

**Southern Oregon University
Board of Trustees**

Statement on Black Lives Matter

As a nation, a state, and a Southern Oregon University community, we continue to witness the senseless killings of Black people throughout our country. The recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and so many others before and since, have been added to the tragic list of historic and systemic injustices committed against people of color since the "founding" of America.

These injustices have a tremendous impact on all of us, but especially on our students, colleagues, families, and friends from communities of color, who experience them on a very personal level. On this Juneteenth of 2020, we act in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, and with people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds who continue to face unprecedented challenges, injustices, and violence.

The SOU Board joins President Linda Schott in her clear statement that *“Southern Oregon University condemns and denounces hate and abhorrent language and behaviors intended to harm any member of our learning community on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, expression, age, national origin (ancestry), immigration status, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status. We are firmly committed to peace, justice, civil discourse, social-emotional support, and respect for all.”*

In our Board's fiduciary role to SOU, there is something we can do to change the course of history. It lies with our students and colleagues. It lies with the educational and social roadmaps we are building during the students' time at SOU. As a Board and University community, let us do what it takes to build in our students, colleagues, and community a foundation that effectively disrupts these patterns of injustice. As the statement etched on Churchill Hall notes, *“The challenges of democracy are the opportunities of education.”*

We must seize these opportunities, and while acknowledging the challenges, we must assure our students and colleagues that we see them, hear them, and stand with them against racial oppression and injustice. We cannot be silent. It is not enough to feel bad, or hope someone else will do something. We must be part of the solution. We must act.

Identifying actions that we can take will be part of our challenge and our opportunity. We recognize that thinking of actions is easier than taking them. But taking action is a moral imperative. As a Board, we commit to not only condemning injustice but also to taking action and rising to the challenge to be part of the solution.

VOTE: Unanimous
DATE: June 19, 2020

Recorded by the University Board Secretary:


