



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

My intention was to share an end of the year message that was full of gratitude for the work you have done this past year, especially these past months. I wanted to send you well wishes as some of you will transition into summer for preparation, recovery, and some time away from the college. I wanted to acknowledge that every single one of you contributed to the educational experience of BCC students and that some of you will continue to do so over the summer months. I wanted to send one more note of congratulations to the graduates. But I simply cannot.

*“I can’t breathe.”* Three simple words that speak loudly to the violent and heinous crimes perpetrated on African-Americans in this country. My wife and I have spent the past few days trying to explain to our daughters what transpired in Minneapolis earlier this week. The result was that our 10 year-old daughter wrote a song that captured her anger towards those who spew hate to enact violence, such as Amy Cooper and deep sadness for the mothers, fathers, siblings, and friends of victims such as George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, and so many others. She understands that she has the privilege of not having to fear for her life when sitting in a car, going for a jog, or birdwatching in the park (an activity she loves very much). I understand and own this privilege as well.

While my family experiences levels of discrimination and aggression for a myriad of other reasons, I am clear that today, right now in our country, our African-American brothers and sisters need the rest of us to center their lives: Black Lives Matter. For the students, classified professionals, faculty, and administrators that have to carry the extra burden of fearing whether or not a loved one will make it home, I am sorry that our society has made this your reality.

Berkeley City College and the community we build within it can serve as a space for healing, hope, and action. I hope that you will join me in continuing to create a community space that cultivates honest and authentic relationships, grounded in a deep respect for people of all cultures and backgrounds. This will call upon us to recognize our privilege, be willing to put that privilege on the line, and be an ally to dismantle the systemic forms of oppressions that are rampant in our society. And this work will need to begin with ourselves, as we rumble through the discomfort of how the history of this country has legally sanctioned enacting power over historically minoritized communities.

It will take all of us to fight the injustices in this country and I stand committed to work alongside each one of you as we support our individual and collective work to say, “Not one more.”

In Community,

Dr. Angélica Garcia (Pronouns: She | Her | Hers | Ella)  
President