

Campus Update 11-2-20

Dear Community Members of Garrigus,

On Thursday, October 29th, there was a bias-related incident where an unidentified person/s vandalized a bulletin board in the main lobby of Garrigus which had the statement Black Lives Matter. In this case, the word Black was torn down leaving the words Lives Matter. At the University of Connecticut we strive to create a safe and inclusive community for all students.

You are invited to join members of our community for a meeting on **Wednesday, November 4th, at 8pm via WebEx** to discuss the impact of this incident and how we will continue to work together to promote an environment of productive dialogue in which individuals and groups of people aren't hurt or harmed. The link to this meeting will be sent out via email 15 minutes prior to the meeting.

When situations like this occur, it is important to not only take a stand against the bias action, but also to educate on why the incident can be viewed as offensive and harmful. Please find the video link provided below and an infographic from the State of the Dream report for your viewing consideration. The State of the Dream report is constructed by members of the United for a Fair Economy (UFE) foundation, and their goal is to create education, trainings, and creative communication to support social movements to increase equity across the United States democracy. The infographic included gives statistical and meaningful context of the social inequity the Black Live Matter movement was founded to fight against within the U.S. economic system.

What's wrong with saying "all lives matter"? | Black Lives Matter (Short, 2 minute video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s29qACe0mEA>

This is only one perspective on the national Black Lives Matter Vs All Lives Matter debate. We believe it is crucial to have an open dialogue about these difficult topics without judgment or persecution. Although we may stray away from these difficult conversations, we must engage in discourse that strives for equity and understanding in our communities. As the Garrigus Hall Director, I am committed to the education and well-being of the members of our community. I will be offering individual virtual meetings to any resident of Garrigus who want to learn more about and engage in civil discourse about this topic. My

contact information will be at the bottom of this email for anyone who is interested in contacting me.

A bias-related incident is an incident that negatively targets, intimidates, or threatens an individual or group due to race, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical, mental, and intellectual disabilities, as well as past/present history of mental disorders. This includes, but is not limited to, graffiti or images that harass or intimidate individuals or groups due to the above characteristics.

We hope that the person(s) responsible for this behavior will choose to make a different decision in the future. If there is anything myself or the Garrigus staff can do to assist you, please feel free to contact me at the Garrigus Hall Director Office: 860-207-3956 or via email jeffrey.benike@uconn.edu. Thank you all for your time and I look forward to discussing this further with anyone interested.

Best,

Jeff Benike

Jeffrey Benike, M.S.

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