

Dear Campus Community—

We have a problem in the United States. It is not a new problem—it has been with us since the nation's founding. It tore us apart in a bloody Civil War and it is tearing us apart now. It is intrinsic to our lives, whether we have the privilege of ignoring it or have the pain of enduring it. And that problem is structural racism, which pervades every corner of our society. It affects health, quality of life, where and how people live, and it is killing our fellow Americans and those who seek refuge here.

Let us collectively come together to express our grief and send our condolences to the family of George Floyd. Of Breonna Taylor. Of Ahmaud Arbery. They are just the latest African Americans who have lost their lives on account of this tragic and seemingly indelible strand of our history. Let us also lend our support to the African American members of our community who have suffered trauma because of these deaths or similar threats and incidences in their own lives. They have never been able to look away. It is time for the rest of us to stop looking the other way.

We say their names. But these three deaths do not stand alone. The rise of attacks on our Asian American communities as a result of COVID-19, the increasing levels of anti-Semitism, the growing number of anti-Muslim hate groups along with the upsurge of Islamophobia, and the intensification and escalation of anti-immigrant intolerance which pervade our country today must be rejected. White supremacy must be rejected. Bigotry must be rejected. Hate must be rejected.

No one in this country should be putting their very existence at risk by attempting to go about their daily life because the color of their skin, the clothing they wear, or visible marks of the religion they practice is marked as “other.”

We must as a university community live our core values of inclusivity, innovation, integrity, respect, social justice and equity and therefore we must reject the killing of Americans of color, the racist profiling of people of color and continue to support all the communities we serve. That includes the actual people on this campus. It is each of you reading this. And when I say *diversity* is who we are, it *is* who *we* are.

Until we lift up and address the needs of those of us and our neighbors who are hurting or harmed by this systemic racism, we *cannot* move forward.

Because we move forward together or not at all.

It is not enough for us to say we are against racism. We need to become anti-racist. This means examining the biases that each of us carry and then acknowledging them, taking responsibility for them, and daily striving to change them. Because those biases are barriers, preventing us from meaningful engagement with one another as fellow human beings.

I continue to be committed to engaging the campus community in a variety of ways. Please watch your email in the coming days for opportunities to connect, discuss and learn in order to assist us to move through these times.

Earlier today, Bernice King stated, quoting her father, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: “True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice.” Let us gather, in virtual community, and say, Enough. Because it will take each and every one of us, working hand-in-hand, to build a better future.

**Tomás D. Morales**

President