June 4, 2020

Statement of Support for Racial Justice

The faculty and staff of the Department of Communication Studies at UNC Charlotte express our extreme grief and outrage over local and national events, including police brutality and the murder of unarmed and innocent Black citizens and unprovoked violence against protestors. We write this statement as a response to the recent murders of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and George Floyd, but also in respectful memory of other Black citizens harmed or killed by racist actions, including Charlotte’s Keith Lamont Scott and countless other - named and unnamed - Black people over the history of this country. We acknowledge the fear, hurt, anger, and frustration that Black people who are subject to the threat of institutionalized violence and white supremacy experience every day of their lives. Our hearts are heavy for our students, our community, our country, and humanity.

As Communication scholars and teachers, we understand that words matter, as does silence. We go on record to say that we condemn racism in every form, whether violent, systemic, or overt; through microaggressions, bullying, silencing, opposing, or erasing. Further, we support all efforts to protest and stand against racism. We care about you—our students—who are hurt and shocked and frightened and angry. We feel your anguish and terror.

Many of us study social justice, and we fight racism, marginalization, and abuses of power through our scholarship and teaching. There is so much more to do. We pledge that moving forward, we will listen more closely, care more, and work harder and more effectively to end this blight. We will work to cultivate a community that supports racial justice. We have made efforts to offer our department as a safe harbor for all students; we will work to be an even safer and more supportive place for Black students, and we pledge to educate our students to enable them to be the change this country needs. We aim to center diversity and inclusion in
curriculum design, foster credible and effective anti-racist practices and continue to listen, learn, and act to confront white privilege. We are compiling a list of resources and assistance as well as crafting a plan to increase and enhance the racial justice commitment of our department. For today, know that we acknowledge and respond to your pain. We see you. We support you. We are here for you.

In sincerity and solidarity,
The faculty and staff of the Communication Studies Department
UNC Charlotte