



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
GRADUATE STUDENT SENATE

TO: University of Vermont Graduate Students

FROM: Avery E. Rasmussen (she/her/hers), Graduate Student Senate President

DATE: June 5, 2020

SUBJECT: Message to the Graduate Student Community & Anti-Racism Resources

We have been gripped with immense sadness and outrage as we learned about the horrific acts of racist violence and police brutality across the U.S. in recent weeks, including the senseless murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade. These murders, along with countless other acts of violence against Black Americans that continue to occur every day, are reminders of the interpersonal, systemic and institutionalized racism pervasive in every corner of this country.

The State of Vermont and our University are not immune to the pandemic of racism. On the contrary, the homogeneity of Vermont and the UVM Community point to an extensive history of systemic oppression of Black Vermonters, including racist land ownership charters, the eugenics movement and the Kake walk. These systems have resulted in outcomes such as racial health disparities, wealth gaps and the overrepresentation of Black Vermonters in state prisons. Overt bias also continues to be a pervasive issue among our community. 69.6% of graduate students reported experiencing bias at UVM.

To our Black community members, we stand with you and are firm in the belief that Black Lives Matter. Attached below you will find a list of campus and community affinity spaces and resources. Counseling and Psychiatry Services (CAPS) are also available and can be reached at 802-656-3340 and <https://www.uvm.edu/health/appointments>.

Many white Americans have felt a call to anti-racism education and action over recent weeks. If this is true for you, we urge you not to let this become a simple act of performative activism or the cyclical social media sharing of Black murders and subsequent silence and inaction. Take steps to educate yourself and listen to Black people without expecting them to teach you. Engage in meaningful actions to dismantle systems of racial oppression, while sitting with the discomfort of knowing these are the same systems that have afforded you privilege.

Attached please find lists of ways to get involved and local VT organizations working towards racial justice to support compiled by the Mosaic Center for Students of Color (MCSC) and the Peace and Justice Center. Also attached is information regarding bias incident reporting at UVM.

As an Executive Council, we pledge to take the following actions immediately and listen to your ideas and feedback regarding additional actions you (graduate students) would like us to take:

- Continue to prioritize efforts to create space for the voices of members of our community who hold marginalized identities.
- Increase collaboration with identity centers and UVM departments to provide anti-racism educational opportunities, programming and volunteer opportunities for graduate students.
- Support efforts to hold police accountable in our own community.

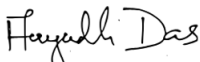
Please follow this link (<http://go.uvm.edu/gssracialjusticefeedback>) or reach out to us directly (contact info in signatures) with any ideas, questions or feedback. We will get back to you in a timely manner.

In solidarity,

Graduate Student Senate Executive Council



Avery Rasmussen, President (aerasmus@uvm.edu, 612-558-2687)



Aayudh Das, Vice President (aayudh.das@uvm.edu, 979-985-7469)



Jaspreet Singh Nagi, Treasurer (jaspreet-singh.nagi@uvm.edu, 607-768-8698)



Rosie Chapina, Communications Director (rosaura.chapina@uvm.edu, 915-497-3459)



Mike Hoaglund, Secretary (mhoaglun@uvm.edu)