



Statement of Concerned Chairs to Fellow Faculty, Students, and Administration

June 8, 2020

John Jay College was born during the social unrest of the 1960s in a period of dissent and the violent suppression of peaceful protest. At that time, according to *Educating for Justice*, “The police were at the center of the turmoil that was ripping apart the social fabric of America...John Jay was founded on the belief that an educated police force would be more tolerant, less quick to respond with violence, and thus less likely to exacerbate the tensions that gripped America in the 1960s” (Markowitz, 2008, p. 37). A key goal of the College since its founding has been to develop “thinking, critical, creative beings with an awareness of their relations to the whole of mankind [sic]” (p. 11). We are now witnessing a similarly painful period in our nation’s history when awareness of our relations to the whole of humankind is being actively abandoned and lost.

Our country, built on oppression and racism, continues to reverberate with acts of injustice as inequities are reproduced systemically and violently. We see this firsthand in the experiences of our John Jay College students, the majority of whom are people of color, enduring the most difficult and inequitable structural conditions: the continuing health disparities disproportionately affecting Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities, including the impact of Covid-19; the disproportionate impact of economic deprivation worsened by the pandemic, with both higher rates of Black and Latinx unemployment and the disproportionate reliance on poorly paid “essential workers” from these communities; and the continued dehumanization of our fellow citizens with black and brown skin, who are scapegoated with trite and predictable excuses that lead to a failure of accountability by those who have harmed them.

As department chairs and faculty members of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, we stand in solidarity with the Joint Statement from the Department of Africana Studies and the Department of Latin American and Latinx Studies and joined in solidarity by the SEEK Department, dated June 2. We denounce and reject the unrelenting violence committed in acts great and small against our fellow citizens and neighbors. We weep in dismay at the injustices perpetrated again and again in our communities, and for the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Eric Garner and so many others. We rage at the defense of vigilante violence, police brutality and state sponsored violent repression, which undermine our nation’s rule of law. We recognize the overwhelming frustration, deep pain and anguish we and those around us are experiencing—our students, colleagues, friends, loved ones, and ourselves.

We also recognize there is work to be done. The first thing we can and must do is reflect upon and acknowledge our own individual and collective racialized, ethnic, class, gendered, professional and any other advantages and privileges, committing and recommitting to personal and collective accountability. To facilitate this process, we offer links to a partial list of readings and resources, below (item 1).

We commit to demanding institutional and systemic change within the college and outside of it, based on the principle of equal protection and treatment for the whole of humankind. For example, we will demand accountability for the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and all those who have died by extrajudicial violence (see links under item 2 below; item 3 lists relevant organizations to support).

Outside the college, we will offer our research and scholarship to inform community organizers mobilizing for racial justice and social change. Within the college, we will double down on educating for justice with actions that may include but are not limited to:

- Diversifying the faculty in our departments with attention to hiring, retention, and promotion policies and practices, and prioritizing that the cultural competency of faculty, administrators and staff be commensurate with the diversity of our student population.
- Calling on all departments and units of the college—academic, co-curricular, and administrative—to examine and strengthen inclusivity policies and practices in relation to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ identities, citizenship status, and ability.
- Working with the Departments of Africana Studies, Latin American and Latinx Studies, SEEK, and any other department or program with knowledge and information on the critical issues of racism and other forms of structural, systemic violence, to advance the original mission of the College to nurture “thinking, critical, creative beings with an awareness of their relations to the whole of humankind.”
- Disseminating knowledge and information on the critical issues of racism and other forms of structural, systemic violence in the form of articles, books and syllabi produced by our faculty and other scholars to inform and enrich the curriculum and pedagogy offered at John Jay College across departments and disciplines.
- Supporting President Mason’s call to equip the next generation of police officers to understand how BIPOC communities have been and are harmed by those sworn to protect them, and why and how law enforcement leaders must be held accountable in cases of police brutality and extrajudicial violence.
- Supporting the John Jay College Student Council call that we teach current and future “law enforcement to police without brutality, prejudice, and with decency” by means of our teaching, scholarship and activism, for we know that our students who dedicate themselves to serving in the criminal justice system are equally harmed by inequality and injustice.

We close with the words of our colleagues in the Departments of Africana Studies and Latin American and Latinx Studies:

Let us vow to keep doing—and do more of—the things in our lives that contribute to making our campus and the world better.

Signatories,

Seth Baumrin, Communication & Theater Arts
Benjamin Bierman, Art & Music
Teresa Booker, Africana Studies
Shu-Yuan Cheng, Science
Angela Crossman, Psychology
Geert Dhondt, Economics
Robert Garot, Sociology
Jay Gates, English
Katie Gentile, Interdisciplinary Studies
Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Africana Studies
Jay Hamilton, Economics
Jonathan Jacobs, Philosophy
Vincente Lecuna, Modern Languages & Literatures
José Luis Morin, Latin American & Latina/o Studies
David Munns, History
Andrew Sidman, Political Science
Monika Son, SEEK
Katherine Stavrianopoulos, Counseling
Alisse Waterston, Anthropology
Daryl Wout, Psychology

Resources (copy links into browser as needed)

1. Engage with Anti-Racism Literature, Media, and other Resources (copy links into browser)

Working Document for Scaffolding Anti-Racism Resources:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PrAq4iBNb4nV1cTsLcNIW8zjaQXBLkWayL8EaPlh0bc/preview?fbclid=IwAR2M-uPiUyqElrT6b4VavxzYwH7pvwNRLglDh_jbelMku2T7fCcSYXqTfgA&pru=AAABcp3Y7t0%2ADkvgGVFxWisPZsc4GQeW6g

Anti-Racism Resources with resources for white people, including white faculty committed to accountability: <http://bit.ly/ANTIRACISMRESOURCES>

There is No Hierarchy of Oppression by Audre Lorde:

<http://www.pages.drexel.edu/~jc3962/COR/Hierarchy.pdf>

Layla F. Saad: “Do the Work: An Anti-Racist Reading List”:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2020/jun/03/do-the-work-an-anti-racist-reading-list-layla-f-saad>

Layla F. Saad, *Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognise Your Privilege, Combat Racism, and Change the World*. <https://www.meandwhitesupremacybook.com/>

Jane Elliot: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CAwIDK6Jkv6/?igshid=1iun5lasy78db>

Laurence Ralph, *The Torture Letters: Reckoning with Police Violence* (2020).

Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist* (2019).

Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard For White People to Talk about Racism* (2018).

Jonathan M. Metzler, *Dying of Whiteness: How the Politics of Racial Resentment is Killing America's Heartland* (2019).

Sylvia Wynter: No humans involved: An open letter to my colleagues
<http://carmenkynard.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/No-Humans-Involved-An-Open-Letter-to-My-Colleagues-by-SYLIVIA-WYNTER.pdf>

George Floyd Resource Compilation (copy link into browser):
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1J0m3eYct6wByXjtNP_a73W13_pY3Bnx1igM_C8DA5E4/edit?fbclid=IwAR3kdwJlpawfdOJRy7EsMjV3J8Ws2rT4U1ia_m2aI3iRfhXb99hIyzTCN8U

A history of racial violence in America (copy link into browser):
https://threadreaderapp.com/thread/1266531249914601472.html?fbclid=IwAR2GgoYOwCJnITSzuaG3q4XQTCtCB3bY0KLZIOaee_G2gHiD8Dx3jVJUP5k

Interview with Dr. Cheryl Grills on the history of racism in American Society
(*Description of video content:* Dr. Grills explains the history of racism in American Society in an accessible way for those who may not understand what led to the current moment.
Suggested audience: For viewers interested in learning more about the examples of systematic injustice that impact Black communities). Copy link into browser:
<https://abc7.com/6222321/>

Other anti-racism resources (link below)
<https://www.provolibrary.com/blog/2268-a-beginner-s-guide-to-antiracism>

2. Demand Accountability and Change (copy links into browser)

Call Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey to immediately end violence against protesters, release all arrested during protests, and hold the officers responsible for the tragic loss of George Floyd accountable.

[Justice For Breonna](#) (List of resources and action steps provided by community organizers in Louisville, KY)

Write to the Urbana City Council (CityCouncil@UrbanaIllinois.us) regarding the Citizen Police Review Board and Police Brutality in Urbana (copy link to browser): <https://cu-underground.com/urbana-police-beat-unarmed-woman-for-arguing-with-officers/>

Take action in other ways (copy links into browser):
https://medium.com/@surj_action/5-ways-white-people-can-take-action-in-response-to-white-and-state-sanctioned-violence-2bb907ba5277

<https://maketheroadny.org/>

Showing Up for Racial Justice: <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/>

Black Lives Matter: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

Color of Change: <https://colorofchange.org/>

3. Support/Donate to Organizations Working for Transformative Justice (copy links into browser)

<https://policingequity.org/> (Center for Policing Equity uses data to address bias in policing; Director is John Jay Professor, Dr. Phillip Atiba Goff)

Minneapolis Freedom Fund: <https://minnesotafreedomfund.org/donate> (supports efforts to help free protestors who cannot make bail)

Black Visions Minneapolis: <https://www.blackvisionsmn.org/> (Local MN Chapter of a national organization working to dismantle systems of oppression and violence)

North Star Health Collective: <https://www.northstarhealthcollective.org/donate>
(Healthcare initiative that also provides trainings, resources, and street medical support to community organizing efforts)

Campaign Zero: <https://www.joincampaignzero.org/#vision> (Online platform and organization that uses research-based solutions to end police brutality in America)

List of options for donations: <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/george-floyd-protests-bail-funds-police-brutality-black-lives-matter-1008259/>