

# UNIVERSITYof **HOUSTON**

August 3, 2016

Dear University of Houston Community,

Recently, members of our community have asked me, in my capacity as assistant vice president for Equal Opportunity Services, questions about how we engage in a conversation about race safely and within the bounds of the University's anti-discrimination policies.

As provided in the University's **Freedom of Expression Policy**, the University is committed to fostering a learning environment where free inquiry and expression are encouraged. What this means is that students have the right to share their ideas even if those ideas are controversial. In this regard, the Policy states,

*"The University expects that persons engaging in expressive activities will demonstrate civility, concern for the safety of persons and property, respect for University activities, respect for those who may disagree with their message, and compliance with University policies and applicable local, state, and federal laws."*

In the past few days, I have been made aware that the experiences of some of our students and groups on our campus have been difficult. As we work to address their concerns, we invite anyone who believes they have been subjected to discrimination to contact me or my staff in the Office of Equal Opportunity Services at 713-743-8835 or at [EOS@uh.edu](mailto:EOS@uh.edu) so we can discuss your options. The University's anti-discrimination policies are found [here](#).

With this in mind, you may have noticed the new tagline displayed in the Daily Cougar as well as on digital monitors across campus: Ours Is a Community that Cares. A community that cares encourages dialogue between us, about difficult topics even, which may lead to disagreement. And that's OK. Just remember that if we disagree with one another, it is our task to find a way to respond with empathy and respect. I hope when you see the tagline, Ours Is a Community that Cares, that you engage in the conversation about how we all meet that expectation.

The mark of a caring community is one that continues to grow and explores with the encouragement of its diverse citizenry. One way to achieve that is to participate in programs such as those hosted by the [Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#) offered to the community at large to give us the opportunity to see things from a different perspective.

In closing, a community that cares challenges itself with debate, but it does so within the confines of our **policies** and without creating barriers to equal opportunity. We encourage all to participate and explore ideas that are different than yours.

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