



*Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine*

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., “There comes a time when silence is betrayal.” As the University community reels from the horrific and violent death of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers; the images of politically-motivated violence against peaceful protesters in Washington DC and other places; and the palpable anger, fear, sadness, social tension, and polarization in America’s streets, homes, and workplaces, we—the Officers and Representatives of the Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine—condemn in the strongest terms these racist, unjust, and violent acts. We clearly and unabashedly denounce police brutality and support de-escalation tactics among those that protect and serve our communities, and we are pleased to see the clear condemnation of violence released by the UMPD ([6/1/2020](#)).

We hurt with the friends and loved ones of Mr. Floyd and all those lost to racist violence and police brutality. We send our heartfelt condolences. And we are angry. Our values as a union are those of compassion, justice, and human dignity, as we work for safe and fair workspaces. The events of the past few days are neither safe nor fair. They highlight the structural inequalities of race and class and the racial ideologies—at times overt but often unspoken—that devalue the lives of Black people in America and other people of color. That COVID-19 disproportionately affects poor people and communities of color cruelly exposes the dual pandemics that today plague our society.

The gravity of these events means that we must do more than echo our common values of inclusivity, diversity, and tolerance, which are noble and necessary for change but not enough. We must *live* these values and act to protect the safety and dignity of every person in our community and strive in our actions for equality and justice. We must treat one another with kindness. We must listen to one another, reaching across our differences. We are all stronger because of these differences. But we must also do more.

We must act. AFUM is committed to antiracism. Racism is antithetical to our values of compassion, justice, human dignity, safety, and fairness. Antiracist actions and speech expose racism and thwart it. In taking these actions, we must unpack America’s brutal and violent history of racial and cultural injustice and the role universities have played in that history. We

note that our statewide campuses sit on the traditional lands of the Wabanaki nations. We will work with other University of Maine System stakeholders to study and reveal modern institutional and systemic racism and endeavor to eliminate them within our campus communities. We will work to promote understanding of implicit bias that shapes our workplace interactions and workspaces. We acknowledge that these changes will take time, as many aspects of racism are hidden and unspoken, yet painfully real in their effects.

We view all members of the UMS community as allies in this effort. If you are a faculty member, we welcome your ideas and active involvement in AFUM and our efforts to bring about these positive changes. We need you. If you are a staff member or administrator, know that we want to make this a better place for everyone to work, and we will partner with you. And if you are a student, know that the faculty cares about you, your well-being, and the quality of your education.

In the coming weeks, AFUM chapters throughout UMS will create scholarships and educational programs to nurture our students and honor and remember George Floyd and others whose lives were taken away forcibly. AFUM is committed to safe and fair Universities.

In Solidarity with Black Lives Matter,

*The AFUM Executive Committee and AFUM-Chapter Executive Committees*

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