



This week, I come to you with a heavy heart as we watch tragic events unfold in our black community and across our state and nation. Words can't begin to describe the emotions that many of us are feeling as we see the murders of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery, the incident in Central Park, and too many others that continue to happen. It's heartbreaking, it's appalling, it's an outrage, and we need to take action to change this. It is also critical to acknowledge that this pain is magnified for our Black and African American colleagues and community members.

As we talk about these painful incidents, I want to acknowledge that I (and many of us) come from a place of privilege. As a white man, I don't know firsthand the feelings or experiences that many of our staff, family members, and community have gone through in their lives and what they are currently going through. I acknowledge that. I honor that. I will continue to work to understand perspectives, have conversations, stand alongside, and ensure we are living by our CSU Principles of Community.

Recently, we had a conversation about these events in the President's Executive Leadership Team meeting. We talked about what we as leaders can do within our CSU Community and not let it just be a conversation. As a part of our discussion, President McConnell and VP Blanche Hughes shared an impactful [article about our black colleagues and what they are going through](#). Please take the time to read it.

As we think about these tragedies and other events happening in our world, we need to recognize that these aren't just things that happen in our personal lives. They affect us all in many ways that blend both work and personal space. How could they not?

When we think about CSU and our workplace, we know that we have work to do. At a university-level, VP Blanche Hughes and VP Mary Ontiveros are leading our Race, Bias and Equity Initiative. This initiative has gained



over 147 proposals aimed at helping our community evolve and address these important issues. I encourage you to read about [the steps our RBEI team has taken](#).

At a divisional-level, I want all of you to know that we are also working locally to address diversity, inclusion, and ensuring that we are not just talking about our Principles of Community, but that we are committed to living by them.

As a part of these efforts, we'll be calling together a special meeting of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to talk more about current events, how we can engage and take actions, and how we can reach out to team members to understand those affected by what is happening in our world and offer our support.

My hope for all of us is that we will be leaderful in this space. We need to acknowledge what is happening around us and in our communities. We need to check in with each other. We should be asking each other, "are you okay?"

We also need to continue to [educate ourselves](#). Doing better means knowing better.

Let's be willing to have conversations that may take us outside of our comfort zones. Let's extend patience and grace to those willing to have those conversations.

We must all work to understand perspectives, have discussions, stand along-side, and ensure we are living by our CSU Principles of Community.

If you would like to share thoughts, engage in a conversation, or help develop ideas to become more involved, please reach out to me (brandon.bernier@colostate.edu) or Kris Seidel (Kris.seidel@colostate.edu) who currently leads our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

Take care of yourselves and each other –

Brandon

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Brandon' written in a stylized, cursive font.