



## College Brief

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FROM: Louis J. Petrizzo, Interim President

**Our College stands firm in its stated position. The College Statement issued last June remains reflective of our institutional desire to create a learning climate that is inclusive and supportive, where dialogue and empathy lead to unity and understanding for all members of our community. The jury has reached a verdict. We must accept and honor that verdict and go forward from here in peace to do our work.**

### **Statement of the College Regarding Current Events**

We join those in the College community now burdened with a heavy heart. Recent events should serve as an awakening to those of us who have slumbered through years of escalating racial tensions that challenge our nation. It is past time now to encourage our friends, neighbors, all levels of government officials, faculty, staff and students, of all races, colors and backgrounds, to step forward to condemn racism in all its forms.

We have come together here at Suffolk County Community College because we care about our students and we firmly believe that education is the best path to follow in order to transform lives and communities. Today, at this time in our history, we need to issue another message—one that says such transformation can only take place where dignity lives, where fairness is supreme, where equity and inclusion are fostered and protected. In our small corner of the world, our College must say these will be our principles to live by.

We must agree to act in unity. We must rally our internal community and challenge those who can be motivated to join in the effort to advance our nation away from intolerance and injustice. Starting here and now. We must enlist broad based support, developed through frank and honest conversation, if we hope to ever impact the underlying realities that torment so many. Policy reform and enforced change are tasks for all of us to embrace and demand.

Say no to violence but also say no to harassment of the innocent. Say no to being subjected to hate because of your skin color—no matter the color. Speak up in peaceful protest to honor the life and legacy of those lives lost and those whose lives have been filled with injustice. A great nation cannot be sustained upon the damaged bedrock that we have seen exposed countless times, over and over again.

We are ahead of many institutions. Our campus structure of multicultural affairs, and our staff charged to lead our diversity and inclusion efforts have been developed to assist us. Likewise, our Center for Social Justice and Human Understanding is prepared to assist us. We have committees, taskforces, and mentors in place to assist us. We have students who are energized. Thankfully, through the personal efforts of many, we have already created a space where all can feel safe. Now we must address the frustration and emotions they are grappling with.

Whole communities are suffering and waiting for action. We stand in support of them all. We must endorse a commitment to push for freedom and justice, to rebuke bias and refute prejudice. Our institution cannot and will not stand by. We will work collectively and civilly to chart a path toward justice for all. Most importantly, we are and must be willing to stand at the forefront of such an effort.