

Dear Coyotes and Colleagues,

I am both deeply saddened and angered by the loss of life this Saturday in Buffalo, New York, where a white male gunman deliberately shot 11 Black and two white victims at a Buffalo supermarket. This outrageous insanity has yet again taken place in a senseless act of violence directed at the African American community.

I join with President Biden's declaration that this racially motivated hate crime is "abhorrent to the very fabric of this nation." But let's be clear. We have been here before. Multiple times. With the shootings at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston in 2015 against Black Americans; with the antisemitic shootings at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018 and at Poway here in California in 2019; and at the Walmart in El Paso in 2019 against Hispanic Americans. The shooters in each of these incidents were white males, who had absorbed racist radicalization which led them to deliberately target people who were non-white or non-Christian.

We also saw here, in San Bernardino, how a radicalized Islamist man and his wife targeted his co-workers at a holiday party in 2015. We still say #SanBernardinoStrong. We lost CSUSB alumni, friends and loved ones that day. The common thread here is radicalization to the point of violence by the shooters, who have access to the means to harm and kill multiple fellow human beings.

We have a problem in our nation. It is not a new problem, and it is not a problem which we have put behind us. Our own Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism continues to track the number of racist and bigotry-fueled attacks which are taking place across the country against anyone whom the attacker does not define as 'acceptable'. And the trends are beyond disturbing.

CSUSB contributes to civil society and the world through teaching, research and community service. We value, promote and proclaim the values of diversity, equity and inclusion on our campus. But we also need to be clear that stating these words as well as teaching their meaning and value are not panaceas. They are simply first steps.

We weep for those who lost their lives and their families and friends who are left devastated. And we need to look clear-eyed at the ideologies of fear and hatred which have driven the actions of their murderers. Above all, we must continue to find ways to bring the power of education and civic engagement to combat hate and ignorance.

We cannot become numb to these horrible, unacceptable acts of domestic terrorism. Mass shootings in our schools, our places of worship, our places of business and entertainment and where we do our everyday shopping, are too horrifically common. These extremist actions have no place in a democratic republic. None.

Tomás D. Morales
President