



Northeastern's  
Student  
Government

### **In Pain and Enraged.**

George Floyd may have ignited this movement, but this movement is so much bigger than one man. This is about Trayvon Martin, Alton Sterling, Breonna Taylor, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, Ahmaud Arbery, Jamar Clark, and so many other countless Black people executed at the hands of the police. We have got to say more than Black Lives Matter. Because what we are seeing, as both individuals and students, is a movement that is much bigger than words.

For years the African American community has been targeted and abused by police officers across the country. All over this country African American men and women are killed and executed in this America; George Floyd was by no means the first unarmed African American man killed by a police officer.

However, while we vividly see the acts and perpetuation of racism running throughout the United States, the truth of the matter is we cannot stand in solidarity claiming Black Lives Matter as our own university remains complicit in racist actions. The fact of the matter is that our university deploys its police department with batons and riot gear to silence our students, threaten our communities and destabilize this movement. We refuse to idly sit here and claim that we stand in support of this movement while we watch our own university militarize its police force, and weaponize this push for racial justice as rationale to behave unjustly. How can our university's president claim to embrace diversity and in the same breath deploy our police department in opposition to peaceful protests? How can this institution advocate for inclusion while turning a blind eye to its own injustices? How can we hope for harmony while Northeastern behaves so inharmoniously? We cannot.

In fact, it is hypocritical for our university to tout diversity and inclusion while it executes actions that undermine these values. We cannot stand by and deliver a diluted and rehearsed letter about Black lives mattering while remaining quiet on what we know students can see. Acts of racism occur on our campus every day -- from Northeastern Police stopping African American students on their way to class, to co-op advisors telling students of color their hair is not "professional." From these systematic abuses of power to the covert mechanisms employed to make students of color feel small and unseen, our university must acknowledge their racist

actions. We cannot deliver a rose-colored soliloquy where we tell you about how a man's life was taken by the Minneapolis Police Department, because this is not about one man. It is about the constant and continued acts of racism that permeate our society, and our university behaves no different.

To my fellow black students, many of us are feeling inundated, overwhelmed and overcome with emotions. And as we work to process our own responses, we are still expected to show up. We are educating our fellow white classmates about our stories. Explaining how this system is designed against individuals that look like us. Using George Floyd's unjustified murder as a platform to speak up on the injustices we face every day. All the while we are still expected to show up for class and for work, and we are doing it with grace and poise. And I want you to know, we see you. We see you facing your anger with this system and our institution. We hear your frustration that NUPD is allowed to treat us as less than, as if we do not belong on this campus. As if we do not pay the same tuition as our white counterparts. We hear your rallying cries, and we see your fire. We cannot breathe. Not in the streets and not in our own university.

The Black Lives Matter movement is gaining traction and we are all witnessing a societal shift, but in times like this we need more than words. We need educational institutions to step up, acknowledge and put action behind their words. We need our administration, our student body and our university as a whole to represent and amplify the voices of the African American populace. If we matter, we need to do more than see it on a page. We need to feel that we matter. We need action. We need to defund NUPD.

In pain and enraged,  
Sade Adewunmi  
Executive Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion