September 27, 2021

Dear Campus Community,

The anti-Black racist incidents that have occurred on our campus this semester, described in an email from Vice Chancellor Nefertiti Walker last week, are contemptible and cowardly. We will not be intimidated by the hateful acts of craven individuals who hide in anonymity. We stand with our students who have been victimized, and we will continually strive for a more equitable community grounded in the principles of dignity and respect.

I want to share with you today that we have secured the services of Stroz Friedberg Digital Forensics, a leading national firm in cyber security, to assist us in our investigation of the source of the racist emails that were sent to members of Black student organizations. While we are mindful of the challenges of determining the source of anonymous emails such as these, we are confident that Stroz Friedberg, with its extensive expertise and technical capacity, will methodically follow every lead in pursuit of the contemptible individual or individuals responsible.

We will also fight back against bigotry and intolerance with a series of educational opportunities and action steps to promote understanding and an ongoing commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion. These initiatives, which complement the measures described in Vice Chancellor Walker’s email of last week, include:

- **Black Joy, Black Healing and Black Justice Forum** – A forum led by the Center of Racial Justice and Youth Engaged Research (CRJ) and sponsored by the Office of Equity and Inclusion on Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2021, 5:30 to 8 p.m., location to be determined. The forum will bring together Black students from across the UMass Amherst campus for an evening of community, love and kinship against a backdrop of ongoing anti-Black hatred that will never define or deter us. Food, music and space for healing, joy and reflection will be led by students and faculty of CRJ.

- **Launching the Black Advisory Council** – A team of faculty, students, administrators and staff charged with developing recommendations to the Office of Equity and Inclusion that will improve the experiences of Black students, faculty and staff on campus. More details to come.
• **Increased funding for the Center of Racial Justice (CRJ).** An opportunity to invest in our internal expertise on racial justice and support the expansion of their capacity to advise on UMass Amherst-specific racial injustices so that our Black community can feel safe and thrive on campus.

When an act of hate occurs in our campus community a comprehensive response protocol is activated. This protocol includes meetings with those directly affected, deployment of support services, communication to members of the impacted student organization, residential community or academic department, and notification of university police (UMPD). When the perpetrator of any of these acts is identified, the full weight of the university’s disciplinary and legal apparatus will be brought to bear. I want to assure you that we are committed to doing everything in our power to support our Black students at this difficult time and will spare no measure in our investigation to determine the perpetrator(s) of these incidents.

The steps that I have shared with you today are part of our continuous efforts to ensure a safe and welcoming living learning environment for all, and we will work with campus partners to launch additional initiatives throughout the course of the academic year. As we chart a path through these troubling times, I am hopeful that we can all work together to stand up to intolerance and build a better, more equitable and just community.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy

University of Massachusetts Amherst