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Orlando Shooting Statement

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Late this week a rainbow flag was raised on a flagpole in the center of our campus. Once raised, it was promptly lowered to half-staff—a symbolic move to honor those lost as a result of the June 12 mass shooting in Orlando.

That flag flown at half-staff should also be viewed as a reaffirmation of our commitment to and our support for the members of the LGBT community on our campus and in communities around the globe. We may never know the true reason a gunman targeted members of that community, but it is clear that this was a hate crime that deprived us all of the potential that 49 diverse and loving human beings offered humanity.

Our core values as a university revolve around respect for every individual. Each person stands ready to contribute his or her unique talents to the world we all share, and each person deserves and has our respect. At this time, when members of the LGBT community are reeling from the shock of the crime and are feeling particularly vulnerable, I ask every member of our campus community to look for ways to reach out, voice support, and reaffirm and reflect on how we can build a world that embraces the human dignity and value of all.