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Dear students, faculty, staff, and alumni,

We have once again been reminded how unjust our society can be. The past 12 weeks have without question lay bare the unceasing inequities African Americans face from inadequate healthcare and economic insecurity to unfair policing. While the horrific killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor – just to name a few - have rightfully angered so many of us and have been the catalyst that unleashed a series of protests in the U.S. and around the world, the intensity of the response is not only because of their deaths but also the ongoing systemic racism that African Americans and other communities of color face on a daily basis. Their deaths are all the more tragic as they are taking place during a global pandemic that has disproportionately affected communities of color, and makes gathering to grieve, honor, and protest even more dangerous to the people who are most impacted.

James Baldwin said, "You always told me 'It takes time.' It's taken my father's time, my mother's time, my uncle's time, my brothers' and my sisters' time. How much time do you want for your progress?" How much longer can we wait? We as a social work department must fully address this crisis and envision a racially just and inclusive society. I encourage faculty to facilitate conversations on racial justice and racism in our classrooms. We should take the opportunity to address racial injustice systemically, at every turn and interaction, in the context of our courses and initiatives, and add new facets on structural and systemic racism to our social work curriculum. We will leverage the leadership of alumni, students, faculty, and the Community Advisory Board to develop social work curriculum specific for supporting our black communities and disrupting anti-black racism. We issue a call to action - to all social workers - to deepen our resolve and work against systems of oppression and racism. We particularly urge our white-identified and non-Black persons of color in our community to commit to action, to engage, or to engage more deeply, in work to address anti-Black racism. Others have compiled lists of ways that you may do so [here](#).

At the Department of Social Work, we are committed to standing against injustice through leadership, advocacy, and action. I invite you to join us, to share your ideas, and to help us develop effective, sustainable actions to achieve our vision of social, racial, economic, and political justice for all. This is not only our professional responsibility; it is our moral responsibility. Together we can demand change. And together, we will prevail.

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