

## Elections 2016: Statement of Concern and Solidarity

### **Department of Latin American, Caribbean and U.S. Latino Studies University at Albany**

Nearly a month has passed since a minority of voters elected the next president of the United States. They voted for a man who delighted in fueling racial, xenophobic, religious, and misogynistic hatred, a man who gleefully incited his majority white followers to vent their rage against the enemies of white supremacy. In these troubled times, whiteness is constitutive of a rekindled, aggressive American nationality. People racialized as non-white are suspect and marked as incapable of being genuinely American.

Sadly, it comes as no surprise that hate crimes against people who are racialized as non-white have swelled since the election. The president-elect mobilized a distressed population by tapping into a contradictory and combustible combination of legitimate socioeconomic grievances and deadly racist fears that people of color would define the future of this country. Instead of advocating policies to address rising inequality and economic decline, the president-elect and his supporters propagated the hateful idea that America would only become great again by extinguishing “political correctness” and “multiculturalism,” deporting millions of undocumented Latin American immigrants, imposing stop and frisk policies in the “inner city,” banning Muslims from entering the country, creating a Muslim registry, and depriving women control over their bodies.

With this election we have seen that social constraints against the most vile and repellent expressions of bigotry are rapidly dissolving. This is a deliberate and insidious crusade to implant fear and uncertainty in order to intimidate those who resist the odious campaign to “make American great again.” We are living in an environment of heightened intolerance toward those who have been most victimized by this society. Throughout the United States college and university students have been targeted and verbally assaulted because of their national origin, ethnicity or skin color. Their rightful place in the university is challenged, and a hostile environment threatens their academic success.

We, the undersigned faculty, teaching assistants and contingent faculty of the Department of Latin American, Caribbean and U.S. Latino Studies (LACS) are acutely sensitive to the damage that racism, patriarchy and homophobia have inflicted on our communities. We believe the university is a crucially important institution for promoting equal opportunities for disadvantaged and historically marginalized populations. As scholars and activists our strength resides in our ability to use our knowledge, experience and resolve to expose and challenge all actions that seek to deter our students from realizing their goals and creating more inclusive communities.

LACS is undeterred in its resolve to create a safe learning environment free from intimidation and that values open expression of differing opinions. The faculty, teaching assistants and contingent faculty of LACS remain committed to the momentous task of preparing all students, regardless of immigration status, national origin, religion, race, ethnicity,

gender, sexual orientation, or abled status to realize their potential as educated and empowered individuals. LACS endorses and supports the petition calling on Interim President James Stellar to declare the University at Albany a “sanctuary campus.”

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