



Dear Students,

Community. Communication. Inclusion. Learning. Support. Sustainability. Wellness.

These words represent the values that University Housing, Campus Dining, and Student Conduct have at the core of our mission and our work with YOU, our residential students.

I, first, want to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing to live with us this year. Whether you are still living with us or left our campus for a different living environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you are still a member of our community and we have appreciated having you live with us this year.

My primary reason, though, for writing this note is to highlight a couple of the core values I listed above and why they mean so much to us, perhaps more now than ever before.

Community, as we define it, is where individuals develop relationships and each member feels valued and included in an environment that is safe to share ideas, thoughts, and common goals.

Inclusion is understanding, valuing, and actively engaging differences in views, approaches, styles, and aspects of individuality (e.g. gender, culture, sexuality, race, socioeconomic status, etc.) that add multiple perspectives to a group's activity.

It is the responsibility of our departments to develop community environments that support all of our core values. We owe it to all of you to create a vibrant living-learning experience that you can call home. It is our job to facilitate safe, comfortable environments where you can grow as an individual, learn from others, maintain respect for one another, and know you belong.

At a time in our country when we have seen so much hatred and bigotry, I am compelled to make a statement to those we serve, particularly our black students. This past week, not to mention the months prior, has given rise to more and more incidents of racism and hatred toward people of color. In particular, the unconscionable murders of Ahmaud Arbury while he was jogging, Breonna Taylor while she was in her own home, and George Floyd, a recent victim of police brutality. These are just three of the countless incidents of violence against people of color. We might think these incidents happen far away from our home. That is not the case. In early March of this year, one of our residence hall students had a racial slur etched into the frost on the window of his car. We have had racist comments written on dry erase boards on residence hall room doors. Discriminatory statements have been made verbally to students on our campus.

All of these incidents are unacceptable and underscore the importance of sending a message that we will not stand idly by without letting you know that our core values mean something and we will respond when discrimination, bigotry, and hatred occur in our community. In response to the recent events marring our country, Black Lives Matter.

University Housing, Campus Dining, and Student Conduct are committed to providing unwavering support and care to our Black students, Latinx students, Asian/Pacific Islander students, LGBTQ students, international students, our DACA students, and others who face discrimination on a daily basis. It is our moral and ethical responsibility as members of this

community. We will confront incidents of bias and discrimination. If we hear something or see something, we will say something and we will do something. Silence essentially condones the behaviors and actions that are counter to our values.

We are committed to providing you with a community living environment that supports every member and gives you a place you can call home. Home, as I define it, is a safe haven, a place of refuge, a place where you belong. It is our responsibility to provide this to you.

And therefore, I make these promises to you:

We, as an organization, commit to learning more by reading, listening to podcasts, attending presentations, and engaging as much as possible in every aspect of our learning to challenge our thinking and help us to become more aware of the injustice members of our community experience. We will do this so we can identify and address these issues more effectively, and provide the right support in all aspects of our work.

We will weave into the fabric of our staff training the values of social justice, diversity, inclusion, and community; and help our staff members identify the issues that negatively influence our values in order to teach them to confront issues of bias and discrimination.

We will address, to our fullest extent possible, all situations where a member of our community is mistreated, attacked, harassed, discriminated against, or hurt by the words, actions, and misdeeds of another because of the color of their skin, their religion, their country of origin, their gender or identity.

We will listen to you.

We will support you.

It has been my honor to serve you this year. Thank you for being a member of our community this year, no matter how long you were with us. Know that our residence halls and apartments will always be your home and you will always be welcome in this community.

If you would like to talk with me or any one of the Housing, Dining, Student Conduct team, please don't hesitate to reach out by emailing housing@wou.edu or emailing me directly at fuchst@wou.edu

Best of luck on your final exams and may you have a safe and relaxing summer.

Most sincerely,

Tina Fuchs
Associate Vice President/Dean of Students and Director of University Housing