

**To:** The Taylor Community  
**From:** Paul Lowell Haines, President  
**Re:** Excalibur Newsletter  
**Date:** February 23, 2018

For the last 47 years of my relationship with Taylor University, I have been proud of the Taylor community's ability to have open and vigorous dialogue over the issues of the day, to wrestle with differences of opinion, and to always seek either common ground or better understanding. This university, this Christian institution of higher learning, has long been a place where community members aspire to acknowledge their differences, while striving to love and to seek God's best for each other. This is the Taylor I have known, and it is the Taylor I love.

Unfortunately, earlier this week, we were confronted with an incident that fell short of Taylor's lofty goals for life together. On Wednesday, an "underground," secretive newsletter was distributed that purported to add "boldly" to the debate on several serious issues.

To the contrary, the unsanctioned, anonymous, and suspect distribution of the publication sewed discord and distrust, hurting members of our community. I am disappointed in the drafters and distributors of "Excalibur" for their method of addressing these issues, and especially for their lack of foresight and sensitivity regarding how this approach could impact community members, especially those of color. Whatever their good intentions, they failed.

The Towel reminds us that community is messy – and is meant to be done in person and face to face. We cannot be a place of anonymous newsletters delivered in the dark with no attribution. Rather, we must wrestle with issues of the day openly, honestly, and freely, but always seeking to find God's truth in the midst of a complex world.

To those members of our community who have been hurt by this newsletter and the ill-conceived manner in which it was delivered, I assure you that you are loved, valued and safe here. You are of great value to God, to me, and to your brothers and sisters in Christ at Taylor University.

I was struck by and concur with a tweet broadcasted in response to this incident:

*Anonymous commentary can create chaos in a community without assuming any of its risk. The real value of dialogue is the opportunity to seek to understand one another and to avoid reducing one another to an incomplex label. Human complexity requires more of us...so does love.*

I am frustrated that we find ourselves here. Yet, I remain confident that we can continue to be the community that I have always loved. We must engage ideas on their merit, and be willing to risk offense for the sake of truth. This is the heart of a liberal arts education. But we can never forget the ideals of life together and the responsibility we bear for "one another."