

**Faculty Senate
Statement in Support of Black Lives Matter**

Approved by Faculty Senate September 29, 2020

Recent months have seen a continuing crisis of lethal violence against Black people, notably, the brutal killings this year of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Daniel Prude; the violence perpetrated against Jacob Blake; and the pervasive threats that people of color face from institutional and systemic racism, including the disproportionate threat they now face from COVID-19. Against this backdrop we must affirm our conviction that Black Lives Matter; confront the fact that people of color are disproportionately the target of pervasive, systemic, and institutional injustice, including on university campuses; and stress that when lives are endangered or oppressed by systemic injustice, it is our duty to take action in whatever way we can.

Every facet of the University's mission depends on the well-being of all of the members of the campus community, and requires that everyone on our campus be safe, welcome, and treated with fairness and respect. Everything we do as a faculty connects with this goal.

It is not enough simply to declare support for racial justice and a commitment to eliminating discrimination. As a faculty, we are responsible for the spaces on campus in which our students learn. We manage classrooms, research groups, labs, libraries, and committees. In all of these spaces, students look to us for guidance. We must take responsibility for making these spaces inclusive and anti-racist.

This fall, the Faculty Senate and Faculty Senate Executive Committee will make issues of racial justice a top priority for faculty governance, and will hold a series of town hall meetings to solicit input from the campus community. Faculty governance provides an open and accessible process for making positive change on campus; it is a venue through which we communicate and work with the university administration, and a vehicle for addressing structural issues related to hiring, tenure, and curriculum. In recent years, faculty governance has created a Faculty Senate Diversity Committee to review and comment on the curricular and policy changes that come before the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate also has worked with the administration to revise guidance related to faculty service in the tenure and promotion process, to make it more equitable for junior faculty, especially those from minoritized communities. In addition, the University is establishing a Campus Citizens Review Board that will give faculty, students, and staff critical oversight in reviewing and improving the policies and practices of campus police.

We call upon all faculty to participate in this process of making positive change on campus, as well as to act within their own spheres of influence to identify and combat discrimination wherever it occurs, so that our campus community can better embody shared ideals of justice, fairness, and equality.