



Dear NPRC Community:

The current pandemic has revealed many truths about our society. In many cases, it has highlighted the goodwill and caring community found across this country as individuals have banded together to help address the growing need created by this unique global health crisis. In many other cases, however, it has shown us the glaring disparate impacts of Covid-19 on the rural poor and communities of color due to longstanding health and structural inequities, legacies of prejudice and racism we grapple with still today.

In the last four months, we have come to know the names of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and most recently George Floyd. Whatever your perspective on the specifics of each case, I hope we can agree that these three lives being taken from us so soon is devastating.

Diversity and Inclusion is one of our core principles. The college strives to be a home and safe haven for our students, faculty and staff of color just as we strive to do this for all of the many rich and diverse communities we serve. I believe that in many cases we succeed in helping people survive and thrive, but I am also certain that in numerous cases the same expressions of hate and exclusion that daily impact people of color and vulnerable communities outside the college, affect our family right here in our own backyard.

To our students, staff and faculty of color – you are seen, you are heard.

Given these tragic incidents and mounting tension building in our own cities and across the country, I know many of you are in deep pain having to confront these inequities, sometimes on a daily basis. Please know that I am here to support you, this college is here to support you, and we will continue our endeavor to provide an environment where everyone can thrive.

At this time, I want to remind you of the *college's value statement*:

*NPRC values lifelong and organizational **learning** by encouraging and fostering continuous learning and intellectual curiosity among all those served by the College.*

*NPRC values **compassion** by providing and maintaining a welcoming and understanding environment that embraces the diversity of our students and meets their needs, regardless of age, experience, ability, and background.*

*NPRC values **inspiration** by striving to empower those served and equip them with curiosity, hope, and courage.*

*NPRC values **integrity** through authentic, honest, reliable, and responsible service, while holding fast to its mission.*

*NPRC values **innovation** through its uniquely adaptive delivery model and organizational structure in order to best serve students and overcome logistical and educational barriers.*

*NPRC values **community** by growing connections, promoting engagement, and fulfilling community goals within each community and instills this value in its students and employees.*

The thing that will ultimately change these unfair systems that continue to disproportionately harm people of color and people of low income is for each of us to learn more, to understand how we contribute, both knowingly and unknowingly, to these systems and to actively work to change them. I am committed to learn more, to take real actions to make a difference, to be better and to do more.

The frustration and anger that has led to protests across the country is understandable. These senseless deaths coupled with the frustration and isolation precipitated by the health crisis has placed each of us in sensitive, difficult situations. We must choose how to take meaningful action to improve the society we live in. Take care of yourself and take care of each other. This is what our values require of each of us.

It will take all of us acting collectively with informed intention and empowering care to start to see the change we need. I ask each of us to please take an intentional step today to be better and to do more.

Sincerely,

Joe

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