

Faculty Senate Statement

The recent killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breona Taylor, and countless others at the hands of police officers and the global protests demanding that “Black Lives Matter,” occurring within the context of a long history of systemic racism in the United States have brought attention to the urgent need for respect for all individuals. We recognize that there is No Time for Silence. On behalf of UTEP faculty, we want to reaffirm our commitment to fostering diversity, inclusion, and equity in our curriculum, our outreach and retention efforts, and partnerships.

We consider the murder and targeting of people because of their skin color as reprehensible and unequivocally wrong. Such incidents violate the very core values of UTEP and our commitment to inclusion, acceptance, dignity, and justice for all people. We acknowledge the immense hurt, frustration, and anger felt by countless Americans, but especially Black African Americans and communities of color who have been the targets of violence because of the color of their skin and generations of institutional violence.

As faculty at a Hispanic Serving Institution committed to access, excellence, and social impact; we reaffirm our conviction that racism has no place—anywhere. We recognize that historically and in contemporary times, Indigenous, Latinx, and Black populations have struggled for fair treatment and have been the victims of racialized violence and discrimination. Change starts with each of us, and we must hold ourselves and each other accountable. We must unite to combat and dismantle racism and discrimination in all its forms and denounce race-related violence, including pervasive abuses of power that lead to injuries and death. We affirm the urgent need for equity, inclusivity of diverse backgrounds, and respect for all individuals.

On behalf of UTEP faculty, we want to reaffirm our commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion for people of diverse ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. We respect the essential worth of all people and firmly believe that diversity strengthens the scientific enterprise and society as a whole. We are committed to creating an environment that welcomes new ideas and perspectives, and where hostility or other harmful behaviors are not tolerated.

As academics, our mission is to serve and work with communities, not just to study them but also to provide resources that help us identify and achieve our common goals. We commit to using our expertise and imagination to expose, confront, undermine, and dismantle inequality, racism, and violence at all levels. In the classroom and university, we acknowledge and confront the long history of racism in the U.S. and in the world. We discuss what institutional racism has meant and continues to mean for people of color, including Black and Latinx communities, Asian Americans, and Indigenous people, and religious minority populations. We commit to confronting our fears to talk about race and racism to decolonize our curriculum and work towards societal change.

We express to our UTEP students, faculty, and staff that we see them, hear them, and support them; and that they can discuss issues of racism and discrimination openly, without fear of reprisal or ridicule. We are building up new generations of students who will take things forward to end this scourge of racism.

Everywhere, we must practice love and respect for one another. We can have rigorous discussions and disagreements in the classroom and in the community but they must be guided by mutual respect and with the goal of providing light, not heat. We respect the essential worth of all people and firmly believe that diversity strengthens the scholarly enterprise and society as a whole. We are committed to creating an environment that welcomes new ideas and perspectives, and where hostility, violence, or other harmful behaviors are not tolerated. We will not be silenced and stand with those who promote respect, dignity, justice, and equity for all.

In solidarity with you all,

UTEP Faculty Senate 2019-2020

June 13, 2020