

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

November 1, 2018

Dear College Community,

Two days ago, I wrote to you about the horrific anti-Semitic massacre in Pittsburgh. The gunman targeted Jews because of their religion (and their support of immigrants). Sadly, there have been many other recent incidents of violence and attempted violence against people targeted for their identity or perceived identity. There have been shootings and bombs in churches, synagogues and mosques, and against people whose faith, race, sexuality or views the perpetrators hate.

I recently received a report about accusatory materials that have been distributed on campus. In the past, some members of our community have felt targeted because they are Jewish or Muslim, because they are Black, Latino or Asian, because they have spoken out for Israel or for Palestinians, because of their political views, because of their gender identity and because of their sexual orientation. Intolerance easily manifests itself in negative behaviors and rhetoric. And it is this rhetoric, hate speech which often leads to what the world has witnessed in Pittsburgh, Orlando, Charlottesville and many other places.

Hate speech is not the same as hateful violence. Hate speech and speech that is hurtful are generally protected by the first amendment. But, as we have learned from too many tragedies, speech can contribute to an environment in which violence is more likely to occur. It is impossible and hypocritical to teach and serve a diverse body of students, while at the same time being disrespectful and intolerant to our colleagues whose backgrounds, race, religious beliefs, political ideologies, gender identity and sexual orientation are also diverse.

This is not who we are at Kingsborough. We are college that respects diversity and are committed to working collaboratively with each other for the success of all students. I know in the recent past there have been incidents that involved trading hateful and hurtful accusations. Although these events preceded my arrival at Kingsborough, they created an environment that lives on. I denounce name-calling and disrespectful and intolerant language and behavior, regardless of the politics or identity of those involved.

When we enter the gates of this vibrant college we should be bringing the best of ourselves, not the worst, to others. We come to work every day to make a difference for our students. Do not bring hate, disrespect or intolerance into these gates. I've said before, I believe in free speech, but free speech does not mean that it is appropriate to use speech to target, hurt, or embarrass any member of our community. There are appropriate channels at this campus and at the university to deal with what you feel is unfair treatment, discrimination and to have your voice heard.

We have seen too many examples nationally and internationally of what happens when hate takes root. I know I speak for the great majority of our community when I say: We will not allow hate to be planted, take root or grow here.

Hate has no home here.

Claudia V. Schrader
President