

Library Statement to read at Student Solidarity Rally 3-1-17

Musselman Library is pleased to be part of today's Student Solidarity Rally. We think of ourselves as a student-centered organization and we're here to stand with you and learn with you today. Thank you for inviting us.

I have a couple of things to share with you.

First, we recently developed a Diversity & Inclusion Statement for the library. It's been online and on a big poster on the main floor of the library for a few weeks, and we brought that poster here today. Please stop by our table to read it and to share ideas that we can consider when developing our Inclusion Action Plan. We value student input.

Second, we have some things to share that fit into the "Stay Aware, Stay Active" theme of today's event. Specifically:

- We have a Civic Engagement guide on our website that includes fact checking websites and ways to contact your Members of Congress.
- We have information about how to get free access to the New York Times and the Washington Post, as well as an infographic about how to spot fake news.
- If you're eager to engage in meaningful conversation with other folks on campus, you'll want to know about various book discussion groups that we're involved in – like #GBCTalks and You've Gotta Read This (we're still in the sign-up period for this one and first year students are reading Alison Bechdel's graphic memoir, *Fun Home*).
- We also want to show you a website called "What We Did Here: Activism at Gettysburg College" – it's a crowd-sourced digital collection, created by student Digital Scholarship Fellows in partnership with the Library, devoted to documenting the discourse that has occurred on campus surrounding issues of race, gender, sexuality, political affiliation, religion, and class. You might want to upload photos and other items from today's event on that website.

Information about all these things is on the handout at our table.

Finally, we want to reiterate that Musselman Library is everyone's library. We are committed to maintaining a safe, welcoming space for everyone in our community. Our collections are cultivated to support your curricular learning, of course, but they are also meant to support your learning as whole people.

I'll close with a quotation from a book. (You sort of expected that from a librarian, didn't you?) Some of my favorite lines come from *Between the World and Me*, in which Ta-Nehisi Coates writes so beautifully about his intellectual awakening during his years at Howard University. About his years as an undergraduate, he writes: "The pursuit of knowing was freedom to me, the right to declare your own curiosities and follow them through all manner of books. I was made for the library, not the classroom. The classroom was a jail of other people's interests. The library was open, unending, free" (48).

One antidote to feeling isolated and overwhelmed is to learn and connect. That's why you're here today. The library is one of the world's great intersections of people and ideas. See you there.