

Statement on Racism and Oppression

(June, 2020)

Over the course of the last couple of weeks, SIUE has sent various messages to our campus community regarding the recent killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd; black lives lost to senseless brutality. Their deaths are a reminder that despite measures to move this country forward in justice and equity, [systemic institutional oppression](#) continues to exist, continues to haunt any forward progress, and continues to cause deep and traumatizing pain to members of our community. It is because of this, that Student Affairs and our partners find it necessary to make clear our stance on the importance of reflection, education, and action. It is imperative that those within our community know that we are filled with unbeatable resolve to do the work necessary to challenge [systemic racism](#) within our institution and to be actively anti-racist. We plan, with our campus partners, to look critically at the policy, practice, and systems within our institution that need to change. This is an extraordinary challenge.

Our first step is to offer moments of reflection. This reflection needs to be authentic; needs to be angry, frustrated, confused, bewildered, and the many other feelings we are feeling as a community. We need to engage in [brave spaces, not just safe ones](#). We must be willing to step into a situation that may be a little uncomfortable because only with the push of discomfort, do we really grow. We must acknowledge that for these spaces to be safe, these spaces are not for our black and brown [folx](#) to educate the uneducated. This can only lead to continued and unending racial battle fatigue. This is not healing. To present an opportunity for listening and reflection, the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion, along with divisional and campus partners offered listening sessions Monday, June 15th through Friday, June 19th. These sessions provided an opportunity for participants to share with one another their authentic expressions born out of our current environment. Additionally, this was an opportunity for participants to share in that moment their feelings, but also to offer feedback and action steps that participants wanted to see within our division and with campus partners. Listening sessions were for sharing but participants were asked to remember that sharing did not mean:

- [Tokenizing](#) a few people of color for their experience.
- Expecting people of color to teach us.
- Demanding emotional energy from people of color.

Additional listening sessions will be offered by the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion, check back for more information.

The next step is education. Many resources have been coming in the recent shared messages and this one will be no different. We do ask that if you do not understand the turmoiled history of racism and oppression in this country, that you seek the resources to educate yourself. This includes NOT asking the black and brown [folx](#) in your life to do that work for you. When black and brown people choose to engage us or teach us, we should graciously listen, but we must not expect them to be our educators on demand. Instead, seek out assistance from those in positions on campus who offer that education as an aspect of their position. They signed up to educate and want to provide those resources for you. Faculty, staff, and graduate students are in positions of education, continued learning, and sharing of knowledge. Utilize the amazing wealth of

knowledge you have access to as a member of the SIUE campus when it is offered to you. Some places to visit, call or make connections include the [Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion](#), the [Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion](#), and [the Office for Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence](#).

Finally, we must act. Too many times, messages such as these simply express a message of concern and care, but do not truly act. Student Affairs and our partners are willing to act. We are planning to, along with campus leadership, build a timeline for action which includes expanding current programs that align with the mission of social change, but also moving forward on plans for new initiatives which will help undo the systemic problems on this campus. This includes expanding our current Sustained Dialogue program alongside our academic partners to create more opportunities to participate. Sustained Dialogue, a process that addresses issues of community relations including race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, religion, age, ability status, and other topics that often are not effectively discussed in diverse groups. Through a process of evaluation and critical reflection, participants dialogue across difference to create actionable plans for campus change. This is but one example. Additionally, the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion, alongside the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, and the Office of the Provost's—Office for Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence—will expand on educational and training opportunities that can be present to faculty, staff, and students in different environments. From staff meetings to classroom guest lectures, we want to ensure that the education you do on your own is complemented by participation in rigorous dialogue. We acknowledge this is not enough. We also ask you to be brave and hold us accountable as an institution, division, and departments when we are not holding up our own call to action. We will continue open and transparent communication with you to ensure we stay on this journey of social change and justice.

To close, Student Affairs and our partners want to align with the message that Black Lives Matter. Not only do they matter, but at this time Black voices need to be listened to with more intensity and fervor than ever before. We hear you. We stand with you. We will act. We will continue to support and will continue to keep you updated on the progress we make towards upending systemic racism.

In solidarity,

Accessible Campus Community and Equitable Student Support (ACCESS) – Dominic Dorsey, Director

Campus Recreation – Keith E. Becherer, Director

Career Development Center – Susan Seibert, Director

Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion (CSDI) – Lindy Wagner, Director

Counseling Services – Courtney R. Boddie, Ph.D.-Director

Dean of Students Office – Kara Shustrin, Dean of Students

Dining Services – Dennis Wobbe, Director

Early Childhood Center – Rebecca Dabbs MacLean, Director

Graduate and International Admissions – James Monahan, Ed.D., Director

Health Service – Riane Greenwalt, Director

Kimmel Student Involvement Center / Morris University Center / Student Success Center – Kelly Jo Karnes, Director

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs – Dr. Jeffrey Waple, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs – Miriam Rocchia, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Office for Academic Equity and Inclusive Excellence – Jessica C. Harris, Ph.D., Interim Assistant Provost

Office of Retention and Student Success- Dr. J. Tyler Phelps, Interim Director

School of Education, Health and Human Behavior Student Services – Gretchen Fricke, Director

Student Opportunities for Academic Results (SOAR) – Dr. Earleen Patterson, Director

Undergraduate Admissions - Todd C. Burrell, Director

University Housing – Mallory Sidarous, Director

[Anti-Racism at SIUE](#)

[Anti-Racism Resources](#)

[Protesting Safely During COVID-19](#)

Student Services & Resources

- [ACCESS](#)

- [Counseling Services](#)
- [Bias Reporting](#)
- [Health Services](#)
- [Kimmel Student Involvement](#)
- [Institutional Diversity & Inclusion](#)
- [International Student and Scholar Services](#)
- [Safe Zone](#)
- [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#)
- [Prevention Education and Advocacy Center \(PEACe\)](#)

- [Meditation and Prayer Room](#)
- [Center for Spirituality and Sustainability](#)
- [JewishLife@SIUE](#)