

June 23, 2020

Dear Brescia community,

Two weeks ago I shared a message denouncing Anti-Black racism and discrimination on campus. As an institution of women's higher education, we have an imperative to **continue to stand against all forms of social injustice and work towards ending racism and discrimination.**

Today, Brescia supports President Alan Shepard's response to the community and Western's commitment to combating all forms of racism and discrimination on campus. **At Brescia, we too are in a position to commit to change. We have the ability and responsibility to our community to create a truly anti-racist culture. This is a culture that must be built through listening, reflecting, learning and understanding. We must analyze our past and current behaviors and practices at Brescia, as well as in our local community.**

Our history of anti-racist and diversity initiatives may not reflect a truly comprehensive approach and more importantly a broader, community-based, consultative process. We must look to our past and put faith in our values, to better inform our future. The Ursuline Sisters have always stood up for members of our society who were persecuted—where gender, race, religion, or immigration status, put them at a disadvantage and potential for being mistreated.

The Ursulines were founded during a time where access to education was offered to a few privileged men of high birth, and the idea of educating women was regarded with derision and hostility. It was in this environment where Angela Merici called a company of women together to step outside of their comfort zone to address issues of inequality. The Ursuline Sisters were called to a mission that required them to challenge many societal norms. At a point in history where the reality reflected universal and unquestioned gender discrimination, the Ursulines had a vision for equal education that was new and radical. They chose a way of life that was radically egalitarian by the standards of their times, and that fought against some of the deepest-held prejudices of their society.

In my previous message I shared that Brescia will work together with King's to form a **joint Anti-Racism Working Group. In early July we will release a draft framework of the working group's Terms of Reference to the community in order to elicit feedback. We anticipate gathering expressions of interest for membership in mid-August.**

As well, Brescia has recently appointed a new Special Advisor to the Principal on Diversity & Inclusion, Lissette Ochoa. In addition to her current role at Brescia, Lissette will work closely with the Principal's Office to support and engage our students and



community as we reflect and formulate longer-term recommendations for change on campus. Initial discussions have begun and we will include this information along with resources to educate our community in a new section under “Campus Life” on our [website](#).

We are taking these first steps, but we know that is not enough. We are committed to learning, listening and having uncomfortable and potentially painful conversations. These conversations will help shape a more informed and inclusive reality for all our students.

Like the Ursulines who came before us, we are prepared to step outside of our comfort zone, to shape a future that violates many unconscious societal norms. We will follow our mission that calls us to challenge these norms, and forge a new reality rooted in our values of wisdom, justice and compassion in order to ensure racism and discrimination on campus are eliminated. Our conversations and commitment to work on these important initiatives will continue to support a more inclusive and diverse community.

Sincerely,

Susan Mumm, DPhil, FRHistS
Principal
Brescia University College