

**From:** Rogers, Patricia L

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**To:** LSC-Campus-Employees <LSC-Campus-Employees@lsc.edu>; LSC-Campus-Students <LSC-Campus-Students@lsc.edu>

**Subject:** Campus Update

Dear LSC Community:

This is a very different June than any past years in the history of Minnesota State and Lake Superior College. We are in the double-fisted grip of two pandemics, and both are serious public health issues. Both pandemics have us staying at home when we can and/or when we are ordered to do so, both have dangerous consequences, and both have a history of causing fear and stress and death. One of these pandemics is the latest version of past viral infections, the other a much more ingrained and ongoing, frequently covert and insidious virus that infects our society's policies, practices, and values.

*What is LSC's response to these two pandemics?*

The first pandemic, COVID-19, is following patterns of infection and spread similar to the 1918 influenza, polio, SARS, and H1N1, to name a few of the more recent pandemics. LSC is carefully keeping to all of the required and recommended operations, health practices, and guidance from MDH, CDC, and own system office. You can read more details about our plans and practices at <https://lsc.edu/coronavirus> . Our current plans for fall are to be **open and ready** for students, with limited face-to-face time on campus, synchronous classes using zoom and other technologies, as well as asynchronous elements in classes. These options have been carefully planned by our faculty and Deans. We will have a robust fall semester, and it is modified to keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible.

Does this mean LSC is returning to "normal?" No. Our plans are in response to the realities of the lingering pandemic and how we will move forward to ensure the best outcomes for LSC students and for a healthy LSC. Those strategies and actions will continue to impact our future.

The other pandemic, systemic racism, is the pandemic that has been with this country throughout its history and is by far the more difficult to address. The latest manifestation of this public health hazard—please note: the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Association and the American College of Physicians (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/01/health/racism-public-health-issue-police-brutality-wellness-bn/index.html> ), emphasize that racism is a public health issue—once again this public health hazard has overtly expressed itself in the recent death of George Floyd. Right there in South Minneapolis, where my friends and friends of friends are mourning his death. Right there where, in the days after Mr. Floyd died, friends found charred wood in their own back yard, others found stashes of chemicals and rocks, and others now have no home left at all.

Where violent riots happened side by side with peaceful protest and daily neighborhood work at cleaning up and supporting each other: People delivering groceries and medications to those who have no transportation and no longer have access to local stores.

Does this mean Minnesota is returning to "normal?" **I hope not!** It should not mean that at all, because frankly "normal" is not working.

Please be assured, LSC **will not** return to normal regarding this particular health pandemic. Systemic racism requires those of us currently in leadership positions to respond, and our response is to strengthen our campus goals for true equity and inclusion. Thankfully, we have already begun this work as our LSC Strategic Plan aligned with Minnesota State's Equity 2030 framework calls for **plans with actions**, not just "thoughts and prayers," even when the latter response is heartfelt and well intended.

*It is summer break. What can I do right now?*

- **Get involved** with our Strategic Planning process when you come back in the fall. We need your good thinking!
- **Become well-versed** with the goals of Equity 2030 (<https://www.minnstate.edu/Equity2030/index3.html> ).
- **Attend** an upcoming Minnesota State Zoom meeting on June 3, 2020 at 1130-1pm, organized by the Minnesota State Indigenous Men & Men of Color Workgroup This is a strategy session to counter systemic racism within Minnesota State and in our communities: <HTTPS://MINNSTATE.ZOOM.US/J/97788792269> .
- **Get engaged** with a team working on Equity by Design (the team is forming now! Watch for more information coming soon).
- **Participate** in upcoming campus and state-wide seminars, professional development opportunities, and discussions to develop your "equity lens." More on this soon.
- **Watch** for more developments regarding other deliberate actions we will take to actively make systemic change.

In the coming days, I plan to meet with our local business and community leaders to discuss our city's response and actions to make Duluth and our region safe, welcoming, and truly inclusive. Together, we must strive to change the old "normal" to a mindful and more powerfully aware future, to be unafraid to name the infection of racism, and to be ready and willing to aggressively work to end the racism pandemic.

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