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Sent: Tuesday, February 4, 2025 7:06:47 PM

To: Hennink-Kaminski, Heidi <h2kamins@msu.edu>

Subject: Acknowledgement to our community and next steps

Dear ComArtSci community,

We would like to provide an update and offer clarification about the notice last week to cancel the ComArtSci Lunar New Year event.

We deeply regret the disappointment and pain caused by the decision to cancel our Lunar New Year event and the language used to do so. We want to clarify that this decision was not made by the university, nor does it reflect MSU's position on cultural events, programming or inclusivity. In celebration of Lunar New Year, MSU offered various activities, including special dining options, a concert and other programs.

The decision to cancel our event was based on input from students who expressed concern about gathering in person for the celebration. We acknowledge that the decision to cancel the event was an overreaction.

Further, our email to the ComArtSci community, some of which was covered by local media, created confusion, misunderstanding, and signaled a lack of regard and respect for the tradition, culture, and values of Asian American and Asian students, staff and faculty.

Additionally, we acknowledge that the cancellation of the Lunar New Year event should not have been associated with recent actions taken by the Federal government.

Over the past few days, we have reached out to and engaged in dialogue with community members who have been affected by the decision. We are committed to our Asian American and Asian students, staff and faculty, and we greatly value their contributions to the vibrancy of our campus community.

This decision was not intended to diminish or misrepresent the Lunar New Year. We recognize the cultural importance of Lunar New Year and other long-standing cultural celebrations. We want to emphasize that there are no plans to cancel future ComArtSci cultural events.

We hope this is the beginning of a collaborative relationship with the MSU Asian and Asian American communities, one that deepens understanding and informs how we move forward to ensure that voices are heard and nurtures an environment where each member is treated with dignity and respect.

Here in ComArtSci we are moving forward with the following actions. First, we are arranging a listening session with our Asian and Asian American faculty, staff and graduate students so that we may better understand the impact of this decision. Second, Lauren Gaines will offer open office hours for undergraduate students from affected communities to share their thoughts, concerns, and feedback on how we can continue to support cultural programming in a way that reflects their experiences and needs.

Finally, we will celebrate the end of the Lunar New Year as a community on Tuesday, February 11. The event will take place from 12-1pm in WKAR Studio B and includes lunch, a presentation, and traditional celebratory activities. We have extended this invitation to others in the MSU Asian/Asian American community as well. We hope you will join us.

Please feel free to reach out to me or Lauren by email, phone, or in person if you would like to connect.

Sincerely,

Heidi Hennink-Kaminski, Dean

Lauren Gaines, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Heidi Hennink-Kaminski, Ph.D.

(she/her/hers)

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