

# Statement of Solidarity with Protests for Police Accountability and Racial Justice

June 2020

The Peace Studies Department of Wilkinson College stands in solidarity with Black communities and their allies across the country protesting for racial justice and police accountability. As a department we teach that justice is a necessary condition for peace, and for too long systemic racism and institutionalized violence have plagued policing practices. We oppose the militarization of U.S. streets in response to protest, and we call upon our students and supporters to be part of the movement for systemic change. There are numerous ways to engage in our streets and elsewhere, even during the pandemic, and we offer further resources here.

In addition to deploring the horrific murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many before them (both those who have captured national attention and those that did not), Peace Studies calls out the problems locally, highlighted by the police killings of Ezell Ford and others who have mental illness, Stephon Clark who merely held a cell phone, and Ryan Twyman who sat unarmed in his vehicle. We must raise these names high, listen to our Black communities' experiences of injustice and organizing wisdom, and join the work for a more just world. Following the lead of minority-led organizations such as [Black Lives Matter](#), [NAACP](#), [Color of Change](#), [The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#), [Movement for Black Lives](#), [Campaign Zero](#), listen with open hearts, examine the research, and take action with them to change the racist legal, educational, and health systems in the United States.

We encourage people to begin with self-reflection and interpersonal conversations. In the words offered by Chapman University's Directors of the [Interdisciplinary Minors](#):  
..hold honest conversations about anti-Blackness and discrimination with our own families, friends, and communities. Covid-19 continues to expose what we have already known to be the racial and social inequalities that our communities live through daily. We witnessed the rise of anti-Asian rhetoric and violence, disregard for "essential" immigrant workers, and staggering infection rates among Native Americans. We need to reimagine what it means to stand in solidarity with each other.

Chapman must enhance its commitment to its Black students, staff, and faculty. These groups have long been underrepresented on campus and especially among our leadership. Improving our University will require strong leadership from a person steeped in the literature on the issues of racial justice and intersectionality. We ask that Chapman move swiftly to find its new Director of Diversity & Inclusion and find ways to implement and strengthen the Strategic Plan for Diversity & Inclusion. Chapman University must fully staff and fund Africana Studies, which came to this University because of the collective actions of our community, and should support all other programs throughout the university that teach minority-focused texts, histories, social science, and social movements.

As a Department we commit to ensuring that our courses educate about and provide spaces for honest and open conversations on issues of race, poverty, police violence, protest, revolutions, and militarization. We will improve our own syllabi and practices for mentoring, teaching, and research. Peace Studies will continue to diversify our faculty and support our Black and other minority students.