



To our students and fellow faculty members in Grogan Residential College

We believe the brutal killing of George Floyd by members of the Minneapolis police force on May, 25, 2020 strikes at the very heart of what we do as educators committed to nourishing the lives and learning of our students.

Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, the killing of Mr. Floyd and so many others, all of them at the hands of the police, all of them black, all under suspicious circumstances, and all within just the past few years is part of a longstanding and sordid history of state sponsored oppression of poor people, and people of color in the United States, particularly those who are African-American. We write to call out and condemn it clearly for what it is—racist tyranny. It is evil, it is overlooked and tolerated by far too many, and its purpose can be nothing other than attempting to stop everything we do as teachers.

Simply put, as teachers, we endeavor to identify, describe, unlearn, and dismantle systems of oppression like racism that stunt our own and our students' lives. In so doing, we ask a great deal of you, our students. We ask you to let us into your lives, your hearts and minds, your dreams and aspirations; we ask you to be receptive to new ideas, new people, and to change; we ask you to question, face hard issues, and to wrestle with difficult problems, to think critically and creatively, to speak your mind effectively, clearly, and even bravely, to stretch, struggle, and grow. And always we ask that you give back and contribute your opportunities, talents, and intellects to helping others and making a better future. In Grogan College, in particular, we tell you that all of this has something to do with being a "professional". And yet, in our opinion the killing of Mr. Floyd and so many others like him says no to all of it. These racist killings and the persistent tolerance of them by elected and appointed officials threaten to shut us down in fearful withdrawal, suspicion, anger, and hateful disregard of one another. Well, we say no to racism and no to these attempts to mute the education and the lives that our students deserve. Throughout our careers, so many of our courageous students responded willingly and enthusiastically to our challenges that we can expect nothing less from ourselves, and from the world.

Therefore, as teachers who care deeply about our students and about the people they become, we completely reject and condemn this continued oppression, and we condemn the destructive fear, suspicion, disappointment, and despair it cynically aims to elicit.

We acknowledge that all of us are hurt by these ruthless acts of state sponsored violence, but we especially acknowledge and condemn the hurt aimed at those who are black and male.

We are under no illusion that as teachers we can stop the crimes continuously perpetrated by so many who wear the cloak of officialdom and "good order" whether they commit the acts themselves, or stand idly by as if they were routine and normal. Our professional commitment to evidence, critical self-awareness, and justice forbids it. But we can, and here and now we do speak out. We can, and here and now we do commiserate in solidarity with those most directly and unjustly affected. It truly is the least we can do.

And we also respectfully encourage everyone who is disturbed by the continued disregard for black and brown lives that the killing of Mr. Floyd's represents, especially those who are white, to become vocal and visible.

Here is a list of some ways to help: [North Star Health Collective](#)

John Sopper  
Faculty Program Chair

Dr. Sarah E. Colonna  
Associate Faculty Chair and Academic Adviser