

From: [Kimberly A. Barrett](#)
Subject: In Solidarity
Date: Friday, April 3, 2020 7:23:37 AM

Dear Lawrence Students, Faculty and Staff,

I am reaching out, as many have from our university, to reaffirm that although we are in different locations we still remain in solidarity as Lawrentians. Even at a distance we are a community of scholars, learners and professionals working together toward our shared educational goals. During this unprecedented period of loss and upheaval it is particularly important that we take a trauma informed approach to our work and relationships with each other. For spring term this simply means taking into account the ways in which the trauma and disruption we are all experiencing is likely to impact our behavior. Culturally responsive teaching and showing compassion for ourselves and others are critically important in our current circumstance. Although we each will experience the current pandemic differently, I have no doubt that the uncertainty and human suffering we are witnessing is extremely taxing on everyone's emotional resources. So I ask that we be gentle with ourselves and others as we make the transition this term to learning and working at a distance.

Times like these often bring out the best in folks, examples of resilience that serve as light for us all, like the staff who risk their own health to clean spaces on campus that are still in use or the faculty who never having taught online, in amazing speed, have incorporated inclusive pedagogy at a distance. But the feelings of fear and powerlessness that are common in large scale crisis can bring out the worst in people as well. An example of this is scapegoating, unwarranted blaming of an individual or group for the current misfortune. With the terrorists attacks of 9/11 this happened to Muslims or people who were perceived to be of Middle Eastern descent. Now with the Coronavirus pandemic the targets of scapegoating are those of Asian descent, particularly individuals perceived to be Chinese. This type of racism and xenophobia is inconsistent with our university values. Accordingly, we all should counter related misinformation and act as allies to those being targeted whether online or in person. If you encounter this or other forms of bias please report it at this [link](#). Or contact me directly to arrange a meeting via Zoom or FaceTime.

Personally, one thing that has been brought into stark relief in this moment is the importance of government. Whether we are considering it's role in ensuring that we all have access to healthcare or providing a financial safety net that enables us to simply survive in hard times like these we need to exercise our right to vote to make sure crucial responsibilities are executed well. We should do this for our own wellbeing as well as others, especially for those who don't share our privilege. This election season could prove to be one of the most significant in a generation. So even if you need to do it by absentee ballot, I urge you to vote. To find information about voting relevant to your location and situation follow this link: <https://www.vote411.org>. Another personal realization that has occurred over the last couple of weeks is that I miss the hugs I received from students and colleagues on campus. So I will be sending everyone a quick virtual huge on Fridays throughout the term in the LU Insider. I hope you will reciprocate!

Finally, in the spirit of combining online learning and compassion for ourselves and others, I have compiled a few links to help you be gentle with yourself and others while successfully navigating our

current distance learning environment. I hope you find them useful. Take care and stay well!

[Four Things to do Everyday for Your Mental Health](#)

[Online College Student Success Manual](#)

[Self Compassion/Loving Kindness Meditation](#)

[Practical Resources for College Students During the Pandemic](#)

[How to Reduce Prejudice in a Pandemic](#)

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