**Students Are Not Suspended For Merely Expressing Suicidal Thoughts**

National Public Radio aired a story in December 2008 about a student who was involuntarily suspended from a college in Ohio after informing counseling staff that he had suicidal thoughts.  The piece also indicates that students at other universities, who are not identified, have had similar experiences.  Here is a link to the story:<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=97713906>

We want the university community to know that this policy is not in place at GC, nor at most other colleges and universities.  Instead, we assess each situation individually and determine the most appropriate course of action.  If a student presents a danger to self or others, immediate steps will be taken to protect the safety of anyone at risk.  This can involve a range of responses, depending on the immediacy and severity of the risk.  Students are not suspended for merely expressing suicidal thoughts in the absence of other indicators of risk.

Once the immediate danger is addressed, college officials will work with the student – as well as others, such as family members, when appropriate – to resolve the situation in a way that balances the rights of the individual with the rights of the community at large.  Involuntary suspension is rarely required here, and students would have the right to timely appeal of such a decision.

If you or someone you know has concerns about anyone's safety, you can feel confident in reporting those concerns to university officials without fear that a rigid policy will dictate our actions.  Here are some people who can help:

• Staff in your residential facility
• Counseling Services staff 478-445-5331
• Public Safety 478-445-4400