Dear Spartans,

Welcome to 2021. I hope your break was restful and peaceful.

We’ve been waiting for hope for nearly a year now, for a light at the end of the tunnel when we can see all roads leading us back to Michigan State University. We hope to gather once again in-person, ask our professors questions in the classroom, cheer in the stands at the Breslin Center and celebrate together as Spartans walk across the graduation stage. We can see the finish line, but we still have some race left to run. Let’s not drop the baton now.

As you know, COVID-19 vaccinations are being administered around the U.S. It will take several months before the vaccine is publicly available. In the meantime, we must continue to do what we can to keep ourselves and others safe by following COVID-19 safety measures, including wearing face coverings and physically distancing. We must stay diligent. Please continue to visit msu.edu/together-we-will for the most up-to-date information on MSU’s safety measures.

As a reminder, students living on campus or coming to campus for any reason are required to participate in MSU’s COVID-19 Early Detection Program. Even if you registered for the Early Detection Program in the fall, you must re-register for the spring semester. Students living in the East Lansing area are also encouraged to participate so we can each do our part to keep our communities safe. More information can be found in MSU President Stanley’s message here. Please also review the MSU Community Compact available here.

Events at the U.S. Capitol
Last week at the U.S. Capitol, we witnessed a horrifying insurrection and violence that left many of us angry and upset. We must reject these violent, oppressive acts. We must be better than this. President Stanley and the MSU Board of Trustees released a statement following the riot, which you can read in its entirety here.

Inauguration
President-elect Joe Biden will be inaugurated at noon on Wednesday, Jan. 20. Additional expected violence and activities are being reported in states, including Michigan, as well as at our nation’s capital leading up to and including Jan. 20. We encourage you to be safe.

Please read this statement on free speech from the MSU Board of Trustees. You may also find additional information about your responsibilities when it comes to activism and free speech at MSU.

Spartans are reminded that this is a time to come together and celebrate democracy. We must be courageous as we uphold and demonstrate our values to appreciate diversity and strive for inclusiveness and equity.
We must hold each other accountable. This is how Spartans change the world.

If you find yourself in a situation where you feel unsafe, or you witness behavior that you believe to be unwelcoming or disrespectful, contact the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) at (517) 353-3922 or email oie@msu.edu. You may also complete a public incident reporting form at msu.publicincidentreporting.com. If you are in immediate danger, please call 911.

Mental Health Resources
I understand all that is happening in today’s world, including COVID-19 and current events, may cause feelings of anxiety and some of you may be struggling. Please take care of yourself.

MSU Counseling & Psychiatric Services (CAPS) continues to support Spartans by providing telemental health services. Alternative options are available for those students who for privacy and/or technological reasons are unable to engage in telemental health services. Learn more about CAPS and available services at caps.msu.edu.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration
In these difficult times, we should remember that our country has experienced similar moments of unrest. Let us not forget the legacy left by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who continuously worked toward his dream of a country void of segregation and racism. May this give you hope. Please consider participating in the variety of exciting and educational opportunities offered to the MSU Community in celebration of Dr. King’s legacy. Click here to learn more about this week-long celebration starting Sunday, Jan. 17.

Thank you, Spartans, for doing what is necessary to keep yourself, other Spartans and your communities safe. We wish you success in this new semester and new year.

Go Green!

Vennie Gore
Senior Vice President for Auxiliary Enterprises
Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Services
Michigan State University