

# TADOHE

TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF DIVERSITY OFFICERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

TADOHE community members and friends,

I beg your pardon as a few days have now passed since the latest horrific events have transpired. Simply, my ability to attempt to translate my heartbreak into sentient words was understandably stalled. Sometimes, there's no need to rush to say something simply because there is an expectation to offer a sound bite in haste. Oftentimes, the most human thing to do is PAUSE and allow ourselves to connect with feeling everything before attempting to articulate anything. Personally, like many of you, I needed those days to grieve, to sit with my anger, to wail out loud, and to accept that I cannot and would not attempt to intellectualize what has happened. In 10 days, we have borne witness to three mass shootings in rapid succession. Gun violence snuffed out precious lives in a Black community grocery store in Buffalo, NY, in a church of Taiwanese congregants in Santa Ana, CA, and in an elementary school in Uvalde, TX. This doesn't include the innocent lives of passengers also violently killed when simply riding the subway in NYC. These are places that should not even be moderately conceivable as dangerous. And yet, it is in the spaces that were once thought to be safe and part of our benign daily lives that will now provoke memories of fear and tragic, violent loss for years to come.

In short, we are weary. The weariness of this moment should not have to be countered by resilience. Resilience is defined as the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties. And though we will somehow keep forging ahead despite some of the greatest

adversities we are confronting in this tumultuous moment, we won't "recover quickly." Perhaps, the insistence that we continue to recover quickly after routinely confronting gun violence that's taken the lives of innocent children and targeted the lives of Black folks, People of Color, and Jewish community members, who have been experiencing marginality, oppression, or who have been scapegoated in irresponsible and dangerous political rhetoric, is the wrong response. Typically, when we "recover quickly," we forget the pain associated with the injury. That forgetfulness and convenient distance from the source of this pain is what lulls us back into the busyness of our dailies without meaningful disruption. So, just like that, the watershed moments that could usher in fast and furious change through collective activation are eventually muted. Hash-tagged. One statement archived. Forgotten.

As President of the Texas Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education, I implore you to activate while you seek to heal. Permit the empathy felt for those suffering to foster momentous change in this season of sorrow. We are our most resilient when we find strength in one another toward a purpose greater than simply surviving. We are destined to thrive, to see our children grow, to learn from the lived wisdom of our elders, to activate around injustice whether it directly visits our doorstep or not. We are the ambassadors of inclusion and that comes with a weighty responsibility that cannot support passive quiet. Please do your due diligence to support your communities and their healing, through their pain, and in the forging ahead of their activation around change that reminds us that feeling safe should be a basic right afforded to all of us.

In love and solidarity,  
Dr. Skyller Walkes