

**Sent:** Thursday, June 4, 2020  
**Subject:** For our SPU Community

To Our I-O Students,

The events of recent weeks have been beyond challenging and tragic. The brutal killings of Black Americans and xenophobic attacks on Asians and Asian Americans remind us of the importance of the work we do in advocating for fairness and the upholding of human rights both in our personal lives and in I-O Psychology. Society is better or worse because of what we do and in many cases what we are failing to do. Based on the conversations in classes, we know that you, like us, are wrestling with a multitude of emotions and heart-wrenching for students who know this isn't new.

We stand in solidarity with the oppressed, the outcast, the persecuted, and the hurting people in our SPU community and the world.

- We condemn the brutal killings of Black Americans – Breonna Taylor, Manuel Ellis, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd.
- We condemn xenophobic attacks on Asians and Asian Americans.

Speaking out now is important. Acknowledging when we have not spoken out in the past is important (e.g., Philando Castile, Walter Scott, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, and numerous others). Listening is important. Having difficult conversations where we trip over ourselves is important. Protesting is important with a commitment to prioritizing voices who have been marginalized and ensuring they have our support and necessary tools to take the lead in creating the paradigm shifts and systemic changes that are desperately needed.

Social justice, climate change, caring about the world outside of the US, Covid-19, employee well-being, and our families and communities are critically important. It's too much. Anything we say or do isn't enough. The fear is often that whatever is said, it will be naïve, presumptuous, preachy, or egocentric - on one level or another. But the SPU I-O program's Christian faith foundation tells us that not speaking up and just standing still is not an option. In the spirit of love and humility, we are called and aspire to:

- Mourn for and repent to the people we have knowingly and unknowingly injured (Matthew 5:3-10)
- Uphold the causes of the oppressed, hungry, aliens, prisoners, fatherless, and widows (Psalms 146)
- Love our neighbors as ourselves (Luke 10:25-37)
- Speak as though our words are the very words of a loving God (1 Peter 4:10-11)
- Love our enemies as ourselves (Luke 6:27-36)
- Embody love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 6:22-23)

The hard work is now and it is ahead. Changing ourselves, our organizations, and our society will take a long-term commitment and persistence. As we move into summer and the coming year, whether that is at school or in organizations, it is time to make a renewed commitment to hold each other and the society in which we live to embody justice, mercy, and humility (Micah 6:8). We are deeply grateful for each one of you, and for our mutual commitment to stand in solidarity with the oppressed, the outcast, the persecuted, and the hurting people of our world.

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## **Statement from the SPFC Diversity Committee**

The SPFC Diversity Committee strongly denounces the horrific racism and hatred on full display in the recent abhorrent killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd. We deeply recognize that these deaths are only the latest among the countless acts of violence directed toward Black individuals going about their everyday lives; these acts, in turn, are a manifestation of historical and systemic oppression of Black Americans in the United States.

We also know that these horrific events impact people differently depending on the experiences that have shaped us. For those of us who are not Black, we will not be able to fully grasp the magnitude of the pain and anger stemming from centuries of experiencing structural and interpersonal racism directed toward Black Americans. Despite this, we stand in solidarity with our Black communities during this time. We stand with you, who are scared, grieving, angry, frustrated, or any other emotions. As social scientists, we in SPFC are fully committed to the work of justice that will help to eradicate racism, hatred, bigotry, and other oppressive systems. We know that the burden of this work should not fall on one community, but rather it requires all of us to be deeply engaged.

We also recognize that the wealth of the United States is a direct result of the labor of enslaved Black people. The U.S.'s current economic structure depends on the ongoing subjugation of Black people (Nkomo, 1992; Roithmayr, 2014). This system has led to disproportionate privileges and opportunities in American society based on race, with many in White communities benefitting most. We invite everyone in SPFC to engage in the lifelong process of identifying when we are upholding and benefitting from unfair systems. Next, we must join together to dismantle those systems even as we reimagine and build new ones. In accordance with SPU's mission, our primary motivation for this work is love, and in this spirit we also support the work of President Dan Martin and other senior leaders to engage in meaningful dialogue and change efforts with SPU students and other constituents.

As educators in psychology and related fields, we believe that the SPFC community is uniquely positioned to be attuned to structural racism impacting Black Americans, and to take appropriate action to advocate for those who are impacted. As such, in the attached document, we have begun the work of compiling various resources that might be helpful for teaching, advocacy, coping, and allyship.