

# Calumet receives unexpected email in tip-box

*This email was sent to a select 28 MCC/EICCD faculty and staff members, as well as two presumed family members of Dr. Boyer. A copy was found in a Calumet tip-box*

Hello,

Most of you have read the calumet about the phone call that I made to them. I would like to tell you what happened. It started before the phone call.

I was fortunate enough to be asked to be co-advisor for the Student Senate last fall. As the term began my co-advisor and I started to get emails requesting information about the past Student Senate student of the month process. My co-advisor tried hard to get the information put together but did not have all the years of information that was requested. She is a very busy person and did not get things as quickly as they wanted so the emails

became more demanding. She sent everything to them that she could and a negative article followed. Shortly after this, I received an email from the paper about the \$38,000 grant that the science department received for new microscopes and other equipment. The question that I got was, “Do you think that MCC would have given the money if you would not have received the grant?” To me this sounds like a negative comment about our college and its budgeting. I know that I could have replaced the microscopes with my science budget, but that would have taken years to do so. Years that the students would not have benefited from them. I did not respond to the email so I received another one later that asked how I felt when I got the grant. I thought this too was rather silly. How does one feel when they hit a home run or finally reach the

top of a mountain? I did not respond to this email either. When the paper came out my picture was in next to a comment that I did not respond to their interview. (I do not like to have my picture taken due to the disability that I have in my neck. This fusion of my neck does not allow me to hold my head up and see directly into the camera. I never take a good picture. I am very self-conscious of this.) There really was no interview. I called the calumet and asked the person that answered the phone why they put my picture in the paper without my permission. I was quickly told that they did not need my permission to put my picture in the paper and that they could use any picture for any reason whenever they wanted. I said “not anymore”. There was silence and I said that I thought it was ridiculous that I was only emailed

two questions about the grant that I worked hard for. The phone was silent again and I thought that I heard a click and the phone hung up. I hung up the phone thinking that the call was ended. I hoped that they would take what I said and make their interview process better and be respectful to others feelings.


Because of all this I will not be making statements to the paper on topics that I feel go against the culture and integrity of MCC.

Thank you for reading my side of the story.

Rick Boyer  
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Muscatine Iowa 52761



# Calumet addresses questions presented in email

 Dear Dr. Boyer,

The Calumet staff would like to clarify some of the unclear points in the e-mail that was sent out from you, Dr. Boyer, to 28 recipients on February 10 at 7:55 am. This e-mail, titled “Not so Punny,” was sent to a group of MCC/EICCD administrators, teachers, and staff. In it, you state that it is your intention to provide “[your] side of the story” in response to a recent article in the Calumet titled “Calumet receives curt call.” In it you tell the recipients: “I would like to tell you what happened.”

Your e-mail states “As the fall term began my co-advisor [Erika Battern] and I started to get emails requesting information about the past Student Senate student of the month process.” Dr. Boyer, fall classes began on August 25, 2014, and the first request for information was made with Erika Battern via e-mail on November 7. This date was well after the midterm date of October 17, and even after advising day on November 4. It is important to note that the article was published one month and three days after the Calumet reporter’s initial request for information. Considering that Thanksgiving break occurred during that month, this can hardly be considered a semester long set of repeated demands for information.

You go on to state the e-mails continued to Mrs. Battern and “became more demanding.” The reporter contacted Mrs. Battern to request copies of previous Student Senate meetings, and even offered to look through them herself to find the information that was needed, which would reduce the “demands”

on Mrs. Battern’s time. Chapter 21 Section 3 of Iowa’s Open Meetings and Public Records law states, “Each governmental body shall keep minutes of all its meetings showing the date, time and place, the members present, and the action taken at each meeting. The minutes shall show the results of each vote taken and information sufficient to indicate the vote of each member present. The vote of each member present shall be made public at the open session. The minutes shall be public records open to public inspection.” If the Student Senate has been following Chapter 21 Section 3 of Iowa’s Open Meetings and Public Records law, it should have taken no time at all to provide the Calumet reporter with the requested information.

The Student Senate is the governing body on campus, and this campus is a public institution, and therefore the governing body is subject to the same Open Meetings and Public Records laws and regulations as any governing body, such as City Council, or the State Legislature. Therefore any member of the constituency, i.e., the student body, which includes Calumet reporters, can request a copy of any meeting minutes. This is not being “demanding” as stated in your e-mail. It is exercising a legal right.

You go on to state “...a negative article followed. Shortly after this, I received an email from the paper about the \$38,000 grant that the science department received...”

This is not the case for two reasons. One, the article titled “Student Senate honors itself” was published on December 10, 2014 on page one of the Calumet. The article “MCC receives grants” was published in the same edition on page

two. Second, the Student Senate article you are referring to was neither negative nor positive. It was a simple statement of facts. Statistics were compiled, the information was calculated and then it was reported. The Student of the Year and Student of the Month processes were examined, including both the previous pattern of awards as well as the current one. That is what the article was about, the processes and patterns of awards. A process or pattern can be neither negative nor positive.

Your e-mail goes on to state that you received the question “Do you think that MCC would have given the money if you would not have received the grant?” and that you felt this “sounds like a negative comment about our college and budgeting,” and that this is the reason you did not answer the student reporter. Your e-mail goes on to state that you “could have replaced the microscopes with my science budget, but that would have taken years to do so. Years that the students would not have benefited from them.” This would have been a perfectly wonderful quote to put into the article. The question was not addressing the right or wrong of the college’s budgeting, but was addressing why your department may have needed the grant or wanted the grant, i.e., did the grant save the college money, and did the grant eliminate “years that the students would not have benefited from them [the microscopes]?”

The Calumet staff is baffled as to why publishing the good news about the grant would be perceived as negative. MCC does not have a limitless budget, which is why, we’re assuming, the requests for the grants were written to begin with.

Are we to assume then that even writing a request for a grant is “a negative comment about our college and budgeting”? Is asking the Stanley Foundation for money admitting to an influential Muscatine company that MCC does not handle its finances well?

The reporter sent you a follow up e-mail, as is customary journalistic practice after she realized the first question alone was too narrow for the importance of this topic. To be clear, the first e-mail did not contain a bad question or a “negative comment.” It simply did not seek enough information. The follow up questions in the second e-mail asked you how you felt about the grant and what you planned to do with the money. In your e-mail you state that you “thought this too was rather silly. How does one feel when they hit a home run or finally reach the top of a mountain?”

Please remember, the reporters of the Calumet are in fact students. If the question that one of them asks you does not encompass the importance of the topic, we encourage all staff members to explain that to them. This helps the learning process and will ultimately produce better journalists who write better articles about the campus.

We at the Calumet sincerely hope that when a biology student asks you a question that you feel has an obvious answer that you do not publicly inform that student that his or her question is “silly,” and then ignore the question. Or worse, ignore the question, and then send a private e-mail informing multiple instructors, administrators, staff members, that the student asked a “silly” question that did not deserve an answer.     *continued on page 11*