

Dear Riverside Community College District Stakeholders and Community Members,

As the representatives of all stakeholders at Riverside Community College District (RCCD), we wish to publicly reiterate our commitment as an institution of higher education to promote social justice, diversity, and equity. We strongly believe that systemic racism must be acknowledged and addressed in the U.S. as it is tantamount to ending the cycle of hegemony that stifles minoritized communities. As academics, our daily work has always been to problematize issues and complicate arguments, but we see that our additional role today is to contribute our insights toward solutions for eradicating racism, bigotry, inequality, and discrimination from our community and from society as a whole. We wholeheartedly believe in this pursuit and accept this role because it is simply not enough to complacently denounce racism from afar. We are committed to fighting this battle on the frontlines in order to protect and empower the most vulnerable members of our community, as a united front.

We firmly believe in the rights of our students and people from all walks of life to demonstrate their values and their desires for a more peaceful, tolerant, and equitable society. We value listening to those who are continually silenced and who are made to feel unsafe in their own neighborhoods; we will provide them equitable access and opportunities to counteract inequality. As allies, we will work to seek justice through a variety of systems—the police, the courts, schools, and, indeed, all American institutions that hold the power to validate the identities of historically oppressed peoples.

Given this commitment, we were extremely disheartened to learn that on June 29th, 2020 during a peaceful protest to denounce racism and injustice near our Norco College campus, some of our students and members of our community were wrongfully bullied, harassed, and even threatened by some individuals with opposing views. Freedom of assembly and expression are among the most fundamental rights enshrined in the U.S. Constitution; these rights must not be denied by a mob mentality stemming from bigotry and terror. When protestors peacefully assemble to express their concerns about forms of systemic racism, they should not be met with dismissals and condescension—certainly not violence. When people of color who take to the streets to protest are labeled as “thugs,” it is an act of criminalization that further perpetuates the very systemic racism we are speaking of. The historic pervasiveness of white supremacy is bolstered by these kinds of stereotypes and by racialized violence which accompanies the stereotypes. They can no longer be dismissed or normalized.

We stand with our African American/Black, Latinx, Native American, Asian, and all other students and colleagues (faculty, staff, administrators) of color and echo the outrage of protestors across the country who have gone out in force to say that enough is enough when it comes to racism in America. We stand to demand change to systemic racism in American institutions. We stand in solidarity with all people of color in our community and within our institution. We stand to say we will support all our students of color and increase our efforts to provide a safe and equitable learning environment for all our

students. We stand to say in solidarity that we will remain on the side of justice for all people of color in our community and across the U.S.

Mary Figeroua, President Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees  
Wolde-Ab Isaac, Chancellor Riverside Community College District  
Monica Green, President Norco/Corona College  
Riverside Community College District Faculty Association Executive Board  
Riverside Community College CSEA/Staff Union Executive Board