

Dear HESA,

Our hearts are heavy as we witness the oppressive acts of violence experienced by the Black community. Not just in Minnesota, Kentucky, and Georgia, but our very home of Tallahassee, Florida. Yet this grief is not new, nor is the accompanied pain novel. The past few weeks are a representation of the history of pain, hurt, and struggle, the Black community faces daily. These murders are not new. These images of brutality are not new. These protests are not new. At the center of all these events is the oppression of Black people.

As a HESA community, we mourn the loss of Tony McDade, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and many more lives that have been lost prior. We understand you're hurt, and we affirm any feelings you may have in regards to the events unfolding around us.

We stand in solidarity with the family and friends of the Black people who were murdered unjustly. We stand in solidarity with the Higher Education Program and Education Leadership and Policy Studies Department at FSU. And importantly, we also stand in solidarity with you. To our Black peers, we recognize your hurt and pain, and we stand with you. To those who identify as Allies, we encourage you to strategically and responsibly use your voice and privilege. We challenge you to call out and deconstruct White supremacy in all its obvious and subtle forms, daily. Be mindful it is not the job of people of color to uphold the mantle of advocacy and education alone. Responsibility also belongs to those with power and privilege. We will not see a change until action, justice, and accountability are prioritized over comfort.

As we work towards dismantling racism and other forms of oppression, we hope you will explore and utilize the following materials shared by Dr. Cameron Beatty, to better inform your journey: [Anti-Racism Resources](#). Alongside our department and program leadership, we encourage you to tap into the following campus resources. If you have witnessed or experienced discrimination, please use [report.fsu.edu](http://report.fsu.edu). For additional support, please contact the FSU Counseling Center for support at 850-644 TALK or <https://counseling.fsu.edu>. Additionally, if you are joining protests or want to advocate, we encourage you to look at tips for safe protesting at [blacklivesmatters.carrd.co](http://blacklivesmatters.carrd.co). Finally, we welcome you to join fellow HESA members in [contributing to the following organizations](#) if able.

It is a privilege to remain silent in times of oppression. We challenge you to move in this season of discomfort and act in solidarity with people of color who are outraged and hurt. Our leadership journey in Higher Education has already begun. We will be defined by how we respond and answer this call to action.

As always, HESA is a resource for you should you need someone to talk to or a community to find solace. We look forward to seeing you soon.

In solidarity,

2020-2021 HESA Executive Board  
Higher Education Student Association  
Florida State University