



Office of Equity and Inclusion COVID-19 Statement

Revised April 7, 2020

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

The Minnesota State Office of Equity and Inclusion remains committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all stakeholders throughout the response to COVID-19. We recognize that the diversity of our student body and employees is one of our greatest strengths. While fear, concern, and anxiety are normal reactions to this public health challenge, we cannot let such feelings cloud our judgment, or lead us to target, stigmatize or discriminate against any individual or group. We must be aware that certain employee and student populations, especially those of Asian-descent, may experience xenophobia, racism or be treated differently on our campuses or in the surrounding community because of fears related to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Stigma, bias and misinformation hurt all of us, create mistrust and shift attention away from the critical effort to prevent and contain COVID-19. There is no excuse for xenophobia or discrimination and it will not be tolerated on our campuses.

In the current environment, it is important that we look for opportunities to have honest dialogue on our campuses and surrounding communities on collective strategies to respond to this health crisis. Together, we must take time and deliberate action to address the well-being of our students and employees. We must show support through the promotion of resources that prioritize academic, wellness, and mental health support. We must address any negative behaviors that disrupt our efforts and embrace uncomfortable discussions that get at the root causes of xenophobia and racism. We must stand together against bias and condemn the stigmatization of people who appear to be or who are ill and especially avoid associating COVID-19 with people of Asian descent.

While our current situation is worrisome for all, we must not allow bias and discrimination to disrupt the ultimate goal of serving our students and meeting the current challenges that lay ahead in confronting COVID-19. We thank you all in advance for your collective action and investment in our community. We wish you all health, safety, and strength during this time.