



**SACRAMENTO
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California State University, Sacramento
Division of Criminal Justice

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June 4, 2020

TO: Our Criminal Justice faculty, staff, students, alumni, partners, and friends

FROM: Dr. Ernest Uwazie, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ernest Uwazie".

RE: Bearing Witness

Sadly, once again, the nation as well as our community has witnessed the death of an unarmed Black man, George Floyd, at the hands and knee of a white police officer, and 3 other officers present at the immediate scene failed to intervene in this tragedy. And again, the nation and people of all ages, hays and hues the world over have come together to protest this shocking homicide, demand accountability, and call for an end to the entrenched institutional racism and anti- blackness in our society. Without question, the unfortunate violence and tearful images of human pain and repudiation of injustice, along with the overwhelming united voice for change, in the aftermath of Mr. Floyd’s death has challenged all of us to revisit the social contract that is the cornerstone of our democracy and the promise of an inalienable right to peace and justice for all. As witnesses and good citizens, we must do better for equal justice! In good conscience, we must listen and act more to demonstrate our value and dignity for Black lives!

President Nelsen calls upon the campus community and all of us to think critically and act anew and justly <https://www.csus.edu/president/presidential-communications/>. The Division of Criminal Justice heeds that call and remains committed to its mission of educating “...*the leaders of tomorrow’s criminal justice community to make positive decisions. ...*,” and our “*students will become confident, visionary professionals who appreciate evidenced based reasoning, creative and critical thinking, diversity, equity, and believe in lifelong learning.*” Every year, we proudly produce over 400 graduates, who along with over 16,000 alumni serve in various areas of the criminal justice field, including law enforcement at local, state, national and international levels. Further, our faculty team is engaged in various critical areas of social justice scholarship and service with potential to effect positive change, including race relations and cultural competency.

Yet, any time a person unjustifiably dies in police custody, it is as if we have not done enough to educate or prepare the next generation of police leadership. For us, this is a watershed moment in enhanced curriculum development and scholarship. For our criminal justice leaders and partners, this is a moment to examine any promising road not travelled in the recruitment, education, retention, and training of our law enforcement personnel, with elevated attention to the vulnerable and resonant voices for change. As we mourn the dead, pray for healing, and demand peace and justice, may we be good witnesses when our actions need to speak louder than our words. As a community, we must demand the law enforcement and justice system that we deserve for the equal protection of the laws and advancement of a just society.

Rest assured that we'll engage our faculty to use this as another teachable moment in our teacher-scholar service, to interrogate the status quo, create robust conversations, and ensure safe space for our students, especially blacks and other people of color. Our division will be a solid partner in any campus and community search or initiatives for responsive actions. We all must be in this together, with same unity of purpose, compassion, and solidarity exhibited in our ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic!

Respectfully, I ask for your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions on how we can better educate the next generation of police leaders and contribute to the positive change we desire. I thank those who have already reached out—with concerns and expressions of solidarity in our shared humanity, or ally-ship. Let us bear a worthy witness of this momentous period, and perhaps make this suffering meaningful.

Peace & Justice, Always!