



## Statements on Death of George Floyd, Unrest

### Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS)

<https://www.wtcsystem.edu/news-media/newsroom/wtcs-commitment-to-progress>

Our nation and state are breaking under the weight of systemic racism, inequality, fear and all the ways in which humans do not treat each other humanely. The death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers – in combination with a pattern of other officer-involved deaths and racialized incidents, and the harsh toll of the pandemic on people of color in general and black communities specifically – has brought communities across Wisconsin and the world to another, overdue moment of tense reckoning. These profoundly disheartening events must be a call to action for technical college leaders, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as System leaders and staff. As educators and learners, we embrace our responsibility and capacity to create inclusive, genuine spaces and systems that support equity.

Each year, Wisconsin's 16 technical colleges welcome to campus more than 20,000 black students. We are proud of the opportunities we provide and the progress we are making to support the success of all our students. And yet, we must continuously improve campus climate and equity in outcomes. We, like many, also must work harder in our hiring practices to assure the diversity of our faculty, staff, and leadership, and then to support each other as colleagues.

Unique to us, Wisconsin's technical colleges also provide initial training for many of Wisconsin's law enforcement officers, who serve under increasingly complex conditions. As many chiefs of police throughout Wisconsin and the U. S. have recognized, however, this complexity can never excuse the unspeakable abuse of authority witnessed too often, and disproportionately by black citizens and communities of color.

We stand with black citizens who are hurting badly. We stand with diverse communities who, with loved ones and supporters, are raising their voices in justified anguish and anger. We stand with our law enforcement faculty, students and graduates who chose a law enforcement career for the right reasons and risk their safety to protect and serve Wisconsin communities. We stand firmly against racism, discrimination, oppression, and exclusion of all types. And we stand against damage to property, livelihoods and communities by a disconnected few.

Mr. Floyd's death, like other horrific moments in our collective history, inspires us to consider what we can do to make positive change. The answer will be different for each of us.

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) is committed to creating safe spaces to support our students and colleagues who are suffering; training future law enforcement officers who are prepared to do an increasingly complex, demanding job with compassion, courage and humanity; delivering educational pathways to economic opportunity for all; and raising our collective voices to oppose injustice in all of its forms. Together, we have the power to create a more inclusive and equitable society for each other and for the future.

## Blackhawk Technical College (BTC)

<https://www.blackhawk.edu/About/News-Events/News/ArtMID/2342/ArticleID/162/A-Message-from-BTC-Executive-Council>

Like many of you, we have been so troubled by recent events in our nation. Our hearts break for the fact that people of color everywhere continue to be subjected to racism, bigotry, prejudice, and fear. This behavior goes against our core values of fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Frankly, this behavior will not be tolerated at Blackhawk Technical College.

While we know that an email will not bring back George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless others who have brutally and violently lost their lives too soon, we are committed to partnering with all of you to facilitate meaningful social change. As an executive team of a predominately white institution, we know there is significant work to be done in this area. Together, there are things we can do to stop racism and hate. All people deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. This is a time to work together to support and understand one another, not a time to further the divide.

At Blackhawk, we are striving to create an environment where all voices can be shared and heard. As an educational institution, we have a responsibility to our students, employees, and community to be a part of the solution. Today, and always, we stand in solidarity with the black community; specifically our students and employees. We say to all of you that Black Lives Matter.

As an executive team, we recognize that many of us are deeply hurting right now. Together, we want to embark on intentional, sustainable action to improve our learning and working environment. Here are a few things to note about our efforts at Blackhawk:

- We are proud of our Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement programs that encourage community service over militarization. As we continue to train the next generation of law enforcement, we are committed to a program that weaves diversity, equity, respect, and integrity into our curriculum.
- We are moved by the work of student organizations such as Men of Color, Multi-Cultural Alliance, and Crecer to help students of diverse backgrounds navigate higher education and prepare for the workforce.
- We pledge to support our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Committee to help them plan and launch initiatives vital to this work. In the days ahead, the committee will be announcing opportunities to bring us together for meaningful conversation, dialogue, and action toward sustained change for BTC.

We may not always get it right, but you will always fail what you don't start. Today we stand as a unified executive team against the racial injustice that is rampant in our society. There is an African Proverb that states, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." We have a lot of work to do, and together we can do better and we can be better.

## **Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC)**

This has regrettably been a historic week as our country fights not one but two deadly plagues. One is a virus that attacks our bodies. The second, a virus that attacks our spirit and the principles upon which this nation was founded.

I'm very pleased that we are fighting and contending with the threats raised by COVID-19. Lab classes that had to be suspended earlier this year are reconvening and we will be graduating a steady stream of talented essential workers throughout the summer. Our summer sessions are also starting so we will be reopening some of our facilities for students and those employees needed to provide onsite services. This will be a gradual, department by department process based largely on demand. We anticipate a large number of employees will continue to work at remote locations for the foreseeable future. The health and safety of our employees and students will continue to be of utmost importance and our actions will continue to be based on local and state health officials' recommendations. The coronavirus has wreaked havoc on our economy and many of our local businesses. It has stressed our dedicated but fragmented healthcare system and caused great suffering. It is a continuing threat, so as our communities reopen our thoughts and actions must seek a balance between safety and economic survival. It has been ten very long weeks since the stay-at-home directive started, and I am sure we are all enjoying reclaiming our freedom.

If ten weeks seems like a long time, none of us can really imagine having to wait over 240 years for freedom and equality. Our Declaration of Independence proclaimed that "all men are created equal..." Little did they know that the most fundamental principle of our democracy, upon which our country was founded, was at best a stretch goal. It was something that had never existed anytime, anywhere in our world and certainly not here in America where the authors of our freedom were often slave owners. Our skewed view of freedom, equality and justice has often perpetuated ugly, harmful myths that promote bias and discrimination. Every painful step in the direction of our ideals has been met with hatred, bigotry and far too often violence. The steps have been too small and have taken too long. But the belief in equality, the thirst for freedom and the need for justice that was evidenced by our Declaration of Independence is still alive today and advancing.

The murder of George Floyd is a senseless tragedy. Regrettably his death is only the most recent of thousands. Violence can rarely be condoned but when unworthy police violate public trust and are negligent, complicit or even criminal we can anticipate resentment, frustration and heated destructive responses.

Feeling grief, shame and rage all at once is naturally bewildering. It is important that we honor victims of this struggle. Most importantly we need to honor them with our actions as we move forward. Our governmental leaders can help with purposeful legislation that clarifies intent and legality. Legislation that promotes equality in pay, housing, healthcare and education...and in opportunity! Citizen advisory groups, much like our College's program advisory committees, are needed to guide our local law enforcement agencies. Enforcement of justice is a responsibility too great to delegate to a few. We need to depoliticize our judicial system and realize that the weight of money on our elected officials and judiciary members undermines their credibility and purpose. We need ethical leadership based on ideals not rewards. All of our governmental leaders need to reaffirm that their duty is to govern fairly and help those who need it most, not pick winners and losers.

There is no magic solution. There is only the continued fight for a more perfect union and a better tomorrow. A quick review of history tells us progress is possible, but never easy. When we look for root causes, we know that ignorance is always the bedfellow of hatred, fear and prejudice. Ignorance is a core cause that we can attack and eradicate. We are educators! We have set forth core abilities that guide our programs and hopefully the lives of our students and those they touch. Teaching job competencies is great, but not enough. We must teach life competencies. Valuing diversity, demonstrating integrity and communicating honestly with others so together we can solve our problems is our game plan. In our important role as a higher education institution, we can be part of the solution to develop meaningful approaches to abolish racism and inequality.

President Kennedy said, "Liberty without learning is always in peril and learning without liberty is always in vain." Educators are keepers of the flame of knowledge. We have the power to shine a light on the ideals and principles of our country. We can shine a light on justice, equality, freedom and public education! We can shine a light into the darkness of ignorance, hatred and bigotry. Fear can give way to opportunity.

Last week our Board approved our strategic plan which calls for us to reexamine our College from the inside out and with the help of others, from the outside in. Together we can improve and together we can make a difference. Stand up for what is right. Help teach the next generations the lessons we are painfully learning so they benefit from our mistakes and shortcomings...not repeat them. Be a guiding light at CVTC and in our communities. I trust no one more.

In the months ahead we must move ahead and together we will.

## **Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC)**

[https://fvtcSusan.wordpress.com/2020/06/03/a-call-for-unity/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+ABlogByFvtcPresidentDrSusanMay+%28A+blog+by+FVTC+President+Dr.+Susan+May%29](https://fvtcSusan.wordpress.com/2020/06/03/a-call-for-unity/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+ABlogByFvtcPresidentDrSusanMay+%28A+blog+by+FVTC+President+Dr.+Susan+May%29)

Normally in this blog I stay away from the constant barrage of incidents, actions, and controversies of the day in our state or country, but not this time. My heart breaks to see this nation being ripped apart, both literally and figuratively because of the historical injustice to people of color and the continuous cycle of oppression. It's especially difficult to see this when the daily work of our college is to build people up, develop skills and abilities for brighter futures, support economic development in our region, and advance our communities.

The recent event in Minneapolis leading to the death of George Floyd and countless other incidents over the years are constant reminders of the effects of inequity and racism in our communities. And our college's understanding of the needs of those we serve is critical to eliminating the historical inequities that stand in the way for many of our staff, students and community members.

We must now, more than ever, be comfortable listening to those affected, seeking out targeted strategies to ensure that opportunities are accessible, and implement actions to ensure that achievements are possible for everyone regardless of individual abilities, differences, and backgrounds. Let's learn from the vast experiences of our business, professional and community leaders of color, seek their input, and value their contributions as we transform challenges into opportunities.

One of our organization's core values is diversity, a value that we do our best to live and support every day. We do this by recruiting and serving a diverse student body in numbers even greater than the growing diversity of our communities. We do this by dedicating staff and resources to specifically focus on advancing students and staff of color, supporting their success and opportunities. We also do this by continuously educating ourselves on the challenges of inequity and ways in which we can continue to close current gaps.

Central to current civil unrest are deep issues of social justice and policing in America – very justified outrage given the pattern of incidents of police brutality involving people of color. I'm particularly dismayed about the issues at hand because at FVTC we offer some of the finest law enforcement training in the country. For many years we've worked with area law enforcement agencies to increase student, instructor, and agency diversity to better reflect our communities. We prepare officers to serve and protect everyone, placing great emphasis on cultural competence, ethics, critical thinking and professional communication skills.

We have much work to do here in this region and across the country. We all do – every person, every organization, every level of government. But this work in rebuilding can only truly advance with a sense of unity – coming together to work on issues that affect us all, especially our disenfranchised community members; not through division and all of the forces that work to divide us in so many ways.

We remain committed as a college to continue working collaboratively with diverse community members, law enforcement agencies, K-12 school districts, non-profit organizations, and others to focus on not just words, not just dialogue, but additional actions to ensure that all members of our community have opportunities and can experience the highest levels of success possible.

I know that the uncertainty we face right now is troubling and unsettling for many in our community and would encourage anyone experiencing anxiety, sadness or deep feelings of fear or anger to reach out for help. I've linked here a number of college and community resources available:

[www.fvtc.edu/emergency-resources](http://www.fvtc.edu/emergency-resources)

Finally, a personal note to our students and staff of color: I see you, I hear you, I care about you and your future, and we will all continue to learn from you and find ways to ensure that you continue to feel welcome, valued and appreciated at FVTC.

## Gateway Technical College

<https://www.gtc.edu/news-releases/message-president-albrecht>

It is with a grieving heart and torn emotion that I share this letter of hope and encouragement for a more tolerant society. The last few days and nights have brought our communities and our nation to its knees. The way in which Mr. George Floyd was treated and eventually died has made a strong and forceful statement about the racial disparity and cry for equality that is needed in our country. We need to recognize and challenge the inequities of race in society and become a model for acceptance throughout our community.

Protests, disruptive behavior and physical damage to property is the outcry of one's inability to be heard. In a post recently shared on Facebook by our Gateway Technical College student ambassador, Megan Bahr writes; "As soon as you feel ready, start the conversation with a person of color, hear the story they've been trying to share, try to better understand what you can do to be an ally." This is really good advice. Listening to each other provides a broader context to the history and meaning of white privilege and the treatment of all underrepresented people of color. As an institution of higher education guided by the power of learning we have a responsibility to use this beacon of reality to strengthen our commitment to our faculty, students, staff and community. A commitment to bear witness to the injustice and respond with an even brighter light on the struggles of race relations, inequities within the criminal justice system, and the imbalance of economics on those left behind.

As a community, we must remain united in our resolve to address such injustices in meaningful ways. As president, I recognize that events like this can have a powerful impact on our lives and I commit to you that we will join the effort to heal our community through justice, and respect the dignity that all people deserve. Lean on each other for comfort, and don't be afraid to reach out if you are in need of assistance. Students our support services and counseling professionals are here for you. Reach out and use them to help you through this challenging emotional time. For faculty and staff, the college Employee Assistance Program is available for you and I encourage you to strengthen your resolve through healthy dialog and reconciliation.

The events of this past week underscore the important work of our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee and we are grateful for their continued efforts and collaborations to move our college towards antiracism, inclusion and equity.

## Lakeshore Technical College (LTC)

Recent events have heightened our awareness of the very real inequalities existing in our country. Inequality anywhere is counter to our mission. As an open-access institution of higher education, we believe every student who walks through our doors is equally entitled to a better a life.

We know people are hurting. We know people are angry. We know people are frustrated and frightened. We also know we are stronger when we are all moving together, and moving together is exactly what we will do.

Over the next few weeks, the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) committee will host virtual *Drop-In Dialogues* using *MS Teams* which will be hosted by various D&I committee members. These *Drop-In Dialogues* will be offered on various dates and times to keep numbers manageable and allow for discussion, reflection, and broader participation. Our goal with the dialogues will be to allow people to come together and process all of the events which are taking place across our state, nation, and the world. The sessions will not be recorded.

The D&I committee has also been working with the Teaching & Learning Center on learning opportunities for staff, management, and faculty. These learning opportunities will focus on various diversity topics including microaggressions, inclusive campuses, and virtual inclusive teaching. These, along with other webinars and e-learning opportunities, will be available in the next few weeks. The D&I committee is also updating their Diversity & Inclusion resources including various books and videos which focus specifically on race and social class. The D&I committee will also continue to work collaboratively with our Public Safety Division.

In the final analysis, there is no “us and them.” We are all in this together.

## **Madison Area Technical College (Madison College)**

<https://madisoncollege.edu/stop-racism-now>

This last week I have experienced a range of emotions related not only to another unjust African American male death, but to the insidious racism that permeates throughout our society. That racism is found in every sector of our society. Though I do not favor violence against property and person, I fully understand why the protests are occurring. I have seen what racist and unjust actions have resulted in many times before:

**Watts, 1965.**

**Newark, 1967.**

**Detroit, 1967.**

**Chicago and many more cities, 1968.**

**Miami, 1980.**

**Los Angeles, 1992.**

**Cincinnati, 2001.**

**Ferguson, 2014.**

**Baltimore, 2015.**

**Charlotte, 2016.**

I've witnessed how communities and businesses were never rebuilt. And, after having personal experience walking the streets with National Guardsman on duty, always prepared to show my identification, I understand the level of frustration, anxiety, and yes, anger.

I pursued a career in education to make a difference in our communities. I chose the two-year community and technical college route because the critical mass of individuals needing facilitated learning was evident. The learning at community and technical colleges results in economic, social, and in some sense, political growth and well-being. I am committed that Madison College will continue to "do the hard work" to improve that trajectory for each student we serve. It all starts with recognizing who our students are, what experiences they have, and appreciating the communities in which they live.

It is appalling to me that we've been down this road so many times, and yet, evidence of true sustainable progress escapes us. And, if it is not an action of law enforcement creating mayhem, it is a system that refuses to understand the experiences, fate and culture of those who have been disenfranchised and have gone unrecognized for who they are for decades.

This must end. No one can just stand by and say, "it doesn't affect me." Everyone is affected by the unjust death of George Floyd, whose breathing was compromised even after indicating, "I can't breathe." It affects you, even if you don't think it does.

I am a leader in this community who is African American. I lead a college that not only provides education leading to a quality career and beyond, but its connections to the community are extensive. As the leader of Madison College, I can't sit idly by and say nothing. A very smart woman (my wife, Kimila) has always said – silence is consent. Are we consenting to what occurred a week ago – much less consenting to everything else that has occurred prior and bound to be in the future? No. It's time we speak up and act on issues of race if we are going to truly embrace equity and inclusion. It's time for our white co-workers and neighbors to speak up about the injustices being placed on our people of color. It's time we understand what it means to be an African American in today's world.

We must put into action proactive strategies that are sustainable. Sustainable criminal justice reform is necessary and demanded. It's incumbent upon us to reimagine what our law enforcement should be, rethink how our institutions can better prepare and support all students, create and follow through with strengthening local businesses, and elect folks who subscribe to integrity, fairness, inclusion and equity. The key is action.

I hope these courageous conversations on race, impacts on individuals, and creation of sustainable strategies happen in every sector of our communities – education, business and government. Engaging community stakeholders in creating and implementing these strategies will be necessary to effectuate change. I simply don't want to walk over this path again ... it will take all of us to commit to fairness and equity and respect for each other.

## **Mid-State Technical College**

I am sending you this message as I reflect on the recent death of fellow American, George Floyd and the events that have followed. His senseless death, along with the deaths of other fellow Black Americans, have again opened our eyes to the racial disparities that continue to exist in our society.

As our nation, once again, comes face to face with injustices experienced by people of color, it has been a week of protest, prayerful moments and sadly, tragic violence. Together, we recognize that our society has much work ahead to put an end to race inequity and social injustice. Please join me, personally, in recommitting to a more open mind and heart.

Mid-State Technical College has been, and continues to be, fully committed to creating and maintaining an environment of diversity, equity and inclusion for all. I appreciate all the work of the Mid-State Diversity Committee in leading productive conversations to cultivate an atmosphere of social equity and civility. We as an institution, firmly believe and embrace the values of inclusion & acceptance, social justice & empowerment and reflection & transformation of our college community.

In closing, let's remember our ICARE value of respect and the importance of demonstrating it. Our definition of respect is: We appreciate individual differences and diverse opinions and work together to create a mutually supportive environment. We treat each other with dignity and appreciate individual contributions of all.

It is my hope that together we can transform into a more inclusive, bias-free community.

## **Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC)**

The tragic death of George Floyd and the subsequent events here and across the country are weighing heavily on the hearts and minds of our college community. This is one of the most difficult and challenging times we are facing as a nation and community as we combat COVID-19 and the persistent racial equity gaps that exist, especially in the Milwaukee region we serve. Many of us are feeling both anger and sadness at yet another reminder of racial inequity and injustice.

These reminders strengthen the college's commitment to the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. MATC plays a critical role in closing equity gaps, creating opportunities for students to have better lives through family-sustaining careers, and working to transform lives and our community.

I know that many of our students and employees are hurting. For those in crisis, please know that resources are available on [our coronavirus page at matc.edu](#).

As we condemn racism and bigotry, we must also continue to work together to ensure we promote a campus culture where individuals can grow and learn in a welcoming, positive and nonviolent environment. We must continue to engage our campus community in meaningful dialogue. We must demonstrate compassion, empathy and caring for one another as we work to fulfill our mission.

## **Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC)**

It is hard to fathom the depths of pain our country and many of our fellow citizens are currently enduring. On top of the mounting fear and isolation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, now our Black Americans have once again been traumatized by a deep-rooted racism that lingers within our country.

As your College President, I want to acknowledge the tragedy that has happened due to the recent death of George Floyd in Minnesota while also recognizing the destruction and anger in cities across our country during the last week. It's scary, disheartening and confusing. At Moraine Park, we serve and represent a diverse population of students, employees and communities, and have a dedication to providing an equitable educational experience.

As an institution of education, I offer you a safe place to learn, work, change and grow. Together we must explore how we are working with all to create inclusive environments while acknowledging that bias runs deep. Additionally, it is our responsibility to show Black Americans empathy, support and care civilly and safely during this time.

In the coming days and weeks, I want to remind you that resources are available to both employees and students who may be struggling or need support. For the safety of all, Moraine Park's safety team is available on our campuses by dialing 5555 from any campus phone. I encourage employees to utilize Employee Assistance Program (EAP) benefits and students to connect with our many Student Services support functions. If you are a student who does not know where to start and needs assistance, please fill out this form and an MPTC team member will be in touch quickly.

Throughout our 2019-2020 academic year, Moraine Park celebrated the year of Diversity and Inclusivity. This special emphasis provided even greater opportunities for our employees and students to embrace and learn more about diversity and inclusion through professional development opportunities, speakers and campus events. These efforts have been a point of pride for our institution—and we hope to grow resources and support services for all, including diverse populations, in the future so we can all develop in our abilities to be allies.

While having a diversity officer has been a priority for years, Leslie Laster was recently hired as our first associate director of diversity and inclusion. I'm confident the elevated role will help lead our institution into the future, especially during these very challenging times. I encourage anyone who would like to share thoughts or ideas for institutional improvement to connect with Leslie at [llaster1@morainepark.edu](mailto:llaster1@morainepark.edu).

## Nicolet Area Technical College (Nicolet College)

<https://www.nicoletcollege.edu/about/blog/note-our-president-nicolet-college-believes-worth-and-dignity-individual>

Among our Nicolet College Values statements, this one is first:

*We believe in the worth and dignity of the individual, and we therefore commit to treating each person with kindness and respect.*

But how can we honor this commitment if we silently watch from the sidelines as hundreds of thousands of Americans cry for recognition of their worth and dignity? In my view, we can't. This is an excruciatingly difficult time for our country. The gut-wrenching killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and so many others like them must stop. No one in this country deserves to be targeted for persecution or subjected to mindless violence based on the color of their skin, the spelling of their name, the deity they worship, whom they choose to love, or the zip code of their residence.

As we express heart-felt sorrow and share our most sincere words of support for those who are so deeply hurting, we know in our hearts that we must do more. We have a moral and ethical responsibility, as human beings and as educators, to fight prejudice and racism, to condemn hate and division, and to reject the false and hurtful stereotypes that cause people of color to fear for their children's safety every day. It's time to step away from the sidelines and stand with those who will help build bridges to a future in which the worth and dignity of every individual is recognized, and all are treated with kindness and respect.

In this time of tension and torment, as we struggle to find the way forward, I am reminded of Barbara Jordan, a true humanitarian, a gifted orator, and the first black woman elected to the US Congress from Texas. In 1976, she said "... the great danger America faces is that we will cease to be one nation and become instead a collection of interest groups: city against suburb, region against region, individual against individual. Each seeking to satisfy private wants." All these years later, this is precisely the road on which we find ourselves, and it doesn't lead to a good place. It's past time to stop and change direction.

We have before us a steep hill to climb. The work will be hard, but the goal, again in the words of Representative Jordan, is not so difficult to understand: "[What the people want is very simple - they want an America as good as its promise.](#)" Though our corner of the world can sometimes seem far from Minneapolis, Los Angeles or DC, I believe that we too want an America as good as its promise. An America where all people are treated with kindness and respect. An America where education and economic opportunity align to reverse the growing chasm between the most and the least privileged. An America with liberty and justice for all.

## **Northcentral Technical College (NTC)**

NTC has celebrated the lives of our students, faculty and staff from around the world for over 100 years.

We believe in and promote an inclusive environment that celebrates, embraces and respects individual differences. As the “college that cares”, we strive to promote social justice throughout the NTC community.

We are deeply troubled by the recent tragic death of George Floyd, as well as the longstanding pain endured as a result of racial injustice. NTC is committed to coming together as a community to listen, learn, grow and contribute toward progress in building a stronger, compassionate and more equitable democracy for all.

As the community’s college, NTC is committed to being a good neighbor and community partner. We have provided activities to promote awareness, respect, understanding, inclusion, social responsibility and have a strong commitment to equity, ensuring everyone has access to achieve their academic and professional goals.

The college Diversity Committee will be hosting “drop-in/dial in” dialogues beginning the week of June 15 for students, staff and faculty to engage in respectful discussions around recent events and how we can further advance social and racial justice. Details for dates, times and how you can participate will be communicated through your NTC e-mail, Teams, and through our Diversity Services web page.

The NTC Library has put together resource guides on a number of relevant topics. These resources can be found at <https://www.ntc.edu/library/resources/research-guides#topical>

Please join me in your own reflection and actions to bring peace and comfort to those who need our support, our compassion and our willingness to listen and to hear their message.

## Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC)

<https://www.nwtc.edu/blog/june/a-call-to-action?fbclid=IwAR1VKg9xy4IzkWMN2I5IaYflmCok0MN2hPVbUQI2fUBuYxqrGikTbyLDAjl>

My heart aches for our black brethren. I am broken-hearted for us. How did we get here? How did we come to live in a place where hate flourishes while we sit by and say nothing, do nothing as people are killed, brutalized, looked down upon, and denied basic human rights and opportunity because of the color of their skin?

It is easy to comfort ourselves by condemning the actions of others. But who among us hasn't switched sides of the street when we see a group of black youth or men walking our way? Who among us hasn't seen a black person and immediately asked ourselves if trouble is coming our way? How many of us have believed, at some level, that the plight of the black American is the fault of their own, even as they disproportionately live in substandard housing, earn less, have less opportunity for their pre-school children and subsequently start out behind in school, rarely catching up? How many of us have had to have conversations with our sons or daughters about not wearing hoodies, masks, or moving in any way that someone might consider threatening (such as leaning over to get your car registration from the glove compartment)?

The sense of hopelessness, the feeling of helplessness must be overwhelming. And now we watch on TV, for all the world to see, a police officer murders a black person, a person already handcuffed and on the ground. This after innumerable stories of violence, racism, and imprisonment visited upon our black community. Instead of blaming the protesters for the violence and looting predicated by protests, we must hold ourselves accountable for the actions and inactions we have individually and collectively taken that has led us to this time. I do not condone the violence, but I can begin to understand its root cause.

Thousands of people are protesting loudly, but peacefully. Let us remember that they are asking for the same basic human rights that most of us enjoy. We should not, cannot, let the denial of these rights continue. Racism, for that is what it is, must be rooted out of our culture. Like most things cultural, that means every little or big offense, every inequity no matter how large or small, every perception held by each person must be examined and understood so that we may tear out all the beliefs and behaviors that reinforce the negative that has been visited on people of color.

As president of Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, I commit to you that the college and I will strenuously work each day to make this happen. Only in this way will we be able to stand hand in hand with our black brethren and all people of every color!

## Southwest Wisconsin Technical College (Southwest Tech)

<https://www.swtc.edu/news/2020/06/unity-in-humanity-the-executive-team-commitment/#.Xwhm2ihKiUk>

Our hearts go out to the grieving family, friends, and loved ones of Mr. George Floyd. His tragic death, indeed murder, was despicable and heinous. It never should have occurred. The perpetrator should face the full extent of the law, along with those who should have been responsible to intervene. This horrific event, and far too many like it in other facets of society, should cause each of us deep reflection on our values and result in a stronger commitment to meaningful action. We must be more urgent in creating meaningful progress towards true respect, deep empathy, and courageous kindness for all people. Racism is evil. Discrimination is wrong. Neither should ever occur in our college community. We have an opportunity to improve, and as a learning organization, we will.

We will create a better place at Southwest Tech for all people regardless of race, color, nationality, citizenship, age, religion, belief, disability, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, genetics, or medical history.

Here are a few of the actions we are taking immediately:

1. Connecting with students of color offering support, encouragement, and resources while seeking feedback on ways we can improve which are meaningful to them.
2. Reaching out to students in public safety programming to assist with processing their current situations and providing support for those who seek to better serve the public by upholding the noblest ideals.
3. Inviting people from our Diversity Work Group to develop a position description for a “Diversity Coordinator” to bring expertise to the college for further training and to provide additional resources to diverse student and faculty/staff populations. Despite our uncertain financial situation, we anticipate recruiting for a new position to begin as we start the fall semester with an emphasis on better serving minority populations. Yes, it is that important.
4. Analyzing the data from our student and employee campus climate diversity and inclusivity survey to determine specific opportunities for improvement in conjunction with our Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity plan as ways to deconstruct built-in biases and create a more welcoming and accepting culture of respect and inclusivity.
5. Strengthening our commitment to our Chargers Respect Pledge, which is attached, along with meaningful programming and professional expectations. Guidelines will be developed over the summer and be part of our priorities for the 2020-21 academic year and beyond.

While this is a preliminary outline of initial actions, it is admittedly inadequate if we are to accomplish our lofty, but essential, expectations of creating a place described by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr far too long ago. There is much we have to learn about being more inclusive and caring. We will strive to do our best to create a more welcoming, understanding, and respectful environment that values the infinite worth of each and every person. At times the feelings of guilt, helplessness, or inadequacy can be overwhelming. We have found, however, that there is greater power in remembering and acting on the difference we make when we serve others with genuine grace and care unfeigned.

We admire the people who peacefully demonstrate their beliefs and values and we are listening to their pleas. We recognize people of color have unique lived experiences and we commit to improving their opportunities to fully participate in “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. We are grateful for the people in public safety positions, especially those of color during this time, who do strive to serve the public with fairness, dignity, and respect. We thank the veterans who sacrifice their lives for the very freedoms which deserve more universal access. The use of anyone’s professional power or personal influence to exercise dominion over another person for any reason is wholly unacceptable and particularly deplorable when coupled with hatred. We must overcome injustices and inequalities as an active choice based on our respect for each other as humans.

The First Amendment, which is revered and sacred, states, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.” The freedom to express your beliefs, opinions, or ideals is sacrosanct. Please exercise this right and let your beliefs be heard. Please commit to making the world a better place for everyone. Take an opportunity to get to know somebody who has a different background. We hope for the time when we can come together, both physically and because of our unified commitment to respectfully uphold the dignity of all individuals.

As we reopen our college after a global pandemic, may we recommit to closing the doors on hatred for other humans. May our actions align with integrity to our beliefs as we seek to better serve our students, each other, and our communities. May we be granted healing and wisdom commensurate with our sincerity in exemplifying true kindness and respect for other people as we serve them with humility, gratitude, and love.

## Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC)

<https://newsroom.wctc.edu/message-of-unity-from-waukesha-county-technical-college-president-kaylen-betzig/>

I am saddened, my heart hurts, and, yet another black person has needlessly lost their life. The tragic and senseless deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor are to be condemned. We mourn with their families, friends, and loved ones and call for justice to prevail. Racial discrimination incidents, as experienced by Christian Cooper, are occurrences that happen in communities of color on a daily basis. We must speak out and not be silent on these issues that Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC) students and employees of color encounter.

We are committed to a learning and working environment where all people, regardless of race, color, nationality, citizenship, age, religion, belief, disability, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, marital status, veteran status, genetics, or medical history, are welcomed. WCTC has much more to do to improve. I had a very deep conversation with the President's Executive Cabinet (PEC) and we are all in agreement that the following steps will occur to address the critical issues surrounding diversity, equity, inclusion, and success of diverse faculty, staff and students recruited and retained at WCTC:

- Immediately, the Director of Compliance and Equity (Sherry Simmons) will serve as a member of the President's Executive Cabinet (PEC) to bring a voice to the table on diversity, equity and inclusion in our decision-making processes.
- Sherry will work directly with the PEC and a newly created team to develop a 30, 60, and 90 day action plan and develop metrics, which will be shared with the entire college community and the WCTC District Board regarding steps to be implemented to change the college environment in regards to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The WCTC community professed our values and commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion many times. However, our previous efforts have not resulted in true systematic change. All faculty, staff and students have the responsibility to uphold those values and commitment. As President, I expect all faculty, staff and students to personally recommit to developing a diverse, respectful, and inclusive environment at WCTC. As individuals employed and attending an institution of Higher Education, we are required by the nature of our role in education to set the example for the students and community we serve to address the issues of racism and hatred. I am looking to you, to help me, the PEC, the WCTC District Board and our community, to not only reflect, but demonstrate through our actions our commitment to those values.

Our actions must align with integrity to our beliefs as we seek to better serve our students, each other, and our communities. May we all be granted with healing and wisdom commensurate with our sincerity in exemplifying true kindness and respect for all individuals.

## Western Technical College

<https://www.westerntc.edu/news/message-westerns-leadership-team>

Across this nation many have stood in solidarity to address the unrest sparked by the deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. As the Senior Leadership Team for a predominantly white institution, we recognize our privilege, but we feel it's vital to add our voices to this situation and state that **Black Lives Matter**.

We are saddened by the loss of life, persistent unequal treatment, and continued violence against the black community. Coming out of the last few weeks, members of our Western family are hurting deeply. Let's stand together, help each other, and love one another in this time of need.

Western is here for all members of our family. But today, we are here particularly for our black employees and students. We acknowledge our responsibility to be part of the solution, and we are committed to being allies for our black community. Let us stand alongside one another to reaffirm our values of diversity, integrity, and respect.

As we continue forward with our strategic directions and commitment to equity and inclusion, we pledge to do a better job communicating our efforts as they take shape. We also commit to including our employees and students of color in these important decisions.

We have made it a priority to invest resources into increasing enrollment, retention, and graduation of students of color. But these efforts lack meaning without intentional action and changes to our culture. We may never be perfect, but we're going to do better every day.

A team of employees has volunteered to start the conversation about specific actions that we can take as a College. We will share more information about these efforts soon. For now, let's focus on educating ourselves beyond the protest and reflect on how we can become part of the solution to end the systemic barriers racism has created at our institution and in our communities.

As a Senior Leadership Team, we stand as one voice, committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for all, while showing mutual concern for one another. Each member of our College community is valued and respected. Please take good care of yourselves, and of one another.

## **Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College (WITC)**

Given recent events, it is important to acknowledge the tragic and brutal death of George Floyd. Many of you rightly feel the need to express your concerns and emotions about racism and bias in our society. Especially at a time like this, it is clear there is work to do. While none of us could expect to solve these problems with a statement or simple communication, I am hopeful that providing some institutional information will encourage our WITC Community to move forward in a positive way.

WITC's strategic priorities include support for diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Our efforts are guided by a longstanding institutional tenet that "Diversity is respected and embraced." This means we continue to work towards ensuring we do not systemically exclude people from becoming WITC students or employees, or from succeeding at our College once they are here. We believe the pathway to success should not be affected by race, social class, or other characteristics. WITC also provides diversity and other training to employees to help understand how discrimination and bias can impact co-workers, students, and others. The expectation is that we strive, both as employees and students, to make WITC an environment where our common commitment to learning fosters greater understanding not only of program or course content, but of each other.

To support these efforts, our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team has been collecting and interpreting data since last fall, which is currently being finalized into a report. This formal effort is being used to continue to learn about our institution and consider new strategies. Our team will meet in the near future and will develop a process for broader student participation to further expand our WITC Community perspective. This work may not solve any immediate problems, but WITC can and will make meaningful long-term progress to close identifiable equity gaps within our College and communities.

While I believe these initiatives put WITC on a good path in many respects, the anger and frustration that has been expressed in recent days is a reminder that we have a long way to go. Not just at WITC, but in our communities and as individuals. To be honest, I feel true progress may sometimes be difficult to measure in our plans and in our information. It will be best reflected in the compassion we show and the understanding we seek.