

March 19, 2021

Dear Students, Staff and Faculty,

Yesterday Liesl Folks, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, and Ivy Banks, Associate Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion, jointly sent a [letter](#) to us all condemning discrimination, violence and hate against members of the Asian American Pacific Islander community and gender-based violence against women.

I want to remind everyone again that I have zero tolerance for any and all harassment, bullying, intimidation, threats, discrimination, coercion, and retaliation – anytime and anywhere.

Of specific relevance to Provost Folks' and Associate Vice Provost Banks' letter, there is no place in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cooperative Extension System and Experiment Station, for prejudice, discrimination, and/or violence against anyone. This of course includes all members of the Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander communities, and women, anyone with a marginalized identity, or anyone at all.

Injustice and inequality will have no home with us.

Every August we hold our college's first-year student orientation. The most important thing I say to our incoming class, more than once, is: *I have zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind, at any time and in any place. We will have 100% fairness, equity, and inclusion.*

Students, our college will be a place where you can pursue your academic goals and your personal growth, without fear of discrimination or fear for physical safety.

Provost Folks and Associate Vice Provost Banks state in their letter that "*As an institution of higher education, we have a **duty** to research, discuss, study and educate against anti-Asian violence, xenophobia and gender-based violence to equip our campus community with the tools to address and eradicate racism and other forms of hate.*"

One of our own experts in the field, [Dr. Russell Toomey](#), has been mentoring the *Asian Voices research project* team of Jared Barnett, Kiera Coulter, Sei Eun Kim, Rayni Thomas and Zhenqiang Zhao for the last five months on this very issue. Their recent data shows that we are not immune from abhorrent racist verbal and physical actions against Asians or people of Asian descent and these actions *increased* during the SARS COV-2 pandemic. This work was funded by a *UA Graduate and Professional Student Council Research and Project Grant* and CALS.

I ask you please to take 19 minutes to watch [their March 4 presentation](#) given as part of the [Frances McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, and Families Turbeville Speaker Series](#).

Dr. Toomey further told me that *“Research is clear that marginalized populations who experience discrimination in schools or workplaces are unlikely to make formal reports/complaints. The reasons for not reporting discrimination range from fear of retaliation to beliefs that nothing will change to obstacles that make reporting difficult and emotionally taxing (including fear of disbelief). Thus, the lack of official reports of anti-Asian discrimination at the UA is more likely due to lack of reporting rather than the lack of actual experiences of discrimination, as painfully described by participants in the Asian Voices research project.”*

For students who are impacted:

- [Asian Pacific American Student Affairs](#) may help you feel a sense of community and provide access to additional support services.
- CALS students and employees have access to **no-cost**, confidential counseling from [Ryan Daily, a licensed professional counselor](#).

All Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension employees, **please do not leave the support our students or colleagues need up to those with similar or marginalized identities. This work is for us all.**

- [OIA resources](#) on creating inclusive classrooms and addressing difficult topics. Please encourage your students to share their experiences – whether they are formally reporting them or not.
- Life & Work Connections has expanded [free counseling services](#) for benefits-eligible employees.
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255. Check your inbox on Monday mornings, twice monthly, for our *Help When You Most Need It* mailing with additional resources.
- The [National Council on Family Relations](#) offers excellent readings, webinars and other resources on dismantling racism against the Asian American community.

If you experience, or are in any way aware of, or made aware of, discrimination or harassment REPORT IT to the [Office of Institutional Equity](#).

I also want to remind everyone that [hate crimes are federal offenses](#).

If you are ever in fear of reaching out, please contact me personally at sburgess@cals.arizona.edu. I want to hear from you, and I will take every action I can to help you.

You can also leave anonymous information with our [Grapevine web form](#), UAPD Tips Line (520-621-8477), or the Dean of Students' [Bias Education and Support Team](#).

Best regards,



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