June 5, 2020 — A message from Student Advocates for Graduate Education

Support the Black Community and Peaceful Protests Nationwide

Recent events have once again brought to the collective attention the injustices and racism which unfortunately still persist in American society. The tenacious and appalling pestilence of racism continues to take lives in our nation’s communities and far too many of our colleagues, classmates, friends, and loved ones do not and cannot feel safe. The murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and countless other Black Americans, by those who are sworn to protect and serve us, are inexcusable acts. The lives lost are a reflection of underlying systemic racism and racial inequities. It is important to remember that these individuals are not just names, they were innocent Americans whose lives were cut short due to a broken political system and highly inadequate federal leadership. The civil upheaval across the nation is an expression of the frustration, anger, and trauma of this racism. How long must we wait, plan, work, march, agitate, forgive, and vote before we have a society in which all lives matter equally, regardless of race or color? The Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE) coalition supports the peaceful protests of groups such as Black Lives Matter and other groups protesting for systemic change nationwide.

Though we all experience and live with the pain of these tragedies very differently, we all have a moral duty and responsibility to advance justice, equity, peace, and understanding in our communities. We must make this commitment together as members of a society that has devalued and perpetuated violence against Black Americans for more than 400 years. It is not enough to be nonracist; we must work every day to be anti-racist. This means critically evaluating our beliefs and prejudices, working to dismantle our own racist beliefs, and calling out implicit, overt, and systemic racism when we encounter it.

We, Student Advocates for Graduate Education, are calling upon Federal Administration, Representatives, and Legislators to support the following legislation:
1. **H.R. 988** - Condemning all acts of police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force throughout the country
2. **H.R. 702** - Recognizing that the United States has a moral obligation to meet its foundational promise of guaranteed justice for all.
3. **H.R.40** - Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act

We, Student Advocates for Graduate Education, are also calling upon our graduate and professional student community, in solidarity, to support the Black community in the following ways:
1. **Contact your legislators** and ask them to vote in support and/or co-sponsor legislation that supports Black communities and systemic change.
2. **Vote** and perform detailed searches on local, state, and federal candidates running for office or re-election.
3. **Donate** to organizations that support and empower the Black community and those directly affected by police brutality.
4. **Educate** yourself, your friends, family members, peers, and colleges on institutional racism and provide ways to implement systemic change TODAY.

Not every day will be our strongest day, not every day will be our best day, but it’s important to keep showing up to work toward a more just society, where people of all color will be treated equitably and respectfully.

In solidarity,
The Student Advocates for Graduate Education

*Student Advocates for Graduate Education (SAGE) is a coalition of Graduate Student Organizations from leading U.S. public research universities who are committed to improving the quality of graduate student life at their own campuses, and promoting access, quality, and opportunity for graduate and professional students at the federal level. This statement has the support of graduate student leaders from:*

- **Michigan State University**
- **The Ohio State University**
- **Rutgers University**
- **Texas A&M University**
- **University of Arizona**
- **University of California- Davis**
- **University of California- Irvine**
- **University of California- San Diego**
- **University of Maryland**
- **University of Michigan**
- **University of North Carolina- Chapel Hill**
- **University of Pittsburgh**
- **University of Texas - Austin**
- **University of Washington**