

Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

This week marks the one-year anniversary of George Floyd's murder, and as we look back on this very challenging year as a nation. I want to thank our many campus constituents who have participated in, initiated, and supported our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism work this past year. And while we acknowledge that many challenges remain not only at Cypress College, but across our nation, we will stay committed to learning from one another and embracing the often-difficult work of dismantling the barriers that stand in the way of our students and colleagues.

Unfortunately, this year has also exposed deep and systemic divisions within our country, and we have seen a rise in attacks on various groups across our communities and country. Cypress College has been unapologetic in condemning bigotry directed at our communities of color – Black, AAPI, DESI – as well as LGBTQ+, and our Muslim communities, and now, we must stand up to the wave of anti-Semitism occurring in recent weeks. In both Orange County and Los Angeles, deeply troubling acts of violence have been directed at our Jewish communities. In the last week alone the Anti-Defamation League has reported 193 anti-Semitic incidents, including in New York, Illinois, California, and Arizona. In 2019, the ADL recorded more than 2,100 cases of assault, vandalism, and harassment against Jews across the U.S., the most since tracking began in 1979 and 2020 was the third-worst year on record. The attacks on our Jewish citizens are part of the rise in hate crimes across our nation, and denouncements of the most recent attacks have been made by Amnesty International and the Muslim Public Affairs Council, among others.

The Cypress College community hosts our Yom HaShoah event each year, to listen and learn from Holocaust survivors who speak of the inhumanity they experienced, as well as the hope that arises when we are courageous enough to stand up against cruelty and hatred. It is through their stories that our own humanity is challenged or affirmed. So must we continue to educate one another about the historical and political reasons for why groups of people are marginalized, the power structures that encourage these divisions and the racist narratives that seek to exclude and create dissent among us. Our college continues to stand up against bigotry and for the peaceful resolution of our differences; as educators we must continue to lead the way as an institution that allows for discourse rather than anger or violence. Hatred has no place at Cypress College.

Buen Cypress



JoAnna Schilling, Ph.D.
President, Cypress College



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