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## [Staforum] Statement from the IWU Alliance

1 message

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To: staforum@lists.iwu.edu, facforum@lists.iwu.edu

Tue, Jun 2, 2020 at 4:32 PM

To our IWU colleagues,

After reflection and collaboration over the weekend regarding a response to the recent events in the country and our community, the Alliance wishes to share this statement with the IWU Community.

We, the members of the Illinois Wesleyan University Alliance, an affinity group formed in 2017 to support IWU faculty, staff, and students of color, write to express our outrage, our disgust, and our heartbreak as we follow the recent horrific events plaguing our country. In a matter of weeks, we have witnessed senseless acts of unprovoked violence against African Americans who were guilty of simply living their daily lives.

The harassment of Christian Cooper in Central Park and the coldblooded murders of Ahmad Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd has brought our country to a boiling point. The ingrained systemic racism on which this country was founded and has operated for centuries is once again on full display for the world to see. We can no longer ignore it. People have had enough. The Alliance supports protests and rallies taking place throughout the world, including our Bloomington/Normal community. Protests condemning racism and senseless fear of Black and Brown people that put our lives at risk every day are an important human right. More than supporting, we want these protests and rallies to be the impetus to intentional and productive discussions that lead to dismantling the root cause of most of the inequities minoritized people face everyday - racism. Racism is at the center of the disparities in health, economics, education, and other principles of society.

We ask, if you are a true ally, an ally of Black, Brown and all people of color, an ally of all sexual orientations, an ally of all genders or non-genders, an ally of all religious and non-religious affiliations, an ally of human beings, that you take a stand. Make your voice heard. Call out discrimination when you see it. Call it out even if it's in your families, your extended families, your professional societies, and organizations. Call it out when you witness it in your department, in your committee meeting, your classroom, your office, your child's PTO, your favorite bar or restaurant, your place of worship, the grocery store or your favorite local park. If you see an injustice, do something or say something. Again, people have had enough and you need to be a part of the solution.

The Alliance demonstrates every day that we can work together, while being from different backgrounds. We also know there are great opportunities to interact and have camaraderie with one another beyond work. The greatest expression of this in the most elegant way is at our signature event, the Unity Gala. This is a symbol of how we can unite as a community socially, that can be an example professionally. Everyone uniquely expressing themselves in an inclusive environment.

We know we can come together, even as we're physically distanced, to make our corner of the world better and live our mission of social justice. We have to be the catalyst for the change we want to see. This means in all of our spaces, we need to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. Allow open and honest conversations to inform, engage, and educate to gain understanding. This is how we affect change.

Yours in solidarity,  
Sharla Brown-Ajayi, Academic Affairs, Alliance Co-Chair  
Brandon Common, Student Affairs, Alliance Co-Chair  
Krasondra Brooks, Physical Plant  
Walter Carter, Physical Plant  
Rosetta Clay, Alumni Engagement  
Joanne Diaz, Dept of English  
Jessie Dixon-Montgomery, World Languages, Literatures & Cultures  
Zahia Drici, Dept of Mathematics  
Tierra Fulwiley, Physical Plant  
Katie Gonzales, Athletic Communications  
Derek Grant, Physical Plant  
Monica Hall, School of Nursing  
Katrina Harper, Physical Plant  
Stuart Haruyama, Office of Multifaith Engagement  
Claressa Kirkwood, Physical Plant  
Franklin Larey, School of Music  
Darius Lockett, Physical Plant  
Ray Martinez, Information Technology Services  
Hanna Mesouani, Office of Diversity and Inclusion  
Adriana Ponce, School of Music  
Brian Richardson, Hart Career Center  
Anfernee Roberts, Office of Admissions  
Chris Schumacher, Athletics, Track & Field  
Stacey Shimizu, International Office  
Veronica Torres Luna, Office of Diversity and Inclusion  
Michelle Wu, Conference Services