

Pat Pitney
Interim President

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Dear UA Community,

This summer into fall, and certainly this past week, we've seen mounting civil unrest across the country.

Throughout the University of Alaska system we value and respect differing opinions and encourage freedom of expression through open and rigorous debate. It remains vitally important that our differences are expressed peacefully and respectfully; differences of opinion should not lead to violence. In a free society, we may profoundly disagree with one another. Addressing these disagreements through open and peaceful dialogue, whether focused on racial injustice or political beliefs, broadens our understanding of the world around us and strengthens our community. You may feel compelled to stand up for what you believe, please do so, peacefully.

This coming Monday is a day to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who believed strongly in peaceful protest, and I encourage all of us to reflect on his efforts, and those of Elizabeth Peratrovich and so many others who fought for civil rights, and challenge us to build on their work

In this area, we are far from perfect, and recognize that we must do more to address racial justice, inclusiveness and diversity. Led by the Board of Regents we are redoubling our efforts to ensure the university system better reflects Alaska's diverse population, and for all to feel they belong on all of our campuses from Ketchikan to Nome. Later today, I will outline for the Board of Regents steps we will take to address their challenge to improve Alaska Native recruitment, retention and success throughout the UA system and the university climate for all people of color. The work resulting from this effort involves robust teams from UAA, UAF and UAS and will accelerate the progress of equity, diversity and inclusion of our processes, policies, programs and operations. You can learn about the initiative at <https://alaska.edu/pres/aknativesuccess/index.php>

Our shared values and fundamental support for free speech, the exploration of controversial ideas, and adherence to civility and respect, must guide us in all that we do.

Sincerely,

Pat Pitney
Interim UA President