



BARSTOW

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

June 1, 2020

Dear Barstow Community College Family,

Today is another important day in the history of our college and in our community and the nation. No doubt you are all aware of the protests that have been taking place around the country in response to yet more actions that demonstrate the horrible truths of social injustice that continue to plague our nation, that threatens to tear apart our communities, and that weighs too heavily on the hearts and souls of many of you who continue to directly experience these injustices.

Please know that I empathize with the pain, sadness, anger, and exhaustion that many Black students, faculty and staff are understandably feeling at this moment. And these feelings extend to all people of color and those who, for myriad reasons, have been systematically excluded, denied, disenfranchised, left unheard or unseen, for far too long.

At this time, however, I know that while empathy is important and essential, it is not enough. We must come together as a community of educators to acknowledge and speak out and up about the persistence of systematic oppression and exclusion in all aspects of our society. As a college community, we have taken many steps to address the barriers so many of our students experience in trying to learn and fully participate in all areas of social life essential to social justice and human well-being, and I applaud the many courageous leaders – and I mean all the faculty, classified staff, administrators, and student leaders – who have been working hard to better understand the experiences of our students and to make our college a place that truly honors diversity, supports the inclusion of everyone, and works to transform the system that continues to yield inequities in outcomes.

In my weekly meeting with BCC managers this morning, I acknowledged my own recognition that there is so much more **I must do** to make equity my number one priority for Barstow Community College. Although much of our great work is intentionally designed to address, over the long-run, the socioeconomic inequities that fuel much of our social unrest, today presents itself as a wake-up call that it has not been enough and that today we have the opportunity to commit to doing more. I think that we begin with the critical self-reflection and conversations that require each of us to address our own blind spots and our personal justifications for not doing more.

I begin with acknowledgement of my own white privileges that keep me from knowing – really knowing at the visceral level, not just in my head – what my Black brothers and sisters and their parents and grandparents have and continue to experience. Although I hold an advanced degree after dedicating over a decade of study and research to learning about social and cultural differences among people, I admit that there is so much more for me to learn about how to translate a willingness to be part of the solution to effectively supporting the solution for our college, for our students, for our community. From what I have seen in all of you, I believe that you can help me to make that translation by sharing your experiences and what you know of our students' experiences to be what we need to be for them and for us collectively.

I acknowledge that at our college, I have yet to adequately support creating a safe space for all of us to speak our truths and to be listened to with open hearts and minds. Some of you have been trying to establish these spaces, and I look to you to help me to immediately provide these spaces for us to support



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one another, and especially our students, over the profound sense of frustration and grief many of you are experiencing today. Within these spaces, we must individually and collectively confront the realities of racism, discrimination and exclusion based on otherness that shape all of our thinking and ways of interacting with one another. I ask that each of you join me in exploring what you can do in your daily practices, your teaching, your program development, your community engagement and your interpersonal interactions to mitigate the forms of anti-Blackness and systemic injustices that pervade OUR community.

Many of you may have learned that the City of Barstow declared a local emergency and enacted a curfew to begin today at 6:00 pm and end at 6:00 am tomorrow, Tuesday. This curfew has been put in place in response to civil unrest and the City states that the curfew is intended to give daytime opportunities to protestors to make their voices heard throughout the City and the world.

The college has joined in supporting this action by closing the college campus today at 4:30 pm to allow employees working at the campus ample time to get home prior to the start of the curfew. Not knowing what the days to follow will bring, I have asked our managers to support the 4:30 pm closure of the physical campus throughout the rest of the work week, through Thursday, June 4.

Please know that I welcome your views and your suggestions on how to help our college take another step up in serving our community as a leader for positive change and as a place where real opportunity exists for all. For us to get past yet another crisis and for us to do more than put bandages on the wounds that we all experience – and some much more deeply than others – we must be in this together for the healing and for the reshaping of tomorrow.

Let there be light and love in the hearts of all of us. Please take thoughtful measures as we continue to fight our health emergency and to battle with renewed resolve the social injustices that continue to fragment us.

Sincerely,

Eva Bagg, Ph.D.
Superintendent-President
Barstow Community College