PROVOST JONES REMARKS

“Stand in Solidarity with Orlando”

Vigil for Victims of Terrorist Attack in Orlando, Florida

Monday, June 13, 2016

Old Main steps – University Park campus

Welcome, and thank you all very much for coming together this evening as we honor those whose lives were lost in the horrific attack early Sunday morning in Orlando, Florida.

I am Nick Jones, executive vice president and provost at Penn State. President Eric Barron wanted to be here tonight, but unfortunately he is traveling. His wife, Molly Barron, is here, and I'd like to acknowledge her presence on his behalf.

It saddens me, as it saddens us all, to have heard once again of a mass casualty shooting somewhere in our world. The attack in Orlando is now recognized as the worst terrorist events in the United States since 9-11. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of the men and women who were killed or injured, in an act of terrorism and hatred that is being condemned around the world.
By coming together tonight, we stand in solidarity with those who lost loved ones. We stand in solidarity with the emergency responders, who acted quickly and bravely in an effort to save innocent lives. We stand in solidarity with everyone across our nation and the world who steadfastly objects to the hatred that fueled such a heinous, criminal act.

By standing together, we are saying that we abhor this and other acts of terrorism, which affects members of our community — including the LGBTQ community — in various ways.

We are saying that at Penn State campuses across the Commonwealth, we have strong communities of inclusion and support – robust, diverse communities that celebrate and respect our differences.

When I say ‘WE are coming together,’ I mean the broader University community that includes administrators, faculty, staff, students, and the public at large — all from various backgrounds, and all standing tall in the face of hatred and intolerance.

At Penn State, we are all part of a community that is committed to engaging about a range of opinions and ideas, while also demanding inclusiveness and mutual respect.

To members of the LGBTQ community, know you have many allies at Penn State and everywhere who mourn with you, who support you, who have your back. We stand strong with you, today and every day.
To members of the Muslim community, know that the actions of one extremist individual do not represent or define you. We know you all – our Muslim students, faculty, and friends – are unified with us in condemning this atrocity, and we stand strongly with you as well, today and every day.

Tonight, our thoughts are with those affected by this terrorist attack, as they try to heal after this shocking and unthinkable crime. We look for avenues to continue to show our support for the LGBTQ communities in Orlando and here at home.

We stand together, and we must do so to show the nation and the world that we value our diverse community, that we embrace everyone in it, and that in it we find great strength. We will continue to provide a safe and welcoming environment for everyone at Penn State.