

To the Graduate and Professional Student Body of Iowa State,

June 11, 2020

The continued oppression of and violence against Black communities are human rights issues beyond politics and are long overdue for national (and international) attention. Black communities have been facing this inequity, inequality, and violence for centuries and it is not their fight to face alone. We must continue to have individuals of all identities join the call to action for effective change.

As the Executive Council of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, we want to be absolutely clear and transparent: we support the current national protests for racial equity and the Black Lives Matter movement. The success of our society rests on the respect and inclusion of historically marginalized and intersectional communities and we **MUST** listen and make room for those voices. It will take sustained pressure from everyone to drive real change towards an equitable and inclusive future for all.

For many of our past and current graduate and professional students, racism and systemic oppression have deeply impacted multiple aspects of their lives. Racism is not a new conversation at Iowa State; even this past year, we saw students lead protests and censures. Discussions are currently happening across various branches of administration to address disparities in diversity and inclusion. As graduate and professional students, we are in a unique position of being in-between. We are learning as students, and we are independent instructors, clinicians, and researchers. As an executive council, we have been elected to lead from this unique position. This year, we commit to active training for all senators and executive positions on the following topics modified from the [Education and Action Tool Kit, 2020](#):

- Understanding that Black students face struggles not faced by other graduate students.
- Confronting our racism and internal biases and refusing to be fragile or fall back on guilt.
- Knowing it is not an option to remain silent.
- We realize that it is not enough to just be non-racist; we will be anti-racist.
- We will be proactive about inclusion in our daily lives and search out our blind spots.
- We are intolerant of racial intolerance.
- We will educate others as we educate ourselves.

University systems can make significant changes to deep-rooted systemic issues affecting racial equity, but historically this has not been the case. As graduate and professional students, we are the future leaders in both academia and our respective fields of study. We must hold ourselves and others accountable for learned prejudices and implicit biases and we must be part of the solution. As elected leaders we are stepping up—we challenge you to do the same.

We are committed to inclusion and Iowa State University's Principles of Community, as well as focused on legislation that promotes the safety, success, and wellness of our graduate and professional students. We are with you in this fight.

In solidarity,

President Eleanor Field, Vice President James Klimavicz, Vice President-Elect Carrie Ann Johnson, Treasurer Charles Wongus, Senate Engagement Officer Marcus Jansen, Senate Engagement Officer-Elect Chelsea Iennarella-Servantez, Senate Information Officer Ozlem Karakaya, Senate Information Officer-Elect Kate Alucard, Conference Officer Abigail Kropf, Wellness Officer Madelyne Losby