Dear Kinesiology family (faculty, staff, students),

We are angered, saddened, and totally disgusted with the various injustices and inequities rooted in systemic racism that led to the senseless killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breeona Taylor – and all of the others that were not in the public spotlight. The human indignity and indecency we have recently witnessed are appalling and deplorable. Our hearts are heavy and our souls are sobbing during this dark moment of our reality. We are in solidarity and pledge our unwavering support for the Black/African American community in general, and for our faculty, staff, and students who identify as such. We unapologetically proclaim that Black Lives Matter! We also stand with the diverse array of allies who are fighting for social justice and equality for the Black community in peaceful and profound ways.

Structural racism has long been an exhausting truth in our country. We know that the experiences of racism are traumatic, the wounds of racism run deep, and the penetrating pain of racism is severe and often unbearable. But, as kinesiologists, we must let this composite pain inspire our purpose! We touch the world, because we move the world as scholars, students, and servants in a discipline focused on movement (both the activity of movement and the movement enterprise). As such, we have a unique opportunity and responsibility to be steadfast in our dismantling of racism and our attack on the weaponizing of Blackness in every form. Be it in the descriptions, associations, and unfounded fears evoked in some when seeing Black bodies jogging through certain neighborhoods, or watching birds in a park. Or be it challenging the racial exploitation, ‘color-blindness,’ or ‘color-silence’ permeating the institution of sport. Or be it illuminating the health disparities and physical inactivity deeply rooted in environmental racism – resulting in underlying conditions that have made the Black community at greater risk for injury, illness, and death – as we recently witnessed based on the disproportionate number of Black illnesses and deaths due to COVID-19. These are just a few examples of the ways in which our collective advocacy and activism for justice and equality matters to humanity.

We are working diligently and strategically to create a culture in Kinesiology that celebrates the true ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are also intentional in our efforts to create a community that is supportive, respectful, and welcoming to all – regardless of personal or social identities, affiliations, orientations, status characteristics, etc. And we are offering resources, programs, and activities that will educate, connect, and challenge us (our biases, assumptions, misunderstandings, etc.), while also educating, inspiring, and empowering our faculty, staff, and students to be agents of social change. We encourage you to join us in these continued efforts! When we know better, we can do better. And when we do better, we will be better – for ourselves, for our school, for our communities, and for the various constituents we serve.

But, we are hurting with the Black community right now. Rightfully so! And we should honor our hurt, and respect the fullness of its pain. But we are also challenged in this moment to allow the pain we feel to fuel our purpose! We are charged with the daunting task to somehow harness the essence of this hurt to heal – ourselves and each other. We can, and should, use sport and physical activity to strike down health disparities and promote social change. We stand united in Kinesiology to live our motto: KIN ALL IN! So, in the spirit of Kinesiology, let each of us – in our own unique and special way – support and celebrate each other, and pledge to move the world towards racial equality and social justice!

In peace and solidarity,
Ketra Armstrong, Professor and Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Lori Ploutz-Snyder, Professor and Dean