

Statement from Members of the Faculty and Staff at Harvey Mudd College

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

January 16, 2017

On April 16, 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote a letter to his fellow clergymen from a Birmingham jail cell. Asked to respond to whether he, a so-called “outside agitator,” had any business protesting the laws and practices in someone else’s town, he responded, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of **mutuality.**”

Dr. King’s words are particularly salient today, after this divisive campaign and before the inauguration of the 45th President of the United States, when a subset of Americans **feels emboldened to increase their violence and discrimination against minoritized people.** Many members of the incoming administration **have pledged to undermine public education,** environmental protections, **climate science, civil rights, women’s rights,** and **human rights** at home and abroad.

Therefore, on this Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the members of the Faculty Executive Committee of Harvey Mudd College and our undersigned colleagues, re-affirm Dr. King’s words. We stand opposed to **those who would make strangers of our neighbors, aliens out of immigrants,** and pariahs out of those whose **race, gender, sexuality, religion, or ethnicity** differs from their own. **We stand against injustice, whether institutional or individual.** We believe that the mission statement of our college calls us to **understand and engage with our interconnected world,** guided by our expertise and the principles of **inclusiveness,** equity, and excellence, to which we as a community aspire. Furthermore:

We believe in science. We believe that the foundation of our future is scientific knowledge. Our ability to address pressing problems and exciting possibilities, such as energy security, food security, global climate change, economic development, sustainable resource management, cure for disease, and space exploration, **is contingent on** progress in scientific research and a strong program of STEM education from kindergarten to college. We will continue to oppose those movements and actions which threaten to **strangle science education in our public schools,** to pass off **pseudo-science as science,** or to de-fund **crucial federal sources of support** for scientific research and development.

We believe in liberal arts education. The liberal arts prepare students to think **creatively;** to grapple with consequential ideas and **complex histories;** to know themselves; to engage others with **civility, clarity, and context;** to produce art and to provoke change; and to act **compassionately,** intelligently, and courageously in the face of the sacrifices and compromises that life and the world demand.

We believe in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which reads:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

We affirm the principle of freedom of conscience, around which these rights coalesce. Therefore, we oppose **all attempts** to abridge conscience or freedom of religion, to **suppress protest**, or to circumscribe **the manner or ability** of our community members to express their values, beliefs, or convictions.

We believe in equality; we reject bigotry and discrimination, whether based on race, gender, religion, sexuality, class, nationality, citizenship status, cognitive ability, physical ability, **political affiliation**, or **any other form of identity**. We recognize that not all people experience bigotry and discrimination equally and that those people who have interpreted the president-elect's victory **as license to terrorize and bully others are not the authors of prejudice**, but merely the latest examples of it. **Hate speech and acts have no place at HMC. We will not stand for it**, and we will speak and act to prevent it.

We believe in dignity and respect. It is unacceptable to **demean women**, sexually assault anyone, ridicule or promote violence against any group of people, **gaslight** those who challenge your ideas, racially-profile, religiously-profile, or attempt to deprive anyone of their freedom and rights because you do not like them. The many disparaging statements made by **president-elect Trump** during the 2016 campaign -- about women, minorities, veterans, disabled Americans, immigrants, and others whom he found it politically expedient to belittle -- **are abhorrent and wrong**.

We believe in equity. We recognize that many of the barriers to equal opportunities for education, compensation, professional development, healthcare, and leadership are not only institutional, but social and cultural. **Effecting change in these areas takes time, collaboration, and work.**

We believe in hard work. Understanding the world, in all its complexities, **is hard**. Building a just world, where people benefit rather than suffer from scientific advances, is hard. The **current political climate** makes it even harder. We know that to do this hard work, many of us will need to become uncomfortable: we might have to change our priorities, at times we might have to be more vocal and more active, at other times we will need to **listen more and speak less**. We will need to recognize the ways that we **may be** complicit in perpetuating inequities in our own institution. We understand that we have work to do on our campus to live up to the ideals of our mission. We commit ourselves **to recognize those areas** in which we are failing and to better embody our values.

We believe in our students, staff, alumni, trustees, and fellow faculty members. We are proud of our community, and we love that we get to know you and work with you. To each of you, we say: you matter. **We will listen to you.** We will work on your behalf. We will support your work and protect your freedom to do it.

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