

October 28, 2021

SACUA Statement Regarding Professor Bright Sheng

While we are not in a position to do a full investigation concerning the case of Prof. Bright Sheng and SMTD music composition students, we believe we understand enough to recommend that the university adopt a restorative justice approach to addressing this incident. Restorative justice would involve a professionally mediated discussion with Prof. Sheng, the composition students, representatives of the administration, and possibly members of the larger community. The discussion would seek to arrive at an understanding of each party's perspective, an agreement about what happened, and a course of corrective action. Such an approach would help Prof. Sheng and the university have an opportunity to learn and make amends. It would also provide the affected students a measure of justice and give them a critical say in how justice is enacted. And, by making selected aspects of the proceeding public, it would help heal the rift that has reverberated across this university.

Individual acts of racism are a symptom of broader systemic racism. Collectively, we still have much work to do to achieve true diversity, equity, and inclusion at the University of Michigan.

(7 votes in support, 1 vote against, 1 abstention)