

Mel Tucker's Response to Brenda Tracy's False Allegations as of 9/11/23

Brenda Tracy's allegations of harassment are completely false. The proceedings initiated by Ms. Tracy are devoid of any semblance of fairness for any matter of this importance, and the University's "hearing" scheduled for October 5-6 is so flawed that there is no other opportunity for the truth to come out. That is why I share some truth with you now.

I helped bring Ms. Tracy to campus in the summer of 2021 because I support her mission of sexual misconduct prevention. This single presentation was her only paid engagement with the University. We developed a mutual friendship that grew into an intimate, adult relationship; at this point, my wife and I had been estranged for a long time. Ms. Tracy and I engaged in dozens of calls throughout fall 2021 and winter 2022, many of which she initiated and which occurred late at night. We both talked about all sorts of intimate, private matters. She told me that I could trust her, and I proceeded to do just that. I was absolutely unaware of the previous negative comments that she had made about iconic MSU coaches, then-President Engler, MSU in general, and even her more recent criticism of Coach Harbaugh, that I learned about during this investigation.

The 1200 pages of investigation materials that Ms. Tracy released to the media contains a number of important facts that any fair-minded person would want to know in evaluating the situation. Even the investigator hired by the University found that we had a "**personal relationship**" and that we shared "**deeply personal and private information with each other.**" Ms. Tracy encouraged our personal relationship by inviting and accepting gifts from me. During the investigation, Ms. Tracy admitted requesting and accepting my gift of expensive athletic shoes, a \$200 Venmo payment, and a personal contribution to her non-profit. Not only did she accept those gifts, but she had to provide me her shoe size and address to receive the shoes, and her Venmo ID to receive the money.

Yes, I did have a late-night intimate conversation with Ms. Tracy in April 2022. Again, as even Ms. Tracy's statements to the investigator confirm, this conversation had nothing to do with the University and was outside of the scope of Title IX or any University policy. (By the way, while press reports have called this a "Title IX" investigation, that's inaccurate. The University admitted there is no Title IX jurisdiction, so the investigation of my private life was relegated to an alleged policy violation.) While I am saddened by Ms. Tracy's disclosure of the sensitive nature of this call, let me be perfectly clear—it was an entirely **mutual, private event between two adults living at opposite ends of the country**. She initiated the discussion that night, sent me a provocative picture of the two of us together, suggested what she may look like without clothes, **and never once during the 36 minutes did she object in any manner, much less hang up the phone.**

Following the call, it was not until four months later—only after Ms. Tracy's next paid presentation was postponed and only after I complained to her that she and her assistant were spreading rumors about my marriage—that she ever told *anyone* (including her therapist, best friend or attorney) that she was offended by the call. In fact, she gave me every indication that everything was fine. She sent me a "Happy Father's Day" text (two months after the call) and repeatedly expressed a desire to return to MSU, telling my assistants that she had a close

relationship with me. Also contrary to her allegations, I never cancelled any presentation. Given a personnel change and scheduling challenges as football season approached, we merely postponed it until January 2023. She chose to file her complaint instead of proceeding with the training.

The investigation has not been fair or unbiased. I can only conclude that there is an ulterior motive designed to terminate my contract based on some other factor such as a desire to avoid any Nasser taint, or my race or gender.

The sham “hearing” scheduled for October 5-6 is ridiculously flawed and not designed to arrive at the truth. For example, in this zoom hearing: (1) neither Ms. Tracy nor any of her witnesses will be required to testify under oath or penalty of perjury; (2) we cannot present or offer any substantive evidence of innocence; and (3) there is no opening statement, closing argument or any opportunity to explain our case. This “hearing” process was obviously designed for student infractions—not to address personal, private acts between adults in which disclosure of the intimate details impact one’s reputation and career. I have no intention of allowing Ms. Tracy’s character assassination to go unaddressed.

Ms. Tracy’s attorney told us from the very beginning that I should not lose my job over her allegations, but that it would take a lot of money to make it go away. Her twisting of our personal relationship months after it concluded is designed to revive her career and destroy my life, precipitated by her greed. One of the most absurd allegations by Ms. Tracy is that if our relationship and associated facts went public, only **she** would be harmed, not me. As the world can see, quite the opposite is true.

I have been ripped from the Team that I love, without any meaningful opportunity to tell my side of the story other than this press release. I am incredibly proud of the outstanding group of men on the Team and my heart aches to be sidelined. I ask everyone to consider carefully **the undisputed facts** outlined and reserve judgment until the full truth comes out.