

From: UofL Update,Service Account
Sent: Tuesday, April 07, 2020 6:00 AM
To: UofL Update,Service Account <ulupdate@louisville.edu>
Subject: COVID-19 message from Interim Senior Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity

Colleagues:

Over the past weeks, we have experienced things never before seen in our lifetime.

Thank you for helping us band together to make sure that our primary constituents, our students and patients, are taken care of as much as possible under these circumstances. I have witnessed an abundance of students, faculty and staff coming together to support each other during this difficult time. Senior leadership has been meeting literally every day to address the concerns and needs of our university family. Communication to our campus constituents has been extensive and continues to be the link to ensure we are all informed.

In this changing environment, we owe a special thanks to our colleagues, those essential employees who are balancing concerns about their own health and safety, as well as that of their family and loved ones. They include our Physical Plant custodial, labor and skilled employees, staff and students working in Housing and University Libraries and other areas of the university, and staff on the front lines across the university who have been coming to campus to manage offices, support our technology needs, support our students, answer phones and provide information to concerned campus stakeholders. Additionally, we certainly cannot forget those who work in health care and social work fields who have joined forces to care for the sick and provide case management for their families. Finally, our researchers continue to engage in groundbreaking work to find a solution to this crisis.

The last few weeks have been a stressful time, filled with anxiety, requiring special efforts to balance work and family and maintain the “community of care” that Dr. Bendapudi continually speaks about as one of our Cardinal Principles. In these times, please continue to be mindful of our most vulnerable populations, and remember that for many students and colleagues, UofL is physically and emotionally “home.”

I also want to remind you that, in our response to COVID-19, words matter. Communications intended to keep us well-informed can inadvertently be the source of misinformation creating an atmosphere of mistrust. The World Health Organization (WHO) identified the novel coronavirus as “COVID-19,” deliberately avoiding geographic/ethnic/racial descriptions as disparaging terms have the unintended consequences of creating

unnecessary fear for some populations. From recent history, WHO recognizes words can have unintended consequences in terms of creating unnecessary fear for some populations. Across the nation, and within our own community, there have been reports of bias, discrimination, and/or stigma directed toward persons with Asian ancestry. This is contrary to the university's core. We have to be diligent in our efforts to support each other, respect all our multiple identities, and actively intervene when we see bias, stigma or discrimination invading our community due to the fear that hides within us.

Remember, UofL is a community that strives to achieve an environment of inclusion. The Office of Diversity and Equity, the HSC Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the International Center, and many other departments and recognized student organizations are here to support anyone who is feeling isolated or has experienced discrimination or harassment based on their identity.

However, it cannot stop there. We are all responsible for looking out for each other, and especially in this time. If you see an act of bias, discrimination or injustice occurring, do something. Now, more than ever, let us focus on our commitment of being our neighbor's keeper and incorporate our values of diversity, inclusion, respect, and collaboration in our everyday actions. Together we can put an invisible, unbreakable barrier around our community to use words to empower us instead of divide us.

As we work to maintain composure and build confidence that we will get past this time in our history, I encourage you to remain hopeful. Continue to do your best and be your best. When things get tough, take time to care for yourself. Spend quality time with your family during this period, as we are reminded how quickly things can change. Try to do something fun, and allow yourself a moment to breathe, relax and celebrate the little things that, up until now, may have been taken for granted. Be intentional about trying to stay positive. Rest and eat well. Most importantly, know that you are valued, that you and the contributions you make to your families, the university and the community are very much appreciated.

Our Cardinal family with all its diverse identities and perspectives is still strong, and we will get through this. Please remember to check on family, students, colleagues and neighbors. We will continue to check in and check on YOU as well, to let you know that the university is grateful for your hard work and your unflinching commitment. Let us continue to carry the Cardinal Principles within us, on campus and at home.

Remember also that there are many resources available to you during this time. **UofL-specific resources include:**

Office of Diversity and Equity: <https://louisville.edu/diversity>

- HSC Office of Diversity and Inclusion: <http://louisville.edu/hsc/diversity> and on Twitter: @UofLHSCODI
- International Center: <https://louisville.edu/internationalcenter>
- Resources for the LGBT Community: <https://louisville.edu/lgbt>

For additional opportunities to remain connected remotely, members of the campus community are invited to follow these Diversity Division units on Instagram for a rotating live chat Wednesdays at noon:

- Cultural Center: @UofLCulturalCenter <https://www.instagram.com/uoflculturalctr/>
- Muhammad Ali Institute: @UofLMAI <https://www.instagram.com/uoflmai/>
- Diversity Education and Inclusive Excellence: @UofLDivEduc <https://www.instagram.com/uofldiveduc/>
- LGBT Center: @LGBTCenterUofL <https://www.instagram.com/lgbtcenteruofl/>

Other available resources

- UofL's Women's Center has developed a list of [activities and attractions](#) to keep people engaged and entertained while self-isolating.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers [resources for managing stress](#).
- The National Inclusive Excellence Leadership Academy has developed a guide to support and empower diversity, equity and inclusion leaders to help manage the implications of this health crisis: <https://inclusiveexcellenceacademy.org/deiandcovid19/>
- The [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity \(NCFDD\)](#) has curated a list of support resources focusing on self-care, transitioning to online teaching, and adjusting previously laid plans to current circumstances.
- Black Lives Matter Louisville has developed a site, [Louisville Mutual Aid - Coronavirus Specific](#), that identifies and links to a variety of local resources.

Best,

V. Faye Jones

Interim Senior Associate Vice President for Diversity and Equity