

To: Elementary and Early Childhood Family
From: Department Faculty and Staff
Re: Position Statement Against Racism
Date: June 21, 2020

Dear Friends and Family of the Department:

We in the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education [EECE] stand united in opposition to racism and racial injustices anywhere. The EECE Department faculty is appalled by the inhumane and unjust treatment of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color [BIPOC]. Acts of brutality like the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery cannot be normalized; these acts represent a crisis in our society.

As teachers and educators, we are in a unique position to work to end this crisis. As such, we must do our part to stop the propagation of racism. It is our responsibility to nurture and support respect and appreciation for diversity. It is our responsibility to learn from and teach about the history of systems which have led to and perpetuate racism, so that we don't continue to repeat these injustices. It is not enough to simply acknowledge that racism exists, we need to vigorously oppose racism.

Education has the potential to transform society, and we must be committed to preparing teachers who are advocates for such transformations, who can identify and change culturally biased curricula and practices, and support advances and equity for all students. If we do not speak out against racism and racial injustices, we continue to be complicit in perpetuating the inequities and injustices we currently see in society. It is time for reflection, it is time for awareness, it is time for listening, it is time for empathy and caring. The time for change, though, is long overdue.

We acknowledge that some people have experienced this pain and trauma for years while others have only read and learned about it, or are only recently beginning to understand how our society perpetuates racism. Through critical reflection, we are committed to understanding the histories and contexts of racism while engaging in critical self-reflection to determine how we perpetuate inequitable practices. As we do so, we need to actively position ourselves to listen, learn, work collaboratively with, and amplify the voices of those who have been ignored for too long. We must be better at combating the injustices toward BIPOC, affirming their lived experiences and educating all students.

We know that systemic change requires collective action. Together, we can be a support system for one another, but also use our unique position as educators to work with our friends, neighbors, peers, and colleagues to use what we learn together to make a meaningful difference in working toward racial and social justice.

Although the summer is upon us, we must think about what we can do now, and how we can continue this work moving forward.

In Solidarity,

EECE Faculty and Staff