

A decorative horizontal line consisting of a series of small, colored rectangular segments in various colors including yellow, orange, red, purple, blue, green, and teal.

August 6, 2019

Dearest Aggies,

This summer has proven to be a difficult one for our campus, our state, and our nation. In our campus community, we have endured a hate-filled video featuring Texas A&M students, and as a nation, mass shootings spurred on by racism, hate, and White supremacy. In the words of Civil Rights Movement activist Fannie Lou Hamer, many of us are “sick and tired of being sick and tired.” You have every right to be tired as it is difficult to feel safe and possess a sense of belonging in the face of bigotry and violence.

I wish I could say that these are “isolated incidents” or that it is the “alcohol talking.” However, I do not believe either to be true. Rather, hate is both systemic and ideological. Left unchecked, hate, bigotry, and discrimination permeate our structures and belief systems. On August 5, 2019, a day after the mass shooting in Dayton, a group of Ohio citizens gathered, shouting a clear and pointed request of their state’s Governor: “Do something!” I could not agree more. Together, we can “do something” to address these issues.

As Aggies, we are all members of one of the world’s premier institutions of higher education. Education and development are our super powers. I ask that every one of you be an education-activist to affect change in our communities.

Do: Be an ally. When hate is directed at a particular group, it is not only that group that is harmed. Hate destroys entire communities; it impacts us all. When possible, teach. Work to shift discriminatory thinking.

The Office for Diversity is here to help. On our website, diversity.tamu.edu, you will find programs and resources to train you to be an effective advocate for diversity and social justice while resisting racism, discrimination, and hate. There, you will also find syllabi to help equip you to have critical conversations about inclusion and respect.

Do: Engage in bystander intervention (but, *not* when violence is taking place!). Hateful discourse and behaviors can be shut down if just one person speaks up. A simple comment like, “don’t say/do that, that’s not ok” has the potential to go a long way. Remember – You are not just intervening with one person, but with everyone who is observing the interaction. Your intervention may encourage someone else to stand-up and intercede the next time they witness racist comments and performances that perpetuate discrimination and hate.

Texas A&M offers Green Dot bystander intervention training, greendot.tamu.edu, to support violence prevention. Those who “live the Green Dot” understand that no single person has to do everything, “but everyone has to do something.” Additionally, the Office for Diversity will soon be introducing anti-discrimination centered bystander intervention training. When that training is available, announcements will be sent to the campus.

Do: Report incidents of hate through the StopHate Portal, stophate.tamu.edu. The Aggie Network is a half million strong, with approximately 70,000 current students and 430,000 former students. If each one of us calls out hate, we can make extraordinary progress in creating and maintaining affirming, respectful communities that everyone is entitled to enjoy.

Do: Engage in self-care. “Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it’s a simple concept in theory, it’s something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. It’s also key to a good relationship with oneself and others” (*What Self-Care Is – and What It Isn’t* by Raphailia Michael, <https://psychcentral.com/blog/what-self-care-is-and-what-it-isnt-2/>).

The Office for Diversity is keenly aware that bias, discrimination, and hate can take a toll on our health. We share with you “Self-Care Resources for Discrimination, Racism, and Hate” as presented by The College of New Jersey, <https://caps.tcnj.edu/self-care-resources-for-discrimination-racism-and-hate/>. In addition to finding potential useful resources such as “[Ten Ways to Fight Hate: A Community Resource Guide](#)” at this site, you will learn how to engage in physical, social, mental, spiritual, and emotional self-care.

Aggies, we can communicate decisively and demonstrate our Core Values by embracing inclusion and rejecting hate.

In solidarity,

Robin R. Means Coleman

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