

11/18/20:

Dear Colleagues,

Many of you may have viewed or heard about the public YouTube videos posted by a faculty member in the GeoSciences Department, in which he expresses his criticism of the efforts to increase the diversity and to provide a safe climate for all at our university, as well as at other institutions. The videos are no longer publicly available, and I have watched only one of them. I saw enough, however, to know that the views expressed are antithetical to the goals I strongly believe we share and embrace as we work together to chart a more just future for our great department. I have also discussed the videos and their impact on our community with co-Deputy Chairs for EDI [REDACTED] and several others.

We stand with our colleagues in the belief that there is an urgency to address the biases and injustices, like bigotry, that are built into our society, especially toward our Black colleagues. As the public posting of these videos made clear, the path forward is not easy, and the problems we are trying to address are not always understood or even acknowledged. We believe that it will take sustained effort and creative thinking over many years, because views like those espoused in the video are still shared and held widely. And, we are committed to a deep, long-term sustained effort to make our department a better place.

A&A Dept Chair

6/2/20:

We have recently received statements from [Provost Lee](#) and [Dean Olinto](#) regarding recent tragic events in Minneapolis, and indeed, throughout our country. I urge you to read these statements. Please know that, alongside the PSD and the University, the Department of Astronomy & Astrophysics and the KICP remain committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. As Dean Olinto states, “Our Division aims to foster an inclusive and creative intellectual environment that promotes diversity of thought and create a culture of respect, inclusion, and wellness.” At every level, in every interaction, we must now do more to build just and equitable communities; to channel our convictions into meaningful action; to dismantle systems of oppression within our fields and nation. Together, we must strive to heal wounds in our society and support and embrace our colleagues, especially at this time our black colleagues and students.

Chair, Astronomy & Astrophysics
Director, Kavli Institute for Cosmological Physics