Good morning, CAUS faculty, staff, and students,

[News with the Dean](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Z2cRtyqJiY-N0o7a7UIuLMJBrWYO8hDJ?usp=sharing) on Tuesday morning drew together a diverse group of staff, faculty, and students from all four schools and the dean’s office to discuss news items that have potential implications for university life.

A range of topics were covered, including:

* The need to re-think established programs in the School of Architecture + Design to keep pace with changes in the discipline at large;
* Networked university infrastructure (particularly workshops and laboratories) that promote and enhance cross-disciplinary encounters;
* Demolition plans for the University Club;
* And new kinds of university space that re-direct focus away from disciplinary insularity toward transdisciplinary experiences.

Perhaps the most topical news item, discussed in CAUS only a matter of hours after the resignation of Michigan State University President Lou Anna K. Simon and on the day of the sentencing of Larry Nassar, pointed to the implications and changes being brought to universities through Title IX.

At Michigan State, the President’s failure to protect the well-being of students has has resulted in her resignation, and there is now mounting pressure on the Board. This is an extreme example, but it points to several critical factors in the future life of universities, and offers CAUS an opportunity to reflect on our own behavior and culture.

One principle to draw from this case is that any form of complaint needs to be taken extremely seriously and to be dealt with in a thorough and respectful manner. This has significant implications for the manner in which leadership should understand and respond to instances of discriminatory or abusive behaviour.

Leadership in CAUS includes the dean’s office and extends to every individual in the college with a responsibility for a school, program, and course. The Nassar case indicates how people who report incidents need to be protected.

As dean, I fully commit to providing such protection. My door is open to those in our team who need to report something and to all of our members who would like help in dealing with particular cases. CAUS is here to help and assist.

The commentary on the Nassar case has now turned to look not just at the perpetrator, but also at those who, when confronted with complaints, pushed back against the complainants and to those with responsibility who simply took no action, resulting in a number of university staff losing their jobs. These people are being referred to as “enablers.” Attention is also being placed on the bystanders who took no action and cannot claim to be “innocent bystanders.”

One takeaway is that none of us can understand ourselves as “innocent bystanders.” When we observe abusive, discriminatory, or sexist behavior we should, and indeed are obliged, to take action.

As Dean, I fully support Title IX and a culture in CAUS in which:

* CAUS leaders will actively respond to reports.
* CAUS leaders will actively support those who report.
* All citizens of CAUS will take action in the face of unacceptable behaviors.

For those who were unable to attend, I invite you to [read the articles from Tuesday's News with the Dean event here](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Z2cRtyqJiY-N0o7a7UIuLMJBrWYO8hDJ?usp=sharing).

I’m looking forward to the next News morning! Thank you to all who participated in a stimulating discussion.

Richard Blythe

Dean and Professor

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