

We express a profound sense of sadness and loss over the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and too many others. We also note that this violence is in part a manifestation of racial divisions and inequalities that reach across other sectors of society including education, health care, employment, housing, and the criminal justice system. We recognize that to remain silent is to demonstrate complicity.

As a community of educators, scholars, and researchers in the Department of Sociology we have devoted our careers to analyzing societal arrangements and exploring their roots and consequences. We now pledge to further expand our critical understanding and awareness as we address head-on issues of racism, inequality and all forms of discrimination in and out of the classroom. We recognize the importance of the front-line activists directly engaged in social justice efforts. Advocacy is part of this process, but so too is the hard work of education and of honest critical and even hopeful scholarship.

This department, in collaboration with scholars and committed persons from across the university, is engaged in the effort to understand and ameliorate the effects of racism. We hope you will join us – in classes, in public lectures, in research and in community service – as we strengthen our collective capacity to do better, and to live up to the obligation the Supreme Court expressed with regard to public schools in *Green vs New Kent County* in 1968: to eliminate racial discrimination “root and branch” from our society. We cannot back away from that commitment.