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**WESTERN
MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY**



Dear WMU community,

Our hearts are broken at the violence, discrimination and hatred we have seen unfolding upon our screens and across our nation. The events we have witnessed on the news in recent days and weeks did not occur on our campus; they did not bring descension and disruption to our Kalamazoo streets. But, nonetheless, they strike at our hearts and in our conscience.

There is much pain and suffering in our world, along with the uncertainty and tension that a global health crisis can engender. An individual's own confusion or fear does not excuse inflicting pain or suffering on others. We stand together as a community, disavowing all actions that are steeped in racism, xenophobia, homophobia or any other version of hatred. These actions do not align with our values and have no place on our campus.

As a higher education institution, part of our responsibility is to create a space where people can engage and interact, free from fear of retribution or personal harm. At Western Michigan University, we value diversity and inclusion in thought, in action and in every other aspect of humanity, and we strive to break down barriers and model the behaviors and responses we hope to see in the greater world.

We believe that there is great power in education and learning when it comes to thwarting hate. That's why we are unwavering in our commitment to opening our doors to people from all parts of the world, all backgrounds and all beliefs. As a community of diverse individuals, we get to know each other, we interact and break down any preconceived notions we may have held. We move forward with open minds and open hearts about what is best about humanity.

In working to do our best in building understanding, we may misstep; it's painful and uncomfortable when we make mistakes or when we uncover biases and misconceptions, individually or collectively. But we don't stop at simply identifying what's wrong or missing—we listen to one another and work to change our attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and actions. When we are willing to open ourselves to new ideas, the result is that we treat each other with kindness and respect and build mutual understanding.

Please know that Western Michigan University—your University—is now and will always be a place that recognizes and celebrates the depth and breadth of humanity and the human spirit, open to all, accepting of everyone, so that all may learn.

Sincerely,

Edward Montgomery
President

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