

Dear LSC Campus Community:

If you have been reading my campus messages, you know I often include a poem that fits the message. I try to select poems that are short and easy to quickly read, yet still leave the reader with something to ponder. Today, I am responding to the disruptive situation we are experiencing in America today. No matter your political leanings, I think we can all agree there is a lot of confusion, chaos, fear of the unknown, and some very angry thoughts and feelings surrounding what should be civil discourse and appreciating the rule of law. Discourse these days can easily slip into confrontation rather than conversation.

In disruptive times such as this, it is critical that we hold fast to our values and stand together. Think in terms of "WE" instead of "I." Stay calm, remain clear on our values, and practice curiosity rather than criticism or anger. Ask questions and be present for each other. We will get through this disruption and will keep our focus on our students and each other.

I had planned on leaving you with Maya Angelou's "Still I Rise" as a fitting poem of perseverance for these times. And it is a great poem. If you need that message today, I encourage you to reread her poem (link and citation below).

But today, I have chosen something that is a bit quiet and contemplative. This poem is also about perseverance, but takes a more meditative approach. Enjoy.

A Center
-by Ha Jin

You must hold your quiet center,
where you do what only you can do.
If others call you a maniac or a fool,
just let them wag their tongues.
If some praise your perseverance,
don't feel too happy about it—
only solitude is a lasting friend.

You must hold your distant center.
Don't move even if earth and heaven quake.
If others think you are insignificant,
that's because you haven't held on long enough.
As long as you stay put year after year,
eventually you will find a world
beginning to revolve around you.

Be well, stay warm, be kind to each other.
Patricia L. Rogers, Ph.D.
President Lake Superior College

"A Center" from *A Distant Center*. Copyright © 2018 by Ha Jin. Available at:
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/152066/a-center>

"Still I Rise" from *And Still I Rise: A Book of Poems*. Copyright © 1978 by Maya Angelou. Available at:
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46446/still-i-rise>