



November 1, 2018

Dear Campus Community:

Tragic incidents make me pause and reflect on what truly matters. Today, I write to honor the lives of those who were recently murdered in the massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. These 11 Jewish worshipers were targeted in the deadliest anti-Semitic violence in U.S. history. As the memorial services for these 11 individuals continue this week, I ask myself what I can do as Superintendent/President to console those among us who are troubled.

I reaffirm our College's support for people of all ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. This reaffirmation is made even more relevant as we consider the vast diversity of faith traditions and ethnic backgrounds of Rio Hondo College community members. As an institution of higher learning, Rio Hondo College recognizes that the type of hatred and bigotry that fueled this attack has no place in our community—or anywhere else. We strive to move beyond merely tolerating differences to lovingly embracing them, while accepting others for who they are. In this process of connecting with each other across our differences we are reminded of our shared humanity.

For those of you who are feeling grief, fear, anger, or any other difficult emotions, please know that there are resources to support you. Students in need of emotional support may reach out to Student Health and Psychological Services at (562) 908-3438. Students can also text the word "COURAGE" to 741741 to receive free, confidential mental health support, 24/7. Students who need to report any threats or student conduct issues can contact the Dean of Student Affairs at (562) 908-3498. Classified staff, faculty, and administrators may seek support by calling the *LifeWorks* employee assistance program at (877) 234-5151, toll free, 24/7.

I invite you to *not* give into despair during this painful time. Please reach out to those who are grieving and let them know you care. I urge you to speak out and condemn racism, anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry. Just as I asserted that this campus is open to students regardless of citizenship status and sexual orientation last fall, I assert that Rio Hondo College should be open to embracing people of all ethnicities and faith traditions. As an immigrant and member of an ethnic minority, I personally hold these values dearly. If we treat each other with compassion and respect, we can co-create a College and community that honors and embraces us all.

Best regards,

Teresa Dreyfuss,
Superintendent/President