

## **STATEMENT FROM THE COMMISSION FOR BLACKS**

The Commission for Blacks would like to acknowledge the impact of COVID-19 on Black and Brown lives, the excessive and ongoing profiling and harassment of people of color, and the murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor. We mourn and empathize with all families impacted by COVID-19 and homicides, especially the minoritized group.

Minorities have been affected at an alarming rate, and they have been grossly overlooked; and now, the murder of Mr. Floyd has created an upheaval in our society. COVID-19 and Mr. Floyd's murder have played a significant role in the civil unrest, and we strongly support equity for all minorities at UT and our collective society. There are no words to express our discontent, disappointment, and frustration with the injustice facing many Blacks in our great nation, the land of the free. We know that these unexpected and unanticipated challenges have created distrust with law enforcement and political leaders, as well as adding physical, financial, emotional, psychological, and social issues with our minoritized brothers and sisters.

Even though there are many challenges and thoughts of uncertainty, we remain hopeful and optimistic that we shall overcome. There are all shades of people protesting and locking arms as brothers and sisters, and we believe this energy is the spirit needed to raise us as a people to that lofty dream that our brother Dr. King suggested.

We will continue to explore collaborations to demonstrate our support of diversity, equity, and inclusion for people of color. As a commission, we would like to extend our support to Black students, faculty, and staff being impacted at UT, within the local Knoxville community, across the state, nation, and world.

Sincerely,

James and Javiette  
Commission for Blacks Co-Chairs