

Dec. 10, 2020

This letter is about the public health issue of racism and equity in education at a public university. It should be considered public record. Anybody can read and share the contents freely.

Dear Karey Krohnfeldt,, Director of Equity at CU Denver (and many cc'd individuals mentioned in this letter and CU administrators who should be concerned):

I received your notice on Nov. 18, 2020 stating that you will not investigate my grievance about retaliation that I submitted on Feb. 18, 2020. It is unacceptable to take nine full months to inform me that you will take no action and make no investigation into my concerns about retaliation, racism, discrimination, and harassment. You are aware of my unsafe work environment because I criticize racism at CU, attempt to disrupt racism, and refuse to bow to CU's efforts to force my conformity with white solidarity. Your inaction to my multiple grievances and late response to my grievance are disturbing because they embolden administrators who make racist decisions and retaliate against those who disrupt racism. That you are "Director of Equity" at CU Denver does not bode well for Equity in Education for BIPOC students at CU. A letter about a serious grievance about retaliation for revealing racism should not contain falsehoods or distractions about the serious issue of racism at CU Denver. Your letter is inaccurate and defamatory, as any honest investigation would reveal. I do not have time to point out every inaccurate statement, but would like a timely response to this letter, as the Regents of Colorado will soon consider my dismissal.

It is common knowledge and common sense that investigations are conducted to discover evidence. Despite my multiple grievances and concerns about racial inequity, retaliation, and discrimination at CU, you and the Office of Equity (OE) have never completed an investigation. Despite the lack of investigation, CU administration often claims that OE has investigated my grievances and found no cause. The world saw what happened when the Catholic Church investigated claims of child rape made against itself. The same thing happens when CU investigates claims of racism made against itself. Of course you, OE, and CU claim that there were external investigators involved. This is a farce. In a city of 2 million, the following facts uncovered by me disprove any claim of unbiased external review made by CU. Chancellor Horrell ordered an external investigation about my concerns of academic mobbing. Karin Curran was asked to do the investigation even though Ms. Curran had never heard of academic mobbing. Ms. Curran lied to me about how she would report her findings to CU, her reports made defamatory claims unsupported by evidence, and she failed to respond to my direct questions about her report. CU cites this defamatory report they commissioned in their effort to disparage me. Likewise, OE hired Julie Pate as an external reviewer of my Feb. 18, 2020 grievance. It is no coincidence that Ms. Curran and Ms. Pate are professional colleagues. CU hired them as "external reviewers" on separate grievances made by me, dealing with issues in which they had little or no expertise. What these investigators shared was loyalty to

CU administration, an ability to provide biased reports, and a likelihood that CU will rehire them for "external review".

You allege "In our previous interactions, you have described individuals within the University as racist and the University itself as engaging in racism. This contradicts you more recent characterization of these terms as having a scholarly meaning, as opposed to the accusations you've previously leveled when you were confronted by the Provost." You offered the following clarification: "With regard to your question below, you will recall that you had previously alleged that Chair Swallow was a racist. As evidence of this, you cited that you viewed his friends list on Facebook and discerned that he had no black friends. When discussing your use of the term "racism" or "racist" with the Provost, you described that you were using the term racism and racist in a scholarly manner." The scholarly definition of racism that I use most often, and is accepted by most scholars including Nelia Viveiros, is "a White person in a position of power that makes decisions or actions that harm BIPOC". For example, Chair Swallow used his power to set teaching schedules to change my teaching schedule from 4+0 to 2+2, against the request of two Haitian presidential candidates and me. His decision harmed Haitians, endangered a 3-year grant, and harmed my collaboration with Haitians. Chair Swallow also used his power to assign merit scores to devalue my research and teaching in Haiti as "humanitarian service". This also harmed me and my collaborations with Haitians. Most people can see how this is racist, because research/scholarly/creative and teaching accomplishments with Black colleagues and students should not be considered inferior to accomplishments with White colleagues and students. OE staff agreed that this racism occurred, but refused to act because "Haitians are not part of the CU community". Does it matter that Chair John Swallow is a member of the CU community, and leads a department that has never hired a Black professor and whose students have DFW rates 50% higher than White students? In fact, when questioned about the evidence I just provided, Nelia Viveiros incorrectly claimed that my department had hired a Black professor and refused to admit that there is inequity in tuition. I have long used the scholarly definition of racism, as presented in this peer-reviewed presentation

(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vWJyJVdGBwPanJLT8k3TeOUlgLNjiyoH/view?usp=sharing>). I provided evidence that Dean Bollard threatened disciplinary action for sharing this scholarly work with students. A real investigation would substantiate my claim. I was confronted by Provost Nairn for expressing concern about racism in my department. He told me not to use the rhetoric of "racism" in an effort to silence me. I add that Dr. DiAngelo defines an "avowed racist" as an individual who continues their racism even after it is pointed out to them. I have informed CU administrators of the racist nature of their decisions and actions, including Chair Swallow on multiple occasions, and several have failed to alter their decisions and actions as a result. Chair Swallow, Dean Bollard, and now President Kennedy continue to refer to my research/scholarly/creative and teaching work in Haiti as "humanitarian service" or "humanitarian pursuits". As any reasonable person would see, the scholarly definition of "racist" or "avowed racist" does not "contradict" the decisions and actions of many CU Denver administrators. What is "contradictory" is that your Office of Equity refuses to act in a manner that would promote equity in education.

In her report commissioned by CU, Karin Curran made the following defamatory statement "It is undisputed that Dr. Cronin has used derogatory names and labels towards Dr. Swallow in his email communications, academic papers, classroom lectures and other forums." My inquiries to Ms. Curran for evidence were met with silence. She would not even indicate which "derogatory names and labels towards Dr. Swallow" that I have used. An

investigation by OE would find that Ms. Curran's defamatory comment is untruthful, unless the Office of Equity and CU considers the scholarly word "racist" to be derogatory. You admit "At various points in the past, you have been cautioned against using such phraseology precisely because your use of these terms [racism and racist],...". It is true that you, OE, and several administrators have "cautioned" me. Every time I have asked people, including you, what word in the English language should I use to describe situations "where a White person in a position of power makes decisions that harm BIPOC"? "Racist" is the only term that I am aware of, and no other term has been offered. "Racist" is not a derogatory term. I have always used the term in a scholarly manner. The only people I know of who are offended by the words "racism" or "racist" are fragile Whites. Of course that term was coined by Dr. Robin DiAngelo, a scholar of Critical Whiteness Studies that you were unaware of when we spoke. Dean Bollard claimed that Dr. DiAngelo is not an academic. There should not be this much resistance to scholarly conversation about racism at CU or any public university. This is indicative of a culture at CU Denver where racism can thrive, and does thrive. You are wrong about the insulting claim that my troubles are due to poor performance. My performance is excellent, and exceeds that of my peers who have been recently promoted to full professor. It is noteworthy that my peers who were promoted to full professor with fewer professional accomplishments have not criticized racism at CU. In fact, a couple have participated in my academic mobbing. My poor treatment is not because of my professional accomplishments, but is because I have revealed racism, and the Office of Equity participates in the conspiracy to remove me from CU Denver.

You and OE's refusal to investigate claims of retaliation, racism, and harassment emboldens the perpetrators of these acts. I believe your inaction led to a situation where Chair Swallow, Assoc. Dean Bollard, Dean Jansma, and Provost Nairn were willing to lie under oath in CU's effort to dismiss me. I asked for clarity from the Chair of the Privilege and Tenure

	CU Faculty and Administration (11)	Cronin Colleagues and Witnesses (17)
# Students	0	4
BIPOC	9%	76%
Worked with Dr. Cronin in field	0%	88%
Gave false sworn testimony	36%	0%
Has carried, spread, and/or accepted false rumors about Dr. Cronin	100%	0%
Considers Dr. Cronin incompetent	>50%	0%
Praised Dr. Cronin's work	63%	100%
Beholden to CU	100%	0%
Has categorized research/teaching with Haitians as "humanitarian service"	>45%	0%
Acknowledges racism is problem at CU	0%, including VC of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity (President Kennedy is a refreshing exception)	88%

Panel Dr. Stephen Cass about how untruthful sworn testimony is handled by P&T. He replied "But as it pertains to untruthful testimony in your P&T hearing, the Panel evaluated the credibility of witness testimony and gave all the testimony the weight it deserves. The P&T Panel in your hearing did exactly that. It carefully evaluated and considered the testimony, evidence and credibility of all witnesses and reached the findings and conclusions set forth in its report. The Panel made no findings that any witness had perjured themselves." As you can see from the following table, the P&T Committee gave more weight to untruthful White administrators who have never worked with me in the field than the truthful testimony of Native American and Black colleagues who have worked with me in the field. For the record, I believe that truthful, informed testimony from BIPOC

witnesses is superior to untruthful, uninformed testimony from White administrators with power. This action by the P&T Panel matches the scholarly definition of racism, and now that CU has been made aware of this racism, I encourage CU Denver to not be avowed racists when it comes to valuing the work, opinions, accomplishments, and contributions of my Taino and Haitian colleagues. I also ask that Dr. Cass provide supporting evidence, or retract the defamatory statement shared with the P&T Panel that I was untruthful. **If your Office of Equity wants to investigate the (un)truthfulness of the testimony of Chair Swallow, Dean Bollard, Dean Jansma, and Provost Nairn and the defamatory statement by Dr. Cass in this ongoing retaliation, I would be happy to provide evidence. If you want me to submit a separate grievance, please let me know ASAP, and I will do so.**

You allege "...you initially raised an unsupported allegation of sexual harassment..." This is a bald-faced lie. I have never made an allegation of sexual harassment. Ms. Krohnfeldt, immediately retract this defamatory lie or present the sexual harassment allegation as evidence. You also wrote "discrimination due to your parental status." This instance occurred in 2005, five years before I worked in Haiti. In truth, the parental discrimination comment stems from a question asked by you, where I shared that I made a complaint about then Chair Tomback in 2005. She apologized and there were no new instances (i.e., problems can be solved when they are properly addressed). Rather than focus on the real issue of racism at CU, and retaliation and harassment because I reveal and disrupt racism, OE refuses to investigate the racism, but rather attacks the victim's performance, "cautions" him against using English words that upset fragile White administrators, makes false allegations about sexual harassment claims, and misleading/unrelated comments about parental status. If OE is really interested in promoting racial equity in education at CU Denver, they should investigate concerns about racism, and stop trying to distract people from the real issue of racism towards Haiti and retaliation for revealing racism at CU Denver.

Table 1. Instances of racism, retaliation, harassment, or violation of Regent policy resulting from Dr. Cronin's work in Haiti and decolonization. These instances result from investigation performed by Prof. Cronin. OE has never completed a formal investigation to these claims, and have never found any of the claims to be false.

Protected activity	Adverse action taken by CU caused by protected activity	Adverse action might deter a reasonable person from opposing discrimination
Conducting scholarly work in Applied Ecology in Haiti, a location with severely degraded ecosystems [note: CU hired Dr. Cronin as an Applied Ecologist]	Within months of beginning my work in Haiti, CU stopped rewarding accomplishments in Applied Ecology	Not being rewarded for accomplishments in ones field might deter a reasonable person from opposing discrimination
Publishing about work in Haiti, including a life-saving PSA (Cronin 2015)	Wrote a defamatory letter to the editor, accusing me of plagiarism and other unethical behavior, causing its retraction. Administration admitted this was done "Because you [Dr. Cronin] accused them [Drs. Swallow and Tomback] and the Dean [Jansma] of racism in a published article in a public forum."	Publish or perish? Violation of 1st Amendment rights. OE refuses to investigate. CU Counsel represented the perpetrators of this adverse action. Of course this would deter a reasonable person from opposing racial discrimination.
Presenting a peer-	Conference costs were not reimbursed by	Financial losses might deter a

reviewed talk about racism at an international conference.	CU. Funds earmarked for Haiti had to be used to supplement CU business (i.e., decision by White administrator with power harmed BIPOC).	reasonable person from presenting about racism.
Expressing concerns about racism to Provost Nairn.	Provost Nairn requested that the rhetoric of "racism" not be used. He also attempted to take my lab, is pursuing dismissal, spread falsehoods about me, and lied under oath at my dismissal hearing.	As the 2nd top administrator at CU Denver, all of the adverse actions might deter a reasonable person from opposing racial discrimination
Shared scholarly work in Haiti with my students.	Dean Bollard threatened disciplinary actions, demanded that I not talk about racism during class, and lied under oath at my dismissal hearing.	Should be obvious, but am willing to explain this to OE if they don't "get it".
Filing a grievance with OE about racial inequity in tuition	Placed on a 195-day forced administrative leave that same day, without due process, and based on a false accusation to cover up the retaliation.	Should be obvious, but am willing to explain this to OE if they don't "get it".
Asked to teach "Race and Racism in Biology"	Request denied by Chair Swallow. Asked to remove the word "Racism" from the title of the course. Chair Swallow had the power to allow this course to be taught on a trial basis, as most courses are initially offered.	This prevented me from sharing important scholarly work about race and racism in a department that has never hired a Black professor and whose Black students have DFW rates 50% higher than White students.
Conducted transdisciplinary work that led to the creation of 3 Bays Marine Park in Haiti. Goldman Environmental Prize Winner Jean Wiener estimated that I conducted 75% of the work. My colleague Jean Wiener is Haitian and Black. He testified that our collaboration is research, and not "humanitarian work".	Chair Swallow testified "He [Cronin] subsequently claims that his work resulted in the creation of this marine preserve. And my -- the department's sense is that if it were as easy as a two-week rapid biological assessment to create a marine preserve, then there would be hundreds of thousands of marine preserves. And he didn't provide evidence that his work resulted in this. Doesn't meet the ISI ranked criteria and it seems to minimize the work that other people have done for decades. Jean Wiener is the one that won the Goldman prize probably for his decades of work."	Of course having your significant accomplishments with BIPOC colleagues devalued as "humanitarian work" might deter a reasonable person from opposing discrimination or from working with BIPOC colleagues. Being told that your work with Black colleagues and students is somehow inferior to your work with White colleagues and students might deter a person from opposing discrimination. It shouldn't matter to OE that Haitians are not members of the CU community.
Accepting qualified graduate students who also oppose racism.	CU denied me the right to accept a highly qualified graduate applicant. They also denied this student the opportunity to pursue a Ph.D. with me.	That this student and I have both been involved with race-based grievances at OE, and were later denied the opportunity to work together would deter a reasonable faculty member or a reasonable student from opposing discrimination.
Reporting racism to the Office of Equity	"At various points in the past, you have been cautioned against using such phraseology precisely because your use of these terms, as applied to individuals within the University, have been made without sufficient basis."	The work involved, and the lack of action by OE, might deter a reasonable person from opposing discrimination. OE does more to maintain the status quo of racism at CU than it does to disrupt racism and create racial equity in education.
Asking that teaching a	Chair Swallow does not reward teaching	Should be obvious, but am willing

class of Black students with a Black co-teacher be rewarded the same as teaching predominantly White students	Haitians as "teaching". In contrast, peers who teach courses at White institutions are rewarding for teaching.	to explain this to OE if they don't "get it".
Asking for a fair dismissal hearing, including calling BIPOC witnesses	Testimony by BIPOC witnesses was undervalued. The truthful testimony of Taino and Haitian who worked with me was counted less than the untruthful testimony of White administrators (Chair, Assoc. Dean, Dean, and Provost) who had never worked with me in the field.	Should be obvious, but am willing to explain this to OE if they don't "get it".
Defining racist as "a White person in power making a decision that harms BIPOC". A scholarly definition, as agreed to by many BIPOC and Nelia Viveiros.	The P&T Panel wrote "Dr. Cronin also engages in this practice of labelling (sic) specific colleagues as "racists" in his professional presentations (see Exhibit L, pages 122-8) and in his publications. This behavior in both the teaching and research (professional presenting and publication) contexts demonstrate a lack of integrity and lack of professional competence." A White P&T panelist stated that using this definition would make him a racist for drinking bottled water.	The questioning of ones integrity and professional competence for revealing and disrupting racism, resulting in dismissal processes, would deter a reasonable person from opposing discrimination.
Submitting a manuscript about racism to a journal. Because of reactions by fragile Whites, the journal asked for approval from CU administration.	Karey Krohnfeldt, Chair Swallow, Assoc. Chair Tomback, CU Counsel, and many others refused to approve the submission of the manuscript to the journal.	This was meant to deter me from opposing and revealing discrimination at CU Denver.
Sharing concerns of racism with supervisor.	Supervisor got angry and "exploded". Supervisor claims that retaliations are not race-based, but refuses to answer inquiries such as "Name one accomplishment with White colleagues that was devalued as "humanitarian service"? Supervisor refuses to conduct merit review according to departmental bylaws, treating me differently than all my peers.	Should be obvious, but am willing to explain this to OE if they don't "get it".
Sharing my research with Black colleagues in the classroom.	When students complained, CU administrators violated the student grievance policy, blocking me from having conversations about racism with students. Silences any conversation about racism.	This was designed to deter me from opposing discrimination in the classroom.
Describing racist actions as "racist".	Told not to call racist actions "racist", or risk disciplinary action.	This was designed to deter me from opposing discrimination.

You inaccurately recounted "You provided one instance in which you allege Dr. Diana Tomback indicated she received credit for teaching at a Canadian university with graduate students. In contrast, you alleged that you taught in Haiti in 2015, were not given credit, but have not taught in Haiti since.

To the extent that Dr. Tomback may have received credit for teaching graduate students at a Canadian university does not adequately balance concerns about your teaching when compared to a single year you taught in Haiti and did not receive credit. As noted

previously, concerns about your performance deficiencies have extended beyond a single year, and do not merely include a year in which you did not receive credit for teaching students who are not CU Denver students." The gymnastic reasoning to dismiss clear racism (i.e., teaching Black undergrads is inferior to teaching White undergrads) should not come from the Director of the Office of Equity. My teaching is very good, at CU and beyond.

In fact, I asked Dr. Tomback "Do you recall these students that you advised at different institutions, did that count as teaching?" She replied "Undergraduate students, it counts as teaching." In 2015, the year that triggered the PIA and the first year in my career that I failed to meet teaching expectations, was the year that my teaching/advising of Black undergrads was NOT counted as teaching. Rather, Chair Swallow who has the power to give merit scores, decided to not reward the teaching of Black undergrads as teaching. This clearly racist decision was minimized by the P&T Panel with "Dr. Cronin claims other faculty were awarded teaching credit for non-CU Denver students, whereas he was not because his were black students in Haiti and therefore this is racial discrimination. Under questioning from Dr. Cronin, Dr. Dana Tomback did state that teaching undergraduates at other institutions for her counted as "teaching". However, that statement was an offhand comment, nothing she clearly stated as departmental policy." Dismissing testimony about racism in rewarding teaching as an "offhand comment" will only encourage the devaluing of teaching activities with Black students. This racism should be further investigated rather than dismissed. I believe that further investigation would reveal that teaching gets rewarded as teaching. Only when the students are Black would a racist supervisor devalue the teaching as "service".

Ms. Krohnfeldt, you have never conducted a formal investigation into my concerns about racism and retaliation at CU Denver, despite your own staff admitting that racist decision(s) was/were made but that the victims were not members of the CU Denver community. I remind you that the perpetrator of the racist decision is a member of the CU Denver community. Failing to investigate is equivalent to ignoring the problem. Attacking the complainant or carrying/spreading/accepting false rumors about the complainant enables or encourages the problem of racism to continue. By attacking the complainant, you encourage the perpetrators. Everything I wrote in this long letter is accurate. Correct me if I am wrong, with evidence.

Please do not take another 9 months to respond to this letter. The Regents of Colorado want to consider my dismissal case shortly, and the information in this report is of utmost importance for their decision. I look forward to a prompt, truthful, ethical response to the inequities discussed in this letter.

Regards,



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