

Dear University of Minnesota Morris community and future students,

At the Board of Regents meeting on October 13, 2022, Vice Chair and Regent Steve Sviggum asked if the Morris campus of the University of Minnesota has “become too diverse for, you know, for—for a student to attend.” He cited two friends whose children “just didn’t feel comfortable” choosing Morris for their college education.

As faculty and staff who have the honor to work at UMN Morris, we consider this what we might call in the classroom “a teaching moment.” During the media coverage that has followed this exchange, Regent Sviggum argued that no question is unreasonable or offensive to ask about university policy. On October 18, he issued an apology; we still see value in asserting our support for diversity & inclusion at Morris and walking through the erroneous premise of this question:

- It is grounded in an unstated, yet no less real, fear of racial & ethnic diversity generally and people of color specifically.
- By connecting enrollment issues to demographics, Regent Sviggum is inaccurately faulting students of color rather than addressing the well-documented marginalization and inequities these students face.
- Regent Sviggum knows that the significant Native American student community at Morris has grown in part from the [tuition waiver](#) for qualified Native students, rooted in state & federal statutes that result from the history of the campus space as a Native American boarding school. He is also aware of the University’s aim of [global competence](#) that is supported through encouraging a diverse student population.
- Who exactly is the prospective student Regent Sviggum was describing? Why would it ever be a bad thing for white students to attend college alongside BIPOC students? Indeed, the question is offensive to the many white students who understand the value of studying at a racially diverse campus.

Rather than dwelling on this moment, however, we want to emphasize the many good things that are happening around diversity at the University of Minnesota Morris. Faculty, staff, and students are involved in a variety of efforts that highlight our commitment to inclusion and make us proud to learn and work here:

- Community engagement projects at the [Center for Small Towns](#)
- An astonishing variety of [student organizations](#) that work toward a full calendar of creative and mutually supportive activities related to the diverse lives of Morris students, including events like the annual Powwow, Taste of Asia, and the Drag Show

- [Discussions](#) and [training](#) to build a more equitable and inclusive campus environment so that students feel a sense of belonging and so that while students' ideas might conflict, they themselves do not have to be in conflict
- As a Native American-Serving Nontribal Institution, the part we play in a critically needed [federal program](#); the [Native American Student Success](#) program supports students for whom higher education has not typically been welcoming or accessible
- [Equity, Diversity, & Intercultural Programs](#)—housed in the only building remaining on our nationally-registered historic campus from the era of the Indian boarding schools—which makes a home on campus for students to live as their full selves through an array of events and resources including lectures, discussions, a clothes closet, and food provisions
- The simple fact that diversity in many forms (not just race) makes Morris an exceptional learning environment—for some students, UMN Morris is the most diverse place they have encountered, while for others, this is the least diverse. (Some [oral history projects](#) housed in the UMN Morris Archives attest to how diversity adds value to our research and teaching.)
- Memorialization of the campus's fraught history through building symbolic, physical, and educational spaces for remembrance and inclusion. (One of the most visible examples is the [Nokoomis Nibii Equay](#) sculpture.)

To our students of color and other marginalized groups: we want you to know that your teachers and supporters at UMN Morris are paying attention. Although we know there is still more work needed to advance equity, we care about your wellbeing as well as your irreplaceable contributions to this community. To everyone reading this letter, including potential Morris students of the future: we hope you'll join us on the prairie for exciting opportunities to learn and grow together in what we hope will be an ever more diverse and inclusive environment.

Sincerely,

The undersigned University of Minnesota Morris staff & faculty

(If you wish to join us in signing this open letter, please fill out the brief form [here](#).)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Discipline/Unit</u>	<u>Date</u>
Dr. Emily Bruce	Associate Professor	History, German Studies, and Gender, Women, & Sexuality Studies	10/18/2022
Cristina Ortiz	Associate Professor	Anthropology	10/18/2022
Heather J. Peters, Ph.D., LP	Associate Professor	Psychology & Human Services	10/18/2022

Kevin Whalen	Associate Professor	Native American and Indigenous Studies and History	10/18/2022
Dr. Nicholas Freitag McPhee	Professor	Computer Science, Division of Science and Mathematics	10/18/2022
Jennifer Kolpacoff Deane	Chair, Division of Social Science	History	10/18/2022
Ed Brands	Associate Professor	Environmental Studies	10/18/2022
Seung-Ho Joo	Professor	Social Science Division-Political Science	10/18/2022
Dr Carrie Jepma	Assistant Professor & Secondary Education Discipline Coordinator	Secondary Education	10/18/2022
Dr Ann M DuHamel, NCTM	Associate Professor/Head of Keyboard Studies	Music	10/18/2022
Heather Waye, PhD	Associate Professor	Division of Science and Math, Biology	10/18/2022
Lu Starr	Project Coordinator	Admissions	10/18/2022
Dr. Danielle Bolland	Assistant Professor	Division of Science and Math, Biology	10/18/2022
Kathy Dingman	Police Officer	Public Safety	10/18/2022
Jon E. Anderson	Professor of Statistics	Science and Mathematics	10/18/2022
Jennifer Rothchild	Full Professor	Sociology and GWSS in Social Science Division	10/18/2022
Dr. Hunter McFall-Boegeman	Assistant Professor of Chemistry	Chemistry, Division of Science and Mathematics	10/18/2022
Alex Keil	Director of Athletic Communications	Athletics	10/18/2022
Lawrence Godwin	Classroom & Desktop Support	Information Technology	10/18/2022
J. Wesley Flinn, PhD	Associate Professor of	Division of the Humanities	10/18/2022

	Music		
Windy Roberts	Teaching Specialist	Spanish	10/18/2022
David Roberts	Professor of Mathematics	Division of Science and Mathematics	10/18/2022
Roger Rose	Assoc. Professor	Social Science/Political Science	10/18/2022
Ann Hendershott	Adjunct Professor	Secondary Education	10/18/2022
Scott Turnbull	Head Men's Soccer Coach	Athletics	10/18/2022
Dr. Elena Machkasova	Associate Professor	Computer Science, Division of Sci & Math	10/18/2022
Sheri Breen	Associate Professor	Political Science	10/19/2022
Jeri Squier	Curriculum Specialist and Faculty Support	Office of the Registrar	10/19/2022
Paul Z. Myers	Associate Professor	Biology	10/19/2022
Craig Peterson	String Instructor	Music	10/19/2022
Joshua Johnson	Assistant Professor of English	Humanities	10/19/2022
Tammy Berberi, Ph.D.	Associate Professor	French-Humanities	10/19/2022
Michelle L. Page, Ph.D.; Professor and Chair, Division of Education; Horace T. Morse Distinguished Teaching Professor of Secondary Education; John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising	Professor and Chair	Division of Education	10/19/2022
Thomas C. Turner	Professor Emeritus	Humanities	10/19/2022
Leslie R. Meek	Professor Emerita	Psychology/Division of Social Sciences	10/19/2022

Dr. Sarah McFall-Boegeman	Assistant Professor of Chemistry	Chemistry, Division of Science and Mathematics	10/19/2022
Jabari Jones	Diversity Predoctoral Teaching Fellow	Geology	10/19/2022
Sarah Beth Tiede Buchanan	Associate professor	French	10/19/2022
Elizabeth Zaske	Academic Records Specialist	Office of the Registrar	10/19/2022
Lucas Granholm	Assistant professor	Theatre Arts	10/19/2022
Hannah Amundson	Assistant director of admissions	Admissions	10/19/2022
Peter Bremer	Librarian	Briggs Library	10/19/2022
Dr. L. Mercredi Chasman	Associate Professor	Mathematics	10/19/2022
Sheila Warner	Executive Accounts Specialist	UMM Business Office	10/19/2022
Sandra Bouta-Kill	Interlibrary Loan Manager	Library	10/19/2022
Adrienne Conley	Associate Director	Office of Residential & Community Life	10/19/2022
Joseph Beaver	Assistant Professor	Anthropology and Geography	10/19/2022
Benjamin Narvaez	Associate Professor	History	10/19/2022
Pieranna Garavaso	Professor Emerita	Philosophy, Humanities	10/19/2022
April Klimek	Executive Operations and Student Services Specialist	Student Success Center	10/19/2022
Katie Jabri	Associate Director of Admissions, International and Multicultural Recruitment	Admissions	10/19/2022
Kristin Youngblom, MS	Associate Director of Institutional Research	Institutional Research	10/19/2022

Alyssa Pirinelli-Deslauriers	Assistant Professor	Chemistry	10/19/2022
Nancy Carpenter	Professor Emerita	Division of Science and Mathematics	10/19/2022
Alexander C. Grabowska	Career Counselor	Student Success Center	10/19/2022
Arden Granger	Coordinator of Special Events (Retired)	University Relations	10/19/2022
Sue Dieter	Public Relations and Communication Specialist	Office of Communication & Marketing	10/19/2022
Bibhudutta Panda	Associate Professor of Economics & Management	Economics & Management	10/19/2022
Rachel Johnson, PhD	Associate Professor	Biology	10/19/2022
Kristina N. Smith	Office Manager/Acquisitions Assistant	Rodney A. Briggs Library	10/19/2022
Mickey Jacobson	Area Coordinator & LGBTQIA2S+ Programs Coordinator	Office of Residential Life; Equity, Diversity, and Intercultural Programs	10/19/2022
Keni Zenner	Learning Assistance Coordinator	Student Success Center & TRIO Student Support Services	10/19/2022
Priyanka Basu	Assistant Professor	Art History	10/19/2022
Robyn VanEps	Dean's Assistant	Academic Affairs	10/19/2022
Jennifer Zych Herrmann	Director of Alumni Engagement	Office of Advancement	10/19/2022
Shaina Philpot	Associate Director	Native American Student Success	10/19/2022
Melissa Wroblewski	Finance Manager	Finance/Business Office	10/19/2022
Kristin Kaster Lamberty, PhD	Associate Professor	Computer Science, Division of Science and Mathematics	10/19/2022

Barbara Burke, PhD	Associate Professor	Communication, Media & Rhetoric	10/19/2022
Ann Williams	Retired B& G	Facilities Management	10/19/2022
Ana Miller	Voice instructor	Music	10/19/2022
Nadezhda Sotirova	Associate Professor	Communication, Media, and Rhetoric	10/19/2022
Angela Vetsch	Director/Librarian	Briggs Library	10/19/2022
Adam W. Coon	Associate Professor	Spanish	10/19/2022
Kari Adams	creative manager	Communications and Marketing	10/19/2022
Gwen L Rudney, PhD	Professor Emeritus	Division of Education	10/19/2022
Marissa Holst	Assistant Professor	Psychology	10/19/2022
Carrie Grussing	Executive Assistant (Retired)	Office of the Chancellor	10/19/2022
Jade Simonton	Area Coordinator	Office of Residential and Community Life	10/19/2022
Thomas Genova	Associate Professor	Spanish (Humanities)	10/19/2022
Vasilikie P. Demos	Professor Emerita	Sociology, Division of the Social Sciences	10/19/2022
Andrew Hao, Ph.D.	Assistant Professor, Sport Management	Education Division	10/19/2022
Emma Donohoe	Assistant Women's Soccer Coach	Athletics	10/19/2022
Jarod Bendele	Percussion teaching specialist	Music	10/19/2022
Matt Zaske	App Developer/Server Administrator	Information Technology	10/19/2022
Lauri Wyum	Instructor	Management	10/19/2022
Laura Thielke	Gift Accounting	Office of Advancement	10/19/2022

	Specialist		
Doug Reed	Director	Morris Challenge	10/19/2022
Brian Studebaker	Director of Admissions	Admissions	10/19/2022
Jennifer Goodnough	Associate Professor	Chemistry	10/19/2022
Chlene Anderson	Education Program Specialist	Academic Affairs: PSEO/Online Learning	10/19/2022
Dr. Joshua Kortbein	Instructor	Philosophy, Humanities	10/19/2022
Dr. Donna L Chollett	Professor emeritus	Anthropology	10/19/2022
James Cotter	Professor	Science and Math	10/19/2022
James B. Togeas	Professor Emeritus	Science and Mathematics/Interdisciplinary Studies	10/19/2022
Roland L. Guyotte	Morse Alumni Distinguished Teaching Professor of History	Division of the Social Sciences	10/19/2022
Sylke G Boyd	Associate Professor	Division of Science and Mathematics	10/19/2022
Matthew Hoekstra	Associate Director, Student Success Center and Coordinator, Disability Resource Center	Student Success Center	10/19/2022
Demi Dumarce	NASNTI Education Collaborator/Salt Springs Teacher Education Lecturer	Education/Native American Student Success	10/19/2022
Bart D. Finzel	Professor of Economics and Management	Economics and Management	10/19/2022
Ferolyn Angell, retiree	Retired Dance Instructor & Director of Academic	Academic Affairs and Humanities Division	10/19/2022

Assistance & Disability
Services

Charise P. DeBerry, PhD.	Director, McNair Scholars Program	Academic Center for Enrichment	10/19/2022
Angelica Senger	Transfer Evaluation/Degree Audit Coordinator	Office of the Registrar	10/19/2022
Matt Senger	Web Administrator	Information Technology	10/19/2022
Stephen Pirinelli-Deslauriers	Assistant Professor of Biology	Science and Math	10/19/2022
Brenda Boever	Director, Office of Academic Success (retired)	Academic Affairs	10/19/2022
Julia K. Dabbs	Professor	Art History	10/19/2022
Sharon Severance	Executive Office & Administrative Specialist	Division of Social Science	10/19/2022
Kiel Harell	Teaching Specialist	Division of Education	10/19/2022
Troy Goodnough	Sustainability Director	Office of Sustainability	10/19/2022
Elliot James	Assistant Professor	African and Black American Studies, Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies, and History	10/19/2022
Kevin Burke	Associate Head Football Coach/Offensive Coordinator	Athletics	10/19/2022
Dr. Peter Dolan	Associate Professor	Statistics & Computer Science	10/19/2022
Dian Rae Lopez	Professor Emerita	Computer Science	10/19/2022
Mark Collier	Professor	Philosophy	10/19/2022
Jenna Ray	Senior communications specialist (former)	Communications and Marketing	10/19/2022

Michael Shible	Assistant Football Coach	Athletics	10/19/2022
Argie J. Manolis	Director of Civic Learning and Engagement	Clifford J. Benson Center for Community Partnerships	10/20/2022
Emily Johnson	Coordinator of First Year Experience	Student Success Center	10/20/2022
Lisa S. Bevevino	Associate Professor	French, Latin, Medieval Studies	10/20/2022
Cheryl Stewart	Assistant Professor	Psychology	10/20/2022
Elise Grabowska	Coordinator	Student Activities, Conferences, and Events	10/20/2022
Dennis D. Stewart	Full Professor	Social Science Division (Psychology/Management)	10/20/2022
Dr. Miriam Gieske	Assistant Professor	Division of Science and Mathematics, Biology	10/20/2022
Kerry C. Michael, PhD	Associate Professor	Psychology	10/20/2022
Chip Beal	Director	Native American Student Success	10/20/2022
Joseph Alia	Associate Professor of Chemistry	Science and Mathematics	10/20/2022
Stephen Burks	Professor of Economics and Management	Division of Social Science	10/20/2022
Julie A. Eckerle	Professor of English and of GWSS	English / Humanities	10/20/2022
Denise Odello	Associate Professor	Music	10/20/2022
David G. Brown	Assistant Professor	Social Science Division	10/20/2022
Rebecca S. Heyn	Teaching Specialist	Music	10/21/2022
Mary P Klauda	UMM alumna 1977	NA	10/21/2022

Travis Stratton	NA	UMM alumnus 2004	10/21/2022
Bradley Deane	Professor	English	10/21/2022
Anna Jackson	Transfer Pathway Navigator	Native American Student Success and Transfer Student Services	10/21/2022
Dr. James M Olson	Chemistry faculty 1960–2001	Division of Science and Mathematics	10/21/2022
Debra L Dornfeld	Former student	Alumna	10/23/2022
Clare Dingley	Staff	Academic Support Resources - serving all campuses	10/24/2022
Nicholas Skulan	One Stop Counselor	One Stop Student Services	10/24/2022
Naomi Skulan	Metadata & Technical Services Coordinator	Rodney A. Briggs Library	10/24/2022
Kerri Barnstuble	Senior Director	TRIO Student Support Services	10/24/2022
Laura D Burks	Principal Office & Administrative Specialist	1- Division of Social Science, 2- Dean's Office	10/24/2022
Jana Koehler	Senior Program Manager	Financial Aid	10/24/2022
Jana Koehler	Director of Golf	Athletics	10/24/2022
Michael Anderson	BA Music Education K-12, BA Theatre	UMM Alumni Class of '80	10/25/2022
Mary Elizabeth Bezanson, Ph.D.	Professor Emerita	Communication, Media & Rhetoric	10/25/2022
Engin Sungur, Ph.D.	Professor	Statistics	10/25/22
Tracey M. Anderson	Associate Professor	Division of Science and Math/Biology	10/25/2022
Steven Collazos	Assistant Professor	Mathematics	10/26/2022