



June 7, 2020

[En Español](#)

Dear Presentation Community,

We have been reading every comment, email, and the open letter shared by students and alumnae and continue to listen and learn. We are deeply sorry that any Presentation student was ever made to feel isolated, excluded, or experienced outright racist treatment while at Presentation by anyone in our community, or through our systems, policies, and practices. We are heartbroken to hear of the accounts of racism at Presentation, and are committed to making systemic changes within our community to stop racism, biases, and transgressions.

Even if just one member of our community experienced racism at Presentation, one is too many. Enough is enough, now is the time for action.

If we haven't made it clear in previous communications, **BLACK LIVES MATTER**. We hear you, we value you, we stand together with you. We want everyone in our community to feel valued and welcome and will not tolerate racism or hatred of any kind.

We understand that systemic change does not happen overnight or in a single letter or Instagram post. We also know that you're more interested in hearing and seeing our actions than our words. There is much work we need to do as individuals and as an institution and this is where we begin; following are planned and previous actions.

You're Invited to Our Community Listening Sessions

There are many conversations happening and many voices to be heard. As such, we will be hosting listening sessions for any student, alumnae, or parent who experienced racism at Presentation on Wednesday, June 10th and Thursday, June 11th. The purpose of these sessions is threefold: to share personal experiences, ask questions and provide suggestions to leadership.

Please watch for more information, including specific timing and a link to register for this event, early next week. This will be the first of many opportunities, and we hope that this is the beginning of an on-going dialogue with our community.

We also welcome conversations with any members of our community who would like to contact us directly or through our [feedback form](#). We are committed to providing ways to make sure that all voices are heard, so that we can grow in understanding and continue to take action.

Commitment to Change

As leaders of Presentation High School, we are fully committed to addressing our issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and to the systemic reform of our school-wide systems and practices in order to build a truly inclusive community. Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team, which is led by our Director of DEI, Crystal Catalan, will engage with the community to develop specific plans that are aligned with our [diversity statement](#); we will be sharing our next steps with the community on **Friday, June 12th**.

Immediate Opportunities for Prayer, Action, and Education

We understand that addressing our nation's deep-rooted history of systemic racism extends beyond our Pres community and must be done in solidarity and partnership with organizations who are experts in this work. We hope you will join us and help the cause by praying, donating, reading, signing petitions, and sending letters to government leaders. You can find resources on our [DEI landing page](#). We will continue to update this page with news and updates and student-led initiatives regularly.

Previous Actions

Driven by our desire to ensure that Presentation is a school where all feel known, loved and served, we embarked on an effort to improve our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts in 2017-18, with an increased focus in the 2019-20 school year. To date, this effort includes:

- Developing a [Diversity Statement](#) to guide our school with input from representative voices.
- Creating the Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion faculty position.
- Hosting a Community Development Week for students, faculty and staff focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion. You can watch a [video](#) recap on our DEI page.
- Voting for and approving the creation of affinity groups
- Celebrating Black History Month with a prayer service; designed and created by our newly formed Black Student Union.
- Conducting Faculty training on building an inclusive community with Lee Mun Wah and microaggressions with Dr. Sandra "Chap" Chapman.
- Discussing text from *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo with faculty and staff and continuing our professional development this summer with *How to be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi.
- Creating an ad-hoc committee to seek feedback about our work scholarship program in order to reform it for this fall.
- Revising our Social Justice curriculum to include more primary sources from voices on the margins and to reflect new understandings of racism and intersectionality.

We realize these actions and words are just a start. We know we must do better and invite you to help hold us accountable in this work by getting involved in our listening sessions, committees, and next steps. We are committed to living by our mission and the social justice values we teach. And, we will continue to have the difficult, but important conversations to bring about necessary changes to ensure Presentation is an inclusive community where all feel valued and welcome.

In partnership,



Holly Elkins
President
helkins@presentationhs.org



Katherine Georgiev
Principal
kgeorgiev@presentationhs.org