California State University SAN MARCOS | OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear campus community,

I am deeply saddened to send you a message this morning in the wake of senseless and horrific shootings at three Atlanta-area spas that killed eight individuals, six of whom were Asian women. My heart goes out to the victims, their loved ones and all those who are grieving.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen as a national and global community a rise in anti-Asian hate incidents, spurred on by xenophobia and conspiracy theories. This was recently validated by a Stop AAPI Hate National Report. We know this escalating violence and hate are part of a long history of anti-Asian bigotry, including the hyper-sexualization of Asian women.

Let me be clear, this normalization of hate and violence is unacceptable. As a university community, our commitment to anti-racism in all its forms demands that we stand up and speak out.

At this moment, teams from Student Affairs and the Office of Inclusive Excellence are mobilizing to provide additional spaces and resources for community building, dialogue and action. They will share more information with you shortly.

I also want to share that we formed an Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) student experience workgroup to look at the challenges facing APIDA student success. This workgroup is composed of students, faculty and staff. They will be working toward making recommendations for tailored APIDA student support and belonging, including a student center.

In addition, please save the date for an interactive panel event on April 15, “From Yellow Peril to COVID-19,” that will raise awareness about the impact of pandemics – both past and present – as they relate to racism experienced by the APIDA community. This event is open to all members of our community, and I hope you will join me in attending. To learn more and register, visit: https://bit.ly/csusmapril15.

I also want to thank the APIDA Faculty Staff Association, which recently launched a new online hub of informative and educational resources that specifically addresses anti-Asian racism and cultural awareness.

If you or someone you know might need support, I want to share the following resources:

- Students can contact Student Health and Counseling Services for a range of services. The Cougar Care Network can also provide information about on- and off- campus resources. And the Cross-Cultural Center, along with all of our Student Life Centers for Inclusion, Identity and Empowerment Student Life (Black Student Center, Gender Equity Center, Latinx Center, LGBTQA Pride Center) are staffed by professional and student staff members who offer their support and solidarity.
- For employees, the Employee Assistance Program is available at 1-800-367-7474. Additionally, FACES has resources in support of faculty, and the Staff Center has resources in support of staff.
- The Office of Inclusive Excellence and the Office of Ombuds, and Title IX and Discrimination, Harassment, Retaliation Office provide a variety of resources that address matters of diversity, inclusion, equity, and discrimination.

I can’t even imagine the pain that so many members of our community are feeling right now. This terrible tragedy impacts all of us - an act of hate or violence against one of us is an act against all of us. I know at times it feels that progress is too slow in coming, but I am grateful for all those in our community who are on the frontlines of creating a more equitable and just world for all. As we extend our thoughts and solidarity to members of our APIDA community, may we also recommit in our words and actions to our values of diversity, equity and social justice. Thank you for all that you are doing to care for one another – I continue to think of you and offer my support.

In Cougar Solidarity,

Ellen Neufeldt
President

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