

We are deeply disturbed by the video of George Floyd's brutal death in the streets of Minneapolis. What is most troubling is that this is not an isolated incident. Just in the past few months, the deaths of Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery have brought to light the real concerns for basic safety that people of color are attempting to express. The lack of respect of life for people of color remains prominent across our country. The pandemic has illustrated how disparities amongst ethnicity and socioeconomic class have hurt those most in need while forcing many to be essential to support the economy. We in Charlottesville are not immune to these issues. The events that took place in Charlottesville in August 2017 showed the entire world that racism remains prevalent in our own community.

We applaud the peaceful protests that occurred in Charlottesville this weekend which our very own faculty, staff, and students helped to organize. We are blessed with a Mayor, City Council and Academic community that are willing to listen to the concerns of the people and want to be part of the solution. As a country, we are better than this and it is our obligation to find ways to eliminate racism from our world.

As a department, we pledge to allow our members the space to express themselves without recourse. We pledge to address the issues we face head on with genuine concern, knowledge and compassion. Faculty, resident and staff wellness is imperative to the success of our department. Every trainee needs to feel supported in a healthy learning environment. The world will not change tomorrow but we will continue to make changes for the better, one step at a time. As challenging of a time as this is, we will persevere. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."

Please stay safe. Together, we will find our way through this trying time.