

[group-education-all-employees] A Call to Action #1

Mary Ann Danowitz CED Dean <educationdean@ncsu.edu>

Fri, Jun 5, 2020 at 4:24 PM

To: group-education-all-employees@ncsu.edu

Dear Faculty and Staff Colleagues,

On Thursday afternoon, Chancellor Woodson and university leadership emailed a statement to faculty and staff about the challenging times facing our nation and the ongoing prevalence of racism and inequity. In that statement, university leadership condemned white supremacy, racial injustice, and all forms of racism and discrimination. They also outline action steps NC State will take to address its own shortcomings as a university, including requiring every student, faculty, and staff member to complete a diversity and inclusion learning module; and assembling an interdisciplinary team to evaluate NC State's policies. Read the full statement and action items [here](#).

While reaffirming the University Leadership's statement, I wanted to let you know that over the past week I have been listening to colleagues and thinking deeply about my role as a human being and my role as the dean of our college, as well as our responsibility as a college in addressing racism and injustice. Like many of you, I am gripped with outrage and pain at the injustice and violence surrounding George Floyd's murder and so many other Black men and women whose lives were taken unjustly. We know too well these heinous acts are part of a history of events that includes four centuries of enslavement of Black people along with violence, systemic oppression, and discrimination in every phase of life, especially education, health, law and its enforcement, employment, and housing. I also acknowledge, because of my white privilege, the meaning of my words fall far short of the lived experiences of our Black colleagues, students, alumni, friends, and community partners.

To all Black faculty, staff, and students, I know you are rightfully hurt, tired, angry, and emotionally exhausted. I am committed to using my words and actions to validate and improve your lived experiences within the college and university.

After watching the unfolding crises in our communities, listening to some of our Black colleagues, thinking about our students in these grave times, and reflecting on those who are feeling hopeless, horrified, hurt, and/or exhausted, I am calling on us to take action as colleagues, as allies, and as a community to do all that we can to support those who have been and continue to be treated unjustly.

As members of the College of Education community, we must embrace our collective responsibility to make sure this crisis is one that drives change in our college. We must recommit, intensify, and bring to life in new and different ways the core of our college's mission:

The College of Education is a voice of innovation for learning across the lifespan. We prepare professionals who educate and lead. Our inquiry and practice reflect integrity, a commitment to social justice and the value of diversity in a global community.

As your dean, I am committed to leading our college community that includes faculty, staff, and students who have aspirations to prepare professionals who educate and lead in ways that increase life opportunities while eliminating social injustices. Our mission compels us to be assertive on all fronts to defeat ignorance, hatred, and oppression. We must live out what it means to reflect integrity and a commitment to social justice. We must begin by being a community that respects each other's humanity in an environment where all who are part of the College of Education community feel a sense of belonging and support.

To respect one's humanity requires understanding what that is for each of us in our respective ways. It calls for listening, compassion, valuing, and caring. It also calls for all of us to undertake and individually commit to the difficult task of engaging in introspection and conversations to become more honest and aware of our individual biases and responsibility to eradicate white privilege, discrimination, invisibility, and silencing in our classrooms, schools, organizations, and communities. We as a college of education must lead the way in responding to today's challenges because of the critical responsibility we have as educators and the critical role that education plays in igniting hope, change, and opportunity in lives and communities. All people, particularly White people, need to own that racism is not a problem that Black people can fix. Next week we will send out a list of resources to assist you with the work you may need to do to more effectively address racism and other forms of oppression because it will take us all.

I am personally committed to taking action to reduce racial injustice in society, our college, and our university, as well as to build a strong inclusive community that prepares educators to challenge injustice and to champion the potential of all people, especially those from minoritized groups and low-wealth communities. As part of that commitment, we as a college are taking the following actions:

1. **Town Hall Listening and Sharing for Faculty and Staff:** From 4 to 5 p.m., Tuesday, June 9, our college will host a Zoom gathering for our faculty and staff to come together to express our feelings and thoughts. Please come with openness and ideas that lead to action in our college and how we can support one another to build a more inclusive community.
2. **Town Hall Listening and Sharing for Students:** Next week we will hold two Zoom meetings for students -- one for graduate students and one for undergraduate students -- to come together to share their feelings and thoughts.
3. **Reach Out and Show You Care:** Please check in with your Black colleagues and show you care. At this time, it is particularly necessary, important, and meaningful for White colleagues to engage. Listen and try to increase your understanding.
4. **Change Agent Group to Become an Anti-racist College:** Beginning this summer Professor Joy Gaston Gayles will work alongside a group of faculty and staff to build on the work of COMID and to identify strategies and actions for the college to more fully engage in anti-racist education.
5. **Review of Rules and Regulations:** The college will begin in August to analyze and make recommendations to strengthen college rules and regulations and to increase accountability to ensure inclusivity and equity.
6. **Recruiting, Retaining, and Graduating Students of Color:** The college will be more aggressive in increasing the number of students we recruit, retain, and graduate from underrepresented groups.

I am counting on all of us to step up and have the backs of our colleagues and students of color. Adding to Chancellor Woodson's words, it is urgent that we do more and we do better now. I am grateful to all of you for showing your support and compassion for those who are in pain and for joining me in this call to action.

Mary Ann

--

You received this message because you are subscribed to the Google Groups "group-education-all-employees@ncsu.edu" group.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to group-education-all-employees+unsubscribe@ncsu.edu.

To view this discussion on the web visit https://groups.google.com/a/ncsu.edu/d/msgid/group-education-all-employees/CAO4wgfGQKx3KBTW5_hfQayjaJU4sZv3-b_cZR4LB4x9h8Oie5w%40mail.gmail.com.