

Dear OACAC Community,

The Executive Board and Leadership of OACAC sees it as our duty and responsibility to address the appalling and senseless murders of Black Americans. Although **George Floyd, Breonna Taylor** and **Ahmaud Arbery** are recent examples of these atrocities, this is not new to the American experience. For over 400 years, Black lives in this country have been systematically oppressed, undervalued, exploited, and underserved. We as a Board, condemn these and all acts of police brutality and the continued oppression of African Americans in our country.

We stand with our families, colleagues, and students who believe that they can be the change in systems and institutions that are built on racism and structured to elevate people with white skin while impeding the advancement of people of color. We recognize the complexity of a system with deep and twisted historical roots and commit to working together toward a better future. We are inspired by peers, who despite their own fears, exhaustion, and anger, continue to be models to us of what our community needs for grieving, healing, and reconciliation. As a group, we commit to studying existing resources to expand our knowledge of the history of systemic racism in our country and promoting anti-racist education policy. We commit to examining more fully our own implicit biases and how to lessen their impact in our personal and teaching, and counseling lives. We commit to advocating for our students of color and representation in what we read, study, and view in the course of their education.

Our association will not turn a blind eye to the myth of education as the “great equalizer” in the United States. This sentiment has been proven false by the realities of economic stratification worsened by our school systems. Perhaps more than any other US institution, schools were founded on normative values of equality and access. Yet, we have all been complicit as value-driven education was slowly replaced by profit and name recognition. In practice, a system built on racist policies like segregation and white-washed curriculum were not dismantled by the Civil Rights Movement or *Brown vs. Board of Education* but were masked by insincere statements of “diversity and inclusion”.

We recognize the disparity between the performance of our Black and African American students compared with white students and other students of color. This is one way we recognize that the systemic racism in our institutions reaches beyond class and beyond neighborhood. We ask, “what will you do to change that?”

To our Black colleagues – you are valued, appreciated, and loved. We recognize that you are hurting, angry, and tired. There are resources available for you to attribute to your self-care. A few of those are:

- [Statement on Recent Racist Incidents and Mental Health Resources for African Americans](#) – NAMI
- [44 Mental Health Resources for Black People Trying to Survive in This Country](#)
- [Coping with Race-Related Stress](#), University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign
- [How to Deal with Racist People](#), by Jens Korff, *Creative Spirit*
- [Surviving Institutions that Weren't Created for You](#) by Yareliz Mendez-Zamora, *Huffington Post*
- [Mindfulness and Stress Reduction Resources for People of Color](#), Perinatal Support Washington
- [Surviving Oppression; Healing Oppression](#), Tarakali Education

To others – challenge yourself and think about how you can become a stronger ally and take action in support of others. There are multiple resources to use in your own personal and professional development. Several resources are provided below.

## Now, YOU Do Something!

### Take Action:

- [Call, write, tweet, meet with your lawmakers](#) and ask how they are both mobilizing for justice for George Floyd AND how they are working to ensure not one more. Use the [Our Voices 2020 Action Guide](#) for tips.
- [Sign Color of Change's petition](#) demanding justice for Breonna Taylor.
- If you are white and attending a protest, remember you still have a responsibility to wear a mask; you do not get to police Black folx's anger; do not be the one to escalate aggression— your body is still safer from the cops and you cannot make the choice to put Black and Brown folx at risk; follow the leadership of Black organizers.

### Donate:

- [Minnesota Freedom Fund](#) pays criminal bail and immigration bond for those who cannot afford. They seek to end discriminatory, coercive, and oppressive jailing.
- [Charles L. Warren Memorial Heritage Scholarship](#)
- [NAACP Legal Defense Fund](#) fights for structural change to expand democracy, eliminate disparities, and achieve racial justice through litigation, advocacy, and public education.
- [Black Lives Matter](#) works to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes.

### Educate Yourself:

- [Talking About Race & White Privilege](#) – National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Read Courtney Ariel's piece in Sojourners "[For Our White Friends Desiring to Be Allies.](#)"
- Make your way through Brea Baker's "[The Anti-Racist Reading List](#)"
- [Check Your Privilege](#) is a guided journey that deepens your awareness to how your actions effect the mental health of Black, Brown, Indigenous, People of Color.
- Check out this comprehensive [Anti-Racism Resource Guide](#).
- Make [The Root](#) part of your morning-news routine.

### What OACAC will do:

- To call out and recognize atrocities perpetrated against Black lives in Ohio and around the country.
- To support our Black members and other marginalized members in their professional careers and personal lives.
- Provide educational and mental health resources for our members that will advance self-care and anti-racism.
- Engage our members in conversations around systemic racism both within and outside of our educational systems.
- Plan a community forum for engagement and learning. More details to come.
- Provide professional development grants to a number of OACAC members to attend NACAC's virtual GWI Conference.
- Direct our financial resources to support educational opportunities and advocacy efforts centered around anti-racism and educational inequalities.

- The Executive Board will undergo implicit bias, equity, and anti-racism training with a vetted source, with an opportunity to later expand to the membership of OACAC.

Our community is in crisis. Our community is suffering. Our voices together and commitment to each other will give us hope. It is not enough to be “not racist”, we must be anti-racist in our work, our lives, and our relationships with others.

In Solidarity,

*Members of the OACAC Executive Board*

Collin Palmer, President

Courtney Johnson-Benson, President-Elect

Kristen Dickerson, Immediate Past-President

Marion Meadows, Inclusion, Access and Success Chair

Brenda Gerhardt, Guiding the Way to Inclusion Co-Chair

Mary Grimaldi, Cleveland NACAC Fair Co-Chair & OACAC Past-President

Alleigh Bradley, Guiding the Way to Inclusion Co-Chair

Nancy Gibson, Board Member At-Large, President 2018-2019

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Scott Jackson, Summer Institute Co-Chair

Jake Kos, Summer Institute Co-Chair

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Chris Cowie, Grants Chair

Mark Cortez, Government Relations Chair

\*Special thanks to the Courageous Conversations program from Indian Hill High School in Cincinnati, platformwomen.org, and others that contributed their efforts to crafting this message.