



OFFICIAL MEMORANDUM
Voted & Approved by the E-Board: 06/04/2020

From: GRO Executive Board
Date: 04 June 2020
Subject: Statement on Racial Justice

Dear JHU Grads,

The past few months have been extremely challenging. The uncertainty, fear, and hardship of the COVID-19 pandemic are now accompanied by tragic reminders that racial inequality is an enduring feature of American life and it is present in the criminal justice system, in police practices, and beyond.

Over the past few days, millions of people across the country have expressed their deep frustration and raised their voices in response to the police killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and many other Black Americans. Protestors have also rallied against the abiding structural violence and inequality that continues to affect Black Americans and other racial minorities in a staggeringly disproportionate manner relative to white Americans.

The Johns Hopkins community is not immune to such racism. Several groups under the administration at Johns Hopkins have released statements acknowledging the existence of such problems, supporting students involved in peaceful protests, and providing lists of resources for students. Other institutions, such as the University of Minnesota, have taken more direct action and cut ties with the local police department as a response to police violence. In February of 2019, the GRO General Council voted against supporting the creation of a JHU Police Department. Given the current climate, and active protests of police power across the nation, we write to remind you of that opposition today. We also urge the Johns Hopkins administration to proactively engage in more advocacy work to move towards justice and equality for our Black community members.

During this incredibly important moment, the GRO stands in solidarity with those most vulnerable. As the brutality faced by Black individuals and communities intensifies across the country, the GRO Executive Board would like to encourage students to not sit back and be silent. The participation of students in demonstrations against racism and police culture can be very significant, and, as history has shown, students' actions can grow in scale and mobilize with

off-campus activists and organizations. It is in our hands to be looking for ways we can contribute to the fight against this deep-rooted systemic racism, and all of us have a role to play in this process.

Not everyone can physically participate in the protests occurring across the country. Therefore, we want to call attention to the other ways one can make an impactful contribution, including: signing petitions, calling representatives and lawmakers, and self-education. This [Black Lives Matter](#) resource page can serve as a directory, listing several ways that you can help nationwide efforts.

The GRO Executive Board will urge the University to support future initiatives for collaboration and conversation on issues regarding race and justice, and take steps towards combating systems of oppression for minority groups. We will continue to advocate for our graduate community and we encourage students to participate in these open conversations.

We encourage everyone to seek out [mental health and wellness resources](#) offered by the University. We also want to share a list of [resources](#) recommended by the Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) on the Medical Campus that focuses on self-care in the wake of enduring racial trauma. Finally we would like to share a collection of resources [\[1\],\[2\],\[3\],\[4\],\[5\]](#) for members of the university community looking to understand more about antiracism and how to strive for it in themselves and with others.

We hope the Homewood grad community takes this opportunity to reflect on such matters and how we can collectively work to better ourselves, our community, and the world we share.

In solidarity,
Your GRO Executive Board