Dear BAC Community,

How are you? Are you feeling anxious and helpless? I feel distraught and infuriated by the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breanna Taylor in the long line of violence directed at communities of color across the United States. My heart and prayers go out to the families of the victims as well as all of us experiencing pain, frustration, and a sense of loss at this time. Please know that our faculty, staff, trustees, and I have been thinking about you. Our first concern is for your wellbeing, and we also want to be here to help you process these events.

Our collective trauma springs from seemingly endless repetition of violence, which, while the individuals change, has been following the same script for not just days and months, but centuries. We all need to play a role in changing that script.

The perpetual plague of social injustice has been laid bare and compounded by the pandemic disproportionately impacting communities of color. Any organization purporting to serve the public good needs to be built on a foundation of equity, empathy, compassion, and love. When any segment of our society feels unsafe and left behind or oppressed, then the superstructure of our society will crumble. If we do not address the scourge of racial injustice, the idea of America as the land of the free will perish in the ensuing debris.

At the BAC, we have made it our mission to include and serve diverse communities and empower them with access to the privileges of design education.

Mere statements of condemnation and rage are not enough to bring about individual as well as systemic change. Marshall Rosenberg, the proponent of Non-Violent Communication (also known as Compassionate Communication) has gifted us with methods of compassionately communicating with ourselves and others. Can there be inclusion without listening? Can there be inclusion with judgement? Rosenberg describes how hearing us and others without judgement or prejudice leads us toward a more inclusive society. He calls us to think, feel, and act in life-affirming ways connecting us with each other even under the most difficult of circumstances. Most importantly, we need to listen to and believe the voices and stories of those who experience systemic racism.

We are here for each other, to speak up for our community, and act in meaningful ways to bring about change through our mission. In addition to empathetic listening, we have many resources available at the BAC to support us all through these unsettling times. Our offices of Student Life and Human Resource Development are always available to support you. Through the Employee Assistance Program, our employees can access counseling and other ways of coping with anxiety. Through the Student Assistance Program, our students can access similar services.
We must do more than make statements. We will continue to be part of the solution as an academic community. We are going to come together on June 10 at the **BAC Talks** where we will address the issues of race and space, including such topics as Crisis As Conversation, Designing Inclusive Spaces that Draw Us Together, Trauma Informed Design, and Design Thinking for Reframing and Problem Solving in the Post-Pandemic World.

Let's mourn the irrecoverable loss of life.

Let's change the script by spreading empathy and compassion.

Let's impact the future by understanding our role in transforming society.

Compassionately,
Dr. Mahesh Daas, President

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**Students: Need somebody to talk to?**

Our Student Assistance Program provides you with free benefits including confidential counseling services. [Click here to learn more](#) or call 1-800-756-3124.

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**Faculty/Staff: Open Discussion with HR**

On Tuesday, June 2 at 9:30 AM the Human Resources department will be hosting an opportunity to freely express ourselves during these challenging times. Please check your meeting invite for the Zoom link.