



December 20, 2018

To SUNY Poly's Faculty and Staff:

On behalf of our institution, I would like to sincerely thank the staff who organized SUNY Polytechnic Institute's holiday gatherings which were well attended, joyful celebrations supporting our community and shared successes over the past year. However, I also want to make you aware that at the Annual Holiday Luncheon at SUNY Poly's Utica campus, some comments were made that were antithetical to the beliefs embodied by SUNY Poly, which is a diverse and welcoming community for people of all backgrounds.

I was personally taken aback by the divisive comments that were made, and the language that was used created an uncomfortable atmosphere. Please know this administration in no way endorses those beliefs and the insensitivity that was displayed. Please be assured that we will continue to move forward with a focus on further fostering a community built on inclusion and diversity.

I am proud to stress that these inclusive values are not words alone, but positive actions enabling a supportive culture in which we uplift each other. As we establish the *Framework for a Sustainable Future* and begin the process of searching for a permanent president for this institution, I have purposefully made the core values of integrity, inclusion, and transparency key components of this effort by establishing a number of committees, including the *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* and *SUNY Poly Empowerment* committees. They are tasked with facilitating a healthy campus climate in which all campus community members feel safe, respected, welcomed, and included, in addition to establishing institutional policies, practices, and campus resources which support diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

As I mentioned during our recent town hall meetings, the search for a Chief Diversity Officer has also begun. This position will ensure compliance with federal, state, and SUNY diversity-focused regulations and guidelines, including Affirmative Action and Title IX, in addition to promoting inclusiveness and awareness via dissemination of relevant information and implementation of strategic activities. Complementing these efforts, gender-neutral bathrooms have been established across both campuses, providing a safe place for people of all gender identities and expressions, including transgender, gender non-conforming, and gender queer people.

I believe it is also important for every member of the SUNY Poly community to know that if you believe you have witnessed, or been a target of, a hate-or-bias motivated incident on campus or while participating in a University-sponsored activity, you may bring the incident to the attention of the Bias Incidents Response Team (BIRT) by completing the [BIAS Reporting Form](#).

Especially during this time of year, when we take time to celebrate the warmth of family, friends, and our communities, I am proud that I have also seen much kindness emanating from our own SUNY Poly community—a kindness rooted in valuing both our differences and our shared humanity.



SUNY POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Grace Wang, Ph.D.
Interim President

Thank you for joining me in celebrating a year of academic and research accomplishments at our institution. I look forward to continuing our positive trajectory as we celebrate our shared strengths that exists *because of* the diversity of our SUNY Poly community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Grace Wang
Interim President
SUNY Polytechnic Institute