June 2, 2020

We, members of the University Advisory Council on Diversity (UACD) at the City University of New York, condemn the flagrant and reckless disregard for human life that led to the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. We condemn and reject the societal systems that support such inhumane and shameful acts.

The killing and disregard for the life of George Floyd, and recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and the list goes on, emanates from the historic and systemic racism which has defined this country all too often. Eloquent verbal condemnations and statements abound, and pour out each day, and have done so over decades, indeed centuries. And yet, here we are again in 2020, witnesses to an unjustified brutal atrocity committed against another black man. The undeniable scene was captured on video, too horrifying to watch, yet too compelling to turn away.

The most recent deaths at the hands of police are the first period in American history where the mistreatment of Black citizens by police cannot be easily ignored or downplayed. Social media has enabled the proliferation of citizen journalists who have made the country uncomfortably aware that abuse is not an anomaly but rather a national pattern that continues to disproportionately impact Black lives.

But this time, it is different. There is a glimmer of hope, a crack in the door to a possible future where humanity and the recognition of the value of all human life will prevail. The people have taken to the streets to protest and rally because this was too much to bear, too flagrant to deny. The people have chosen to defy the possibility of death from COVID-19 to protest, to speak out and force the country to look racism in the face. This heinous killing of Mr. Floyd comes on top of the historic disparities exposed for all the world to see as COVID-19 ravaged communities of color, low-income workers and their families, and the most vulnerable among us.

While national and local leaders such as the White House Advisor for National Security, and the New York City Police Commissioner deny systemic racism, we are seeing the recognition of this righteous anger at the grassroots level. We are seeing local police commanders, sheriffs and some police officers “take the knee,” and choose to march with the protestors. We have heard police officers openly declare and rebuke the racism of their fellow police officers across the country. This morning, there was a report of white church goers “taking a knee” before their fellow black parishioners, offering an apology for racism and declaring their solidarity and support to their black brothers and sisters. This is the beginning of a true dialogue.

We, UACD members, pledge and commit to support and broaden this dialogue. We will do everything in our power so that this is not just another moment in time for the outpouring of eloquent statements. We will offer our support through CUNY to our students and colleagues to bring these discussions and critical analysis of systemic and historical racism to the greater community through education and
development of resources in order to support structural policy changes that will eliminate discriminatory policing.

Sincerely,

**University Advisory Council on Diversity**

Anthony Browne, Ph.D., Hunter College
Andy Kai-chun Chuang, Ph.D., LaGuardia Community College
Sherry Deckman, Ed.D., Lehman College
Lisa A. Ellis, Baruch College
Shelly Eversley, Ph.D., Baruch College
Lauren Gretina, Esq., Hostos Community College
Concetta Mennella, Esq., New York City College of Technology
Sylvia Miranda, Ph.D., retired, Bronx Community College
Joyce Moy, J.D, AAARI, Asian American/Asian Research Institute
Jo Pantaleo, Queensborough Community College
Mohsin Patwary, Ph.D., Medgar Evers College
María Scharrón del-Rio, Ph.D., Brooklyn College
Michael Seltzer, Baruch College
Joyce Tang, Ph.D., Queens College
Stanley Thangaraj, Ph.D., City College of New York