

Graduate Student Union Statement on Racial Justice
June 2020

Dear Colleagues,

In the past few weeks, we have witnessed appalling acts of racism and violence. The Executive Board of the Notre Dame Graduate Student Union unequivocally condemns racism in all its forms, and stands in solidarity with people of color in our community as they confront injustice. Several Notre Dame students, alumni, and their allies have written this past week discussing how to confront these issues of racial injustice, and it is clear this is a complex issue which is not easily solved. Please know that we are aware that the University of Notre Dame is not immune to the malignant effects of racism on our society, and while we still have much to learn about the best course of action for overcoming existing issues, we are committed to fostering diversity and understanding in all levels of graduate education.

The Notre Dame community has made very notable progress in creating a more unbiased and diverse culture on campus, and has a long history of working with African American leaders to confront racial injustice head on. Past president of Notre Dame, Father Ted Hesburgh, spent many years serving on the Civil Rights Commission to craft policies to support voting rights, employment, housing, education, administration of justice, and public accommodation for African Americans. He went so far as to march with Martin Luther King in 1964, at a civil rights rally in Soldier Field in Chicago, to publicly protest against racism. We feel strongly that his life should serve as an example that one person can have a profound impact on the well-being of others, and ultimately change history for the better. No one should be judged by the color of their skin, but rather we should all be judged by the content of our character. We commit to following his example, and encourage all of you to, in his own words, *“be the kind of person who not only understands the injustices of this life, but is also willing to do something about them.”*

We will continue working with our members and partners to make programs more diverse and accessible to all students, regardless of their ethnicity. As the GSU Executive Board, we are fully aware that words are not enough in times like this; however, we are committed to being a part of the change needed to make life better for students of color here at Notre Dame. We realize that for us to make a long lasting impact on supporting diversity at Notre Dame, we will need help from the broader community. Please assist us by offering any ideas you may have on how we can support events that promote diversity and inclusion to help deepen the Graduate Student Body’s understanding of racial inequality and different cultures that exist here on our campus. We stand in solidarity with our community as we know that injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere. To all of us who do not identify as people of color, please join this effort as an ally so every student feels they belong on our campus. As one of the most renowned institutions in the world, Notre Dame’s actions stand as an example for other Colleges and Universities. We hope all of its members will answer our call and truly walk with us in this fight for justice and equality.

In Notre Dame,
The Executive Board of the University of Notre Dame Graduate Student Union