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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
ELIZABETH BRADLEY

A Message from President Bradley

October 24, 2017

Dear all,

I am writing to help prepare us for tomorrow. We have several events on campus in the evening. I have been made aware of the very real and legitimate pain that students are feeling about one of these events. Students have expressed fear for their safety and well-being, particularly in the national context of hate speech and divisive language. Many find this time extremely stressful and unsettled.

In my role as President, I want to affirm my commitment to maintaining the safety of our students, faculty, staff, and administration. I hope we can be a campus where we think about how our words will affect others and where principles of equity and inclusion underpin our actions.

Here are the events of the evening that I know about:

At 7:00PM in Rocky 300, William Jacobson, professor of law at Cornell University, will be giving a talk organized by the Vassar Conservative Libertarian Union. The title of the talk is, "An Examination of Hate Speech and

Free Speech on College Campuses.” The VCLU previously advertised a different title that had not been approved by the VSA. I have spoken with the speaker, and I expect this to be a peaceful discussion. If you do not wish to engage with these ideas, other activities are available.

At 5:30PM in the Villard Room, Amitav Ghosh, an award-winning author, will be giving the Asian Studies annual Gandhi lecture. The talk is titled “Chasing the Dragon: Traveling the Opium Route to Qing China.”

At 7:00PM in Sanders Classroom Spitzer Auditorium, Vassar alumna Hope Singen ('91) will present an original play titled “SKIN”, described as “a frank and funny queer love story about transcending sexual violence.”

In addition to these two talks and the performance, VSA and Healing 2 Action have organized a community gathering in the Library from 6:00-9:00PM Wednesday that will be a place of healing and peace. We are also working closely with Wendy Freedman and Counseling Services at Vassar to be sure adequate emotional support staff are present all evening.

I am thankful for the excellent and compassionate work of the students in Healing 2 Action, the Executive Board of VSA, and many others who have worked tirelessly and creatively to develop safety teams and plans in collaboration with faculty, staff, Campus Safety and Security, and the President's Office.

See you around campus.

President Bradley

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