



State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Office of the Undergraduate Student Association

To the ESF Community:

On the night of Wednesday, November 6th, 2019, “**racial slurs** against black and Asian people were written on two floors in a Syracuse University dorm building [Day Hall].”¹ The Syracuse University (SU) campus was notified of this incident on Monday, November 11th after students from those floors shared information via social media. One week later, on Wednesday, November 13th, “[g]raffiti using **racist language** against Asian people was reported in Syracuse University’s Physics Building around 5:30 pm.”² The campus was notified of this incident on Thursday, November 14th at 3:20am. On Thursday, November 14th a report was made about an **anti-Semitic** display near campus at around 4:30pm.³

The Undergraduate Student Association (USA) and the Baobab Society are **outraged and disheartened** to hear of these egregious events, and stand in **solidarity with underrepresented students** on both campuses affected by these crimes. All students deserve to feel safe, especially in the places where they live. We encourage all students to support one another in this time of need. The [ESF Bias Reporting System](#) and [ESF Counseling Services](#) are two resources available that we encourage students to utilize.

Too often, discrimination and racial bias are only discussed in the wake of large events such as those of this past week, yet the **prejudice experienced by minorities on a daily basis** is often overlooked. ESF is a school of people who are passionate about doing good and making a positive change in the world, but we must **recognize our limitations as a disproportionately white academic institution** in order to move forward. Although this incident did not occur on our campus, USA and the Baobab Society recognize a campus-wide need to do more to support underrepresented communities. We aim to do this not just by providing support after incidents, but also by proactively fighting bias, improving **cultural competency** on campus, and

¹ <http://dailyorange.com/2019/11/racial-slurs-written-day-hall/>

² <http://dailyorange.com/2019/11/derogatory-language-asian-people-found-physics-building/>

³ <http://dailyorange.com/2019/11/swastika-drawn-snow-near-505-walnut/>

advocating for diversity in admissions and hiring programs. The following are courses of action that we will take and advocate for:

- ❖ The Office of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity will host an **open forum** with the Division of Student Affairs and USA to allow for students to share and hear thoughts on this event and campus culture towards people of color, along with long term goals to address discrimination on our campus and in our community.
- ❖ We highly recommend ESF administration and ESF UPD addresses these incidents officially and outline actionable steps that the college will take to respond to them.
- ❖ USA is currently in contact with the SU Student Association to provide USA support for any action items that they are pursuing.
- ❖ We encourage students to leave anonymous feedback and ideas to improve inclusivity on campus via the suggestion box in Gateway and the easel in Moon Library. These suggestions will be directly given to any appropriate parties per the suggestions collected.
- ❖ Promote **cultural competency** on our campus via seminars, dialogues, curriculum changes, and classroom experiences.
- ❖ **Promote allyship.** Listen to others' stories, amplify the voices of others, and self-educate on relevant social issues. Use more inclusive language. Be willing to engage in uncomfortable conversations. Challenge existing assumptions about others.
- ❖ We encourage all members of the ESF community to recognize that traditional STEM curriculum has traditionally excluded underrepresented populations, and a greater effort must be made to **consider diversity, equity, and inclusion within the STEM field.**

Instances such as the three aforementioned are **unacceptable and detestable**, but we hope these events will be used as a **catalyst for change** and a motivation to achieve a more **equitable community**. We encourage the campus community to reflect and have discussions surrounding these topics in order to shift the climate and prevent these adversities from happening again.

With kindness and care,

The Undergraduate Student Association and The Baobab Society