

June 4, 2020

Dear campus community,

George Floyd's death at the hands of Minneapolis police was an abhorrent act of racism. I have been struggling, like many of you, with these senseless acts of violence against Black people in our country. George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many countless others who have lost their lives reveal the deep social fractures of racism that persist. We must take action.

The nation and our campus need to listen to what people from oppressed and marginalized groups have been saying for years. We need to listen to what Floyd said with his dying words, "I can't breathe," a tragic statement for one man and terrible reality for millions more. We must lift the memories of Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, and Tamir Rice, and Trayvon Martin, as well, and far too many others. We must listen, we must remember, and most of all we must act, to denounce the ugly remnants of overt bigotry and to dismantle the even more insidious structures of institutionalized racism.

As president, I am:

- Working with Monmouth and Independence mayors and police departments to ensure a safe and just community
- Working with the President's Cabinet, the University Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Committee (UDIAC) and the Cultural Competence Committee on our Diversity Strategic Plan
- Reviewing the results of our own Campus Climate Survey and establishing action steps such as more comprehensive cultural competency training
- Using the final Diversity Plan, in conjunction with UDIAC, to establish action items

Our campus has a strong tradition of educating underrepresented students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. WOU is committed to providing an equitable higher education experience for all students that is rigorous and socially just. In doing this, WOU will transform the lives of graduates creating momentum for positive change in our social fabric, and in the future of the nation. Our values of community, diversity and respect continue to be central to our mission and are even more important today.

Many of us are engaged in ways to make our future better by confronting hatred and injustice, and yet, we need to do more. WOU is about transformative education, challenging ourselves to new experiences, exploring how we feel about race, and taking action to increase our understanding and appreciation of all. I ask you to share your experiences and ideas you have for confronting hatred and injustice on our campus. Incidents of bias can be reported [here](#), and you can email me other ideas.

Office of the President

345 Monmouth Ave. N. | Monmouth, OR 97361 | 503-838-8888 | Fax: 503-838-8600 |
wou.edu/president



TOGETHER WE
SUCCEED

I ask all of us to support our students, faculty and staff of color as we gather the strength to overcome these horrific acts of hate. Finally, our hearts go out to the family and friends of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others who have been victims of violent hate crimes in America. We mourn with you.

Sincerely,



Rex Fuller
President