



Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

In recent weeks, our community has been subjected to a torrent of hate speech. It has been scrawled on our walls, stamped in the snow, emailed to our faculty, yelled from crowds and posted online. The volume and velocity at which these hateful acts have occurred have forced multiple law enforcement agencies to spend countless hours tracking anonymous trolls and vandals who seek to frighten us and challenge our values, chasing unsubstantiated rumors and investigating unverified reports. We are outraged and saddened by these hateful acts. We condemn hate in all of its forms, unequivocally.

The University continues to work with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, and is using all available resources, technologies and best practices to ensure the safety of our students, faculty and staff. Based on our ongoing conversations with law enforcement, our campus is safe. Accordingly, the University will be open and classes will resume on Monday, Dec. 2, and will continue through the end of the semester.

We recognize our reassurance may not completely alleviate the sense of fear among some members of our community. We continue to grant broad discretion to faculty to accommodate students who are unable to attend class in person. Our academic deans are working with faculty to ensure that students will not be penalized for missing class in person, although they are expected to finish academic work and meet deadlines for turning in assignments. As educators, we must show compassion to and care for our students.

We stand firmly committed to rallying the full resources of this University to move aggressively into implementation of the agreements made with our students of color, international students and our Jewish community. As such, the academic affairs side of the University will:

- accelerate curriculum development and approval processes, including the first-year experience course SEM100, and additional course offerings in social difference and social justice;
- work with faculty and students on curricular changes so that we can leverage the incredible expertise of our faculty to address these issues in the classroom;
- continue to train and develop our faculty and staff to provide inclusive teaching and services; and

- redouble our efforts to recruit and retain faculty and students from underrepresented communities.

Our community must stand in unity to reject hatred and pursue shared goals. While we will return to campus on Monday, Dec. 2, we will not return to business as usual. As a community, we must push urgently for change on our campus. Change is hard. It is made harder by the fact that our University exists inside a society where racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and other hateful biases and prejudices are on the rise.

We hold ourselves to a higher standard and must step up and rise to the occasion.

Maxwell School Professor Jenn Jackson recently said it best: “We can’t end all of that at once, but we can certainly chip away at it with intention... We may be afraid at times, or may even burn out, but fear is not enough to keep us from struggling for a more just campus environment.”

We look forward to welcoming you back to campus.

Warm regards,

Kent Syverud
Chancellor and President

John Liu
Incoming Interim Vice Chancellor and Provost