

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Message from the CDO

November 10, 2017

This semester has been challenging for many students, faculty, and staff at the University of Wyoming. In September, we received unfortunate news that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was rescinded, causing rippling, negative impact on Latino students. During my weeks here, campus community members have told me personal stories of being targeted, discriminated, or marginalized because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, sex, age, disability, and gender identity. We have some students condemning conservative or liberal views, not realizing the opportunity of enhancing their educational experience and strengthening critical thinking skills by openly engaging in civil conversations across differences. There were Holocaust-denial fliers distributed on campus, causing the Jewish community to feel the sting of anti-Semitism. Some people across the state, nation, and in the UW campus community sent email messages, made social media posts, or made telephone calls to students, faculty, and staff that were hateful, judgmental, and inaccurate. Freedom of speech does not imply freedom from responsible, inclusive, respectful, and civil communication that demonstrates care and concern for one another, even though we may not agree or have very different beliefs and perspectives.

Fostering a welcoming culture of inclusion composed of diverse people is a value of this university. We are diverse in race, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, ideas, worldviews, life experiences, and more. This week tested this community's willingness and ability to uphold our values for diversity, inclusion, civility, equity, and respect for one another's right to freedom of speech and refraining from using that freedom to discriminate, marginalize, ostracize, and attack people who may look, act, pray or not pray, love, move through life differently, and think from oneself. There is no place in the community for hate and discrimination. As a community, we are better than this. Students were able to engage in civil discourse and protest during the Dennis Prager event last night, and our community is capable of so much more.

This community has many wonderful people here who have contributed to this work. The Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will have its second meeting next week. There are students, faculty, staff, and community members serving on this council who are adding valuable input to the development of the UW Strategic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan. The Campus Conversations with the CDO have gathered additional input, including conversations with registered student organizations and student groups such as members of ASUW, Keepers

of the Fire, College Republicans, Multicultural Student Center Town Hall, Rainbow Resource Center, athletes, and many more student interactions. I have made visits to departments, colleges, Faculty Senate and Staff Senate for their input and have talked to several alumni and community members. More than 120 people completed the online survey to add input to help make the Strategic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan reflect the voices of the UW community.

I am honored to lead the efforts to make the University of Wyoming community an increasingly welcoming, equitable, diverse, and inclusive place where hate, discrimination, inequity, and marginalization are not tolerated. We have a great deal of work ahead, but together we will make lasting, positive change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily A. Monago". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Emily A. Monago

Chief Diversity Officer

Office of Diversity and Inclusion