

Statement to the MATC Board from AFT, Local 212 President Michael Rosen:

Good evening.

On behalf of the faculty and staff I want to welcome Dr. Rick Monroe to the MATC District Board. We look forward to meeting with you shortly.

I also want to thank the entire board for your uncompensated volunteer work. The 1500 members of Local 212 appreciate the work you do on behalf of our students and the entire community.

I also want to wish you and the members of the administration a very happy Thanksgiving.

I have a serious matter to discuss with you tonight.

Local 212 was shocked to read in the paper today that MATC is contemplating arming its newly organized public safety department. And we were even more outraged by how a representative of the administration who has worked for the college for less than one year characterized our students and the college.

At this time we are opposed to the proposal to arm the MATC public safety staff. The decision to arm our security is equivalent to authorizing them to use deadly force on campus. We oppose the deadly force proposal at this time for four reasons:

First, the characterization of our students as angry, confrontational and dangerous to the community is grossly inaccurate. There is no data, evidence or experience to substantiate this inflammatory claim which is the basis of the administration's argument to provide public safety access to deadly force. In the absence of any compelling rationale, there is no reason to pursue deadly force capacity on campus.

In addition, the unsubstantiated mischaracterization of our students harms the reputation of our students and college in the community, a reputation we are trying to build.

Second, suggesting that our students are dangerous and confrontational as the rationale for providing security with guns is a dangerous proposition because it suggests MATC needs to prepare its security staff to use deadly force against our very own students. These are our students, many of whom are juggling family, work and school in an effort to better their lives. They are some of the hardest working, most dedicated people in the state of Wisconsin. They are actively pursuing the American Dream through education. They are not criminals whom we need to be protected from.

Third, the matter of arming our public safety personnel has not been discussed widely within the college community.

There has been no discussion about the necessity of arming public safety personnel with the faculty or front line staff who work with our students every day. There has been no discussion of this matter with our police science faculty and staff who train the area's police personnel. There has been no discussion of this matter in 212's monthly meetings with the President of the college. And there has been no discussion of this matter in Core Committees or on the Safety Committee.

Before the board takes a position on authorizing the use of deadly force on the campus it should hear from the community's stakeholders which the public safety staff is organized to serve.

Finally, the Governor's Commission Report on Campus Safety does not advocate arming public safety officers with deadly force capabilities. The Report has several proposals including lighting, communications and evacuations procedures, and the importance of mental health resources among other things, but never advocates the need for guns on campus.

At this time, we urge the board to reject the proposal to provide our public safety officers with deadly force capabilities. The entire college community needs to step back and engage in a systematic evaluation of our public safety needs and the most appropriate and cost effective way of ensuring that MATC provides our students with a stimulating, nurturing and safe learning environment.

Thank you.