

Baylor reports racially related incidents on Election Day

November 5, 2008

WACO—Baylor University police reported three apparently racially related on-campus incidents on Election Day.

Late Tuesday afternoon, university officials were notified a single clothesline rope resembling a noose was seen in a tree.

Later in the day, police investigated a small fire in a barbecue pit next to Brooks Flats residential community. Allegedly, several Obama/Biden campaign signs were burned.

Still later in the evening, police were called to a disturbance outside Penland Hall men's dormitory, where a shouting match occurred between two small groups of white and African-American students.

"These events are deeply disturbing to us and are antithetical to the mission of Baylor University. We categorically denounce and will not tolerate racist acts of any kind on our campus," Interim President David Garland said in an e-mail to all Baylor students.

"Further, we are committed to maintaining the safety and unity of our campus community. We wish to celebrate and strengthen inclusiveness, understanding and acceptance of all members of the Baylor family."

Garland reminded students regarding university policies regarding civility and respect. The e-mail included a link to Baylor's eight-page civil rights policy.

Garland encouraged faculty, staff and students to participate in ongoing dialogues sponsored by Baylor's multicultural activities department.

African-Americans make up about 7 percent of Baylor's current student enrollment. The university's student body is 72 percent Anglo.

"We believe that the incidents on our campus yesterday were irresponsible acts committed by a few individuals," Garland concluded. "As a community, we condemn these terribly unfortunate events that do not represent the values we share as members of the Baylor family."