

April 2021

Dear President Dudley,

I hope you are doing well this semester. I know this past year has brought challenges that none of us were expecting, but I am grateful for your commitment to allowing us the privilege of attending classes in person. A virtual W&L is simply not the same.

Because the full W&L experience is valuable to me, not just as a student but also as an athlete, I have been extremely diligent in following every guideline set forth by the university intended to keep us healthy and on campus. Looking back on my entire life, I've always been a rule follower. I never received detention, and I was rarely reprimanded at home. I believe this stems from my parents' instillation of respect for authority, even authority with which I disagree, in me.

Yesterday's event, on the other hand, showed a blatant disregard for the rules intended to keep us safe. As what was undeniably a social gathering, this demonstration certainly exceeded its allowed maximum of 10 participants, which is against the guidelines. It is my understanding that these individuals were socially distanced, except on Cannan Green and when they were walking, but there is no provision in place for organized gatherings of 150+ people despite apparent social distancing.

As an American, I recognize the importance of our first amendment right to assemble, but during trying pandemic times, many assemblies have been foregone for the supposed benefit of the masses. Unfortunately, we have learned that not all gatherings are treated the same. Over the summer, we saw countless protests and riots that broke Covid-19 restrictions encouraged by state officials while small businesses were forced to close their doors without any promise of ever opening them again. I am disturbed by the fact that this same hypocrisy has found its way onto our campus: some sports cannot compete, and clubs cannot meet, but groups with the correct social, political, and "moral" agenda are allowed to congregate with the protection of our public safety officers. Furthermore, spectators were explicitly not allowed to attend our athletic events over the weekend, yet reporters came yesterday to

document the demonstration. I walk around this campus every day terrified that one wrong move could get me quarantined or sent home.

I would like to close by reaffirming how disappointed I am in the event that took place yesterday. As I walked to class, I noticed they had left their stickers all over school property, which shows such a high level of disrespect for what's left of our university. I want to emphasize that this sort of group will never be satiated.

If the name is abandoned, there will only be the next thing that's not correct enough, not equitable enough, or not changed enough. This is the very definition of progressivism: its mission can never be accomplished or else the movement would cease to exist.

Every student at this school willingly matriculated into Washington and Lee University.

I thank you for your time spent reading this. I did not take writing it lightly.

Humbly,

Elizabeth Hertzberg