June 15, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

Friday, June 17, Glendale Community College will close its doors in observance of Juneteenth, an important holiday in American history that until recently was largely unknown to a significant number of Americans.

Juneteenth National Independence Day was designated as a federal holiday last year to commemorate the day in 1865 that Union troops arrived in Texas and announced that all enslaved people were now free two and a half years after the Emancipation Proclamation. The GCC Board of Trustees followed the federal government by unanimously voting to recognize the Juneteenth holiday locally each year.

For decades, many people have been celebrating Juneteenth. While the end of slavery is certainly cause for celebration, I encourage you to take some time to reflect on the legacy of slavery and how it impacts our nation today. Think about the inequities that still exist and the people who continue to struggle. Consider what we are doing as an institution to make corrections. And ask yourself, if you are doing all that you can to not only support racial equality, but to take a firm stand against racism.

Slavery may have been eliminated in the U.S. in the 1800s, but racism is very present nearly one quarter of the way into the 21st century. Systemic racism is quantifiable with measurable differences between White and Black Americans regarding a host of categories including income level, education, home ownership and life expectancy. And we continue to witness horrifying outbursts of racial violence, as occurred in Buffalo recently where an 18-year old gunman murdered ten people during a racially motivated attack.

There is much to reflect on as we celebrate and observe Juneteenth. 157-years ago, while most of the nation recognized the end of slavery, thousands of people remained enslaved in Texas for months after the Civil War had ended. Today, let us not live as if racial inequality has been eliminated while others continue to suffer.

David Viar
Superintendent/President