Students: We invite you to participate in our path forward.
1 message

Communications and Marketing <communications@georgiasouthern.edu>   Fri, Jun 5, 2020 at 12:00 PM
To: GS-Students <gs-students@georgiasouthern.edu>

Dear Students:

We join you in outrage over the recent events in our country, including the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. These events shed light on our nation's deep divide regarding racial equality. We extend our continued condolences to the families involved and all members of our learning community who are personally affected by these tragedies – especially our students, faculty, and staff of color.

Recently, Georgia Southern University learned of some inappropriate and offensive social media posts. We are outraged to see such social media posts that include statements, images, videos and other content expressing ignorance, racism, discrimination, and disrespect. We are saddened that you must deal with these inappropriate messages while also living through a global health pandemic and witnessing violence and division across our country.

There are some real, historical and divisive biases in our society. These biases are shaped by who we are, where we are from, and so much more. At Georgia Southern, we are committed to overcoming these biases. We assure you that when we become aware of possible incidents of racial bias, they are taken seriously. A team representing the Office of Inclusive Excellence and the Division of Student Affairs thoroughly reviews each incident and determines the appropriate course of action.

The Georgia Southern community prioritizes Inclusive Excellence where we respect individuals and all the identities we represent. Our success as an institution depends on how well we engage in issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Furthermore, your success as students and future alumni is also dependent on your ability to navigate the most challenging of issues, and right now many of them center on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As new leaders at Georgia Southern, we embrace the university's values of openness and inclusion, and reaffirm our commitment to building a more inclusive community where every member of the Georgia Southern family feels they are heard and valued. We want to reiterate President Marrero's message to Eagle Nation on Monday that we must take measures to stand up for our shared values, and for one another. At this time, we invite you to participate in our path forward to our shared value of Inclusive Excellence in the following ways:

·   Participating in the Virtual Community Listening Session for students that will be hosted on Tuesday, June 9 from 12:30-2pm (a separate email will be sent with meeting details). There will also be listening sessions for alumni, faculty and staff.
·   Letting us know, consistently, the steps we can take to improve your experiences by submitting your ideas via our Inclusive Excellence Idea Catcher: https://academics. georgiasouthern.edu/diversity/inclusive-excellence-idea-catcher/.
·   Initiating a comprehensive policy review to ensure diversity, equity, and inclusion are fully incorporated into all university practices and procedures.
·   Adding an Inclusive Excellence video to the SOAR orientation curricula for incoming students.
·   Including in our first-year experience course five modules focused exclusively on Inclusive Excellence.

Faculty and staff are in your corner. We want you to succeed. We are here to celebrate your successes, support you in your deepest sorrows, and challenge you to expand your worldview. Let us engage in respectful dialogue about the most challenging issues facing our community and our world while showing what it truly means to be Georgia Southern Eagles. Please take every measure to take care of yourselves during this time and know that your well-being is our highest priority as well.

Our best,

TaJuan Wilson, Ed.D.   Shay Little, Ph.D.
Associate Vice President for Inclusive Excellence   Vice President for Student Affairs
and Chief Diversity Officer