



From the Office of the President

John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.
REGIS UNIVERSITY | DENVER, COLORADO

John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.
Hate Incidents on Campus
November 20th, 2018

Dear Regis Community,

As many of you know, in the past month, Regis University has become a target of white nationalists who seek to wreak havoc on our community. On November 1, flyers declaring, "It's okay to be white," were posted on the exterior of three of our campus buildings, a tactic corresponding with a coordinated, international effort to disrupt college campuses. Four days later, on November 5, Regis was targeted once again, with a second set of flyers, proclaiming "White Lives Matter," above a swastika. These flyers were placed under the doors of two administrators and one faculty member -one Jewish and one African-American - in the Loretto Heights School of Nursing.

Hate speech is neither free nor innocuous. Any speech that aims to denigrate another person or group, to "put them in their place," is an assault on flesh and blood persons, our colleagues, our families, our sisters and brothers. It is also an assault on our deepest guiding principles, a violation of everything that Regis is and stands for. I stand firmly with all today who are hurt, angry, frustrated, and frightened that hate has reared its ugly head in our community and has terrorized some of our community's most vulnerable members. As a community with and for others, we denounce every act of racism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy, and we stand with those most affected by these hateful attacks. These cowardly actions, committed under a cloak of anonymity, were intended to stir up racial tensions on our campus and to pit us against one another, with the hope of disrupting the good work we do here every day in an environment of friendship, trust, and shared mission. We believe that every person bears the God-given dignity and right to live, study, and work in an atmosphere free of hate and intimidation. We must act diligently and reflect critically and prayerfully when that dignity and right is violated. We must not let these cowards win.

Who are we, and what do we stand for? Our words matter, to be sure, and our deep listening, prayerfulness, and reflection abides, but our actions give flesh to our common mission. As soon as the incidents were reported, we took a series of actions to identify the perpetrators and initiate longer term strategies for a community-wide response.

- Campus Safety immediately notified Denver Police and began investigations into both incidents. Investigators continue to review printer and copier records, in order to identify the source of the flyers. Should the ongoing investigations lead to the identification of an offender, we will hold those responsible accountable for their violation of our community standards and policies.
- Our Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) convened within 24 hours of each incident and recommended both administrative and community responses.
- On November 2, Vice Provost Gonzales, Dean of Students Romero-Aldaz, and RUSGA President Rico Gomez issued a joint statement explaining what had occurred the day before and called on the community to continue Regis' long tradition of rejecting hate on our campus.



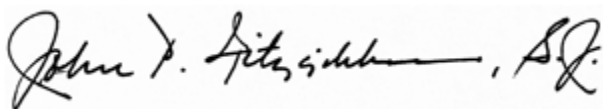
- In response to the November 5, (flyers) the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence (ODEIE) organized the Unity March Against Hate, which was held on November 7, to express support for the victims and begin the healing process for the community.
- I am endorsing, at the recommendation of BIRT, a new social justice and inclusion work group that is charged with envisioning further community actions to address structural inequities and to support the ongoing work of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence and other offices which have a number of initiatives underway.
- Prior to recent incidents, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence had been working with the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning on an all-faculty training, scheduled for August 2019, that will provide both online and classroom-based faculty with the tools needed to fight racism on our campus and create more inclusive curricula, pedagogy, and supports for all students. Both offices welcome community participation in this ongoing initiative.

I want to reiterate that all of these responses have taken place with my knowledge and full support and under my supervision. My cabinet, (the Provost and the Vice Presidents) and the Deans are in constant communication and working tirelessly at every level of the university to ensure a collaborative, transparent, and empowering response.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that these are not the first such incidents to galvanize our community. Sadly, they may not be the last. As Vice President Wilcots shared at our recent town hall meeting, these hate crimes are on the rise nationally. The Justice Department reports that hate crimes surged in the three months after the 2016 election and have increased steadily since that time. Reports were up by 17% in 2017 and have risen still in 2018. Of reported hate crimes, 58% were race related and 22% were based on religion. Thus, while deeply painful, it is not surprising that our African-American and Jewish colleagues were targeted in these recent incidents. And despite our efforts we may see future attempts to intimidate and demean members of our community. Friends and colleagues, let us not play into their hands.

Let us take consolation in the Jesuit values and institutional policies that guard our community against hate, and above all let us lift up and defend one another. We all share responsibility for the long, hard work of shaping an inclusive community where all can flourish. In that spirit, I invite you to join with me and my administration in developing an institution-wide continuing response strategy.

Respectfully,



John P. Fitzgibbons, S.J.
President