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March 13, 2018

William Rudd, Ph.D.

President

Marietta College

215 Fifth St.

Marietta, OH 45750

Dear Dr.Rudd:

 I am writing to respectfully ask that you reconsider your plans for landscaping on the Marietta College campus. Specifically, I am concerned and disappointed about the plan to apply chemical fertilizer and herbicide on the campus grounds between Seventh and Fourth Streets.

 These substances will leach into the soil and potentially damage trees, shrubs, and other plants which currently beautify the MC campus. They will also pass into the ground water and be part of the effluents flowing through Marietta and into the Ohio River. MC has an amazing collection of trees which are a model to arborists or anyone else who admires and respects trees; I would hate to see these trees damaged by chemical herbicides. Chemicals like those to be used are also health risks for those on campus and in the community (gypohosates, for example, have been linked to cancer).

 As a respected institution of higher education in our region, Marietta College is looked upon as a model in many respects. I would like to think that MC can be a model of environmental stewardship by improving its landscaping through the planting of natives trees, shrubs, and grasses rather than displaying a monoculture of golf-course like alien grass. If you are concerned about bare spots and weeds in grassy areas, there are non-chemical alternatives for fertilizer that can be used to promote growth of existing grasses

 As a former employee of MC and as a resident of the Marietta community, I have been impressed and proud of your initiatives of outreach to the greater Marietta area. You have given the College a visibility and participation which has long been needed. I would encourage you to continue in that vein of responsible leadership and citizenship by offering a landscaping plan that supports community health, environmental stewardship, and appreciation of the natural beauty of the campus. By doing so, you will also provide a teachable moment for MC students who could witness (and participate perhaps) in environmentally sustainable practices of landscape management.

Sincerely yours,

George Banziger