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June 1, 2020

Dear Glendale Community College Community,

Let us remember the dying words of George Floyd, "I can't breathe," and work through education to provide the breath of life without racism, hatred, discrimination, and inequity. A headline for Mary McNamara's LA Times column today says, "Racism Seems to be a Pandemic with no Vaccine." Let us make education that vaccine.

Each year at graduation I ask the graduates to reflect on what their experiences at GCC and their degree mean and urge them to go into the world with a dream, an imaginative view of what might be, and to work together toward a common goal, with civility, tolerance, and respect. It is clear to me that statement is not strong enough. The dream and common goal must be a world without racism, hatred, discrimination, and inequity. Yes civility, tolerance, and respect are important, but the advocacy must be strong and not passive. Education at GCC must include providing the skills to be actively anti-racist and to see and change the barriers to success for the disenfranchised.

Recently in my message concerning the Armenian Genocide, I asked us to think about what we can do individually and collectively to make certain atrocious violations of human rights do not occur anywhere, anytime and against any people based on their race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, culture, tribal identity, political affiliation, or sexual orientation. I urged our students to commit to learning as much as they can and using their experiences at GCC to gain the critical thinking and advocacy skills to speak out against human rights violations.

It is my responsibility, joined with the faculty, staff, and administrators at GCC, to stand up and to speak out on behalf of change. We must look at our curriculum; defined learning outcomes; student engagement services and activities; our mission, vision, and values statements; our hiring practices; our professional development focus...and make the changes that prepare our students to provide the leadership needed for a better world where there is no racism, hatred, discrimination, and inequity. Let the education that occurs at Glendale Community College be the vaccine.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Viar'.

David Viar
Superintendent/President