

June 1, 2020

Dear Ohio State Graduate Students,

We are writing to you today to let you know that we do not simply “see you,” but that we also hear, understand, and share your frustration, anger, disappointment, and pain. The past week has been a very trying time in the midst of what was already a difficult year and on the heels of a stressful and unexpected spring semester.

Like many of you, we have been closely following the events in Minneapolis and in cities across the country, including right here in Columbus (on- and off-campus), in response to the senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, John Crawford, Tyre King, Tamir Rice, Julius Tate Jr., Henry Green, Bettie Jones, Eric Garner, Tanisha Anderson, Philando Castile, Atatiana Jefferson, and Dominique Clayton. These are just some of those whose injustices were publicized, and we can be sure there are countless others whose names we do not know.

Our hearts go out to each and every one of you — along with your families, friends, and demonstrators across the nation — feeling pain and agony over another senseless murder. During this time, please be sure to check in with your family, friends, and colleagues, especially those who are at-risk and/or in the Black community. Traumatic stressors and events like those of the past few days impact everyone, but some more than others.

The Ohio State University is not immune to what is occurring in Minneapolis, downtown Columbus, and cities across the nation. Our campus community consists of individuals from various identities, backgrounds, and cultures. We adamantly believe this should serve as a notice to university administrators that The Ohio State University has a moral obligation to ensure that our campus community, as well as the Central Ohio community, cultivate spaces where all Ohio State students and their experiences are respected, supported, and protected.

Over the course of this past week, students have been asked by leaders of our university to reflect and engage in dialogue. While we recognize reflection and active dialogue are key pieces to addressing the inequalities we witness on a daily basis, we know that dialogue alone is not enough. There must be more advocacy, evaluation of policy, and cultural shifts taking place in tandem with these dialogues in order to effect long-term change. We will continue to push the Graduate School and university leaders to make Ohio State a more equitable and inclusive community. We need to address institutional racism, bigotry, implicit and explicit bias behaviors, policies, practices, and acts of prejudice that are rampant within our campus communities, Central Ohio, and across the nation — which many of our students, faculty, and staff are forced to encounter on a daily basis.

Institutional equity, inclusion, and diversity can no longer be mere talking points — they must be backed by action. We can no longer say we champion diversity while remaining silent on issues affecting so many within our community. We can no longer say we reaffirm diversity without outlining strategic initiatives, actions, and goals to combat these injustices at the institutional, local, state, national, and global levels.



We will not stop fighting until the voices, concerns, hardships, and experiences of Black students, faculty, and staff at Ohio State are prioritized by our institution's leadership and real change is made.

As noted in our April 6th letter to you all, attending graduate school can be very demanding and we have all had to face the additional challenge of living through an unprecedented global pandemic. We recognize how trying the current environment may be as you manage academic responsibilities, research, work, and social lives, while also caring for your family and friends who may be impacted by this global health crisis. Processing yet another instance of racially-motivated violence at this time feels overwhelming. We recognize this challenge and we want to focus attention on our peers, faculty, staff, and loved ones who are feeling undervalued, underappreciated, and disrespected. Your experiences are informing our fight for true justice at our university and in our community.

As we all prepare to navigate the weeks ahead, we want to take a moment to stress the importance of taking care of yourself during these demanding and stressful times by prioritizing your mental, physical, and emotional health.

On behalf of the Council of Graduate Students, we send our love and support to all of you during what is surely a very difficult and emotionally exhausting time for all of us. This is an extraordinary moment in history, and it requires each of us to treat one another with the utmost respect, care, and compassion. Please remember, CGS fiercely supports and advocates for all Ohio State graduate students and we encourage you to reach out to us at any time by email at cgs@osu.edu.

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COUNCIL OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Resources:

- [Student Legal Services](#)
- [Counseling and Consultation Services](#)
- [Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Together As Buckeye COVID-19 Emergency Grant Fund](#)
- [Graduate Students COVID-19 Concerns Report](#)
- [Ohio State Official COVID-19 News and Updates](#)

Read the Undergraduate Student Government, Council of Graduate Students, and Inter-Professional Council joint statement to university administrators here:

<https://cgs.osu.edu/posts/documents/ipc-statement.pdf>

Sign on to support the joint government statement here:

go.osu.edu/statement