBTQ students and their allies.

As CDO, she is responsible for building and role modeling a climate that is inclusive and welcoming to all students at Gallaudet University. Imagine if a Chief Diversity Officer signed a petition that stated students with disabilities should not be granted additional resources concerning accessibility issues; or students of color should not have the same rights as white students, this conversation would look very different.

Personally, given the information available, I believe that the University should terminate her as the CDO. I realize that the University has to be careful relating to Ms. McCaskill’s rights and the lawsuit that she has already said that she will pursue. So give her a different job at the University that does not have the responsibility of creating a safe haven for all of Gallaudet students.

Read more: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/10/17/dispute-gallaudet-over-chief-diversity-officers-gay-marriage-stance#ixzz2BHsz5jKG>

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