Description of the Faculty Senate "Resolution Affirming and Living Our Core Values"

On the evening of October 22, 2014, a number of CWRU students active in the #webelonghere movement held a peaceful protest as part of the National Day of Protest Against Police Brutality. The protest began on the north side of campus by the Village; students then walked down Euclid Avenue to Kelvin Smith Library, where they went through silently holding signs. Finally the students moved back to the north side, stopping in Denny's, before silently walking through Wade Commons. During this event, the protest was criticized by people who posted racist comments on the social media platform Yik Yak. These comments included a comparison of African America students to primates, a description of the protest as a performance of "The Jungle Book," and a wish for the police to "beat" the student protesters.

Yik Yak is a computer application designed to allow users in close proximity to share anonymous comments. On the app, users can write and respond to comments (called "yaks") as well as "up vote" or "down vote" comments. Several of the racist comments received "up votes" from users who approved these statements. The app determines users' locations and then collects users into groups occupying a 1.5-mile radius. This means the comments posted about the protest came from within a 1.5-mile radius of our campus.

In response to this racist incident, President Barbara Snyder sent an email to the entire CWRU community on October 23, 2014, an email that both condemned the incident and reaffirmed CWRU's commitment to the core values of diversity and inclusion. President Snyder's letter can be read on the website of CWRU's #webelonghere movement: http://webelongherecwru.tumblr.com/post/100802861197/a-letter-from-president-barbara-snyder-to-the-cwru

As a result, the Committee on Minority Affairs drafted "The Resolution Affirming and Living Our Core Values" which (1) affirmed CWRU faculty's commitment to diversity and inclusion and (2) condemned acts of unconscious bias as well as conscious acts of bigotry, discrimination, and aggression toward any member of the CWRU community. On November 24, 2014, the full Faculty Senate voted to endorse this resolution.