

On behalf of Rich Lee:

Dear faculty, staff, and students --

I write this email without knowing really where to begin beyond sharing sadness, anger, fear, and a conviction to not step back, not sit down, not defend, and not stay quiet. As we slowly recover from the pandemic, the racism and xenophobia in this country continues to persist, exacerbated by the ongoing trial of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd and then yesterday the mass shooting in Atlanta of 8 people (6 of whom were Asian American women) by another White man.

I appreciate that our department has made diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) a priority in our strategic plan and through the development of DEI recommendations for changes to the department culture and curriculum. But there is more for us to do, collectively and individually.

Today, I ask that we allow ourselves space and time to reach out to others who may be needing more comfort and support, check in with students (grad and undergrad) who may not have the right words to process all that is happening today, and talk with family and friends so we can begin to truly address issues of justice.

For my class today, I am going to set aside the lesson plan and address the ongoing racism in this country.

And for those needing support, I am here and will do the best I can do to listen and support.

- Rich

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[He/Him/His]

The University of Minnesota stands on [Miní Sóta Makhóche](#), the homelands of the *Dakhóta Oyáte*