



Office for Equity and Diversity Statement on the Murder of George Floyd

June 4, 2020

We are reeling in the wake of George Floyd's murder at the hands of a Minneapolis Police Department officer. For eight minutes and 46 seconds, George Floyd was pinned down, pleading for the officer to spare his life. "Please, I can't breathe." "Everything hurts." "They're going to kill me." Bystanders tried to intervene, but the officers refused to listen.

George Floyd's final words force us to confront graphic and undeniable evidence of systemic racism and violence against Black communities. We cannot look away.

Protests have erupted in Minnesota and across the country and world, calling for us to fight against systems of oppression that are built to marginalize, harm, and kill members of our communities. We cannot wait for more Black lives to be lost.

We support President Gabel's action to limit work with the Minneapolis Police Department. We thank Jael Kerandi, President of the Minnesota Student Association, and the many students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members who are advocating and calling for immediate and swift action.

We know that more work needs to be done. The Office for Equity and Diversity is committed to partnering across the University to dismantle systemic racism. We hear and support the demands for leadership and accountability. We also hear the questions about what each of us can do while we work on longer-term efforts. As a start, consider the [following actions](#):

1. **Listen:** Listen to members of Black communities, Indigenous communities, and communities of color who continue to experience the damaging effects of historical trauma, oppression, and systemic racism. Our communities have knowledge and lived experiences that must be elevated.
2. **Learn:** Learn about anti-Blackness and its pervasive and harmful impact on Black communities. Learn more about your role in creating change. Dismantling systemic racism cannot happen without an understanding of the history of our University, state, and nation.
3. **Support:** Support impacted communities. Donate. Volunteer. Create intentional spaces to process anger, sadness, and grief. There are many immediate and long-term needs.
4. **Advocate:** Make your voice heard. Get involved in efforts to create change within and beyond the University. Systemic change cannot happen without direct action and advocacy.

The University is closed this afternoon in honor of George Floyd's memorial service. We will take this time to reflect. We know that immediacy and grief will fade, but we cannot forget George Floyd. Tanisha Anderson. Michael Brown. Philando Castile. Jamar Clark. Eric Garner. Botham Jean. Tamir Rice. Breonna Taylor. There are many more names. Many more Black lives taken by police violence. Say their names. Remember them. Commit to action.