

This week has been another reminder of how systemic discrimination and double standards destroy our trust and communities. It is clear that racism and privilege are defining challenges that our generation faces. This is not the world we want to live in. This is not the legacy we want to leave for the next generation.

We are all grieving for George Floyd, a death that has shaken all of us. Whether we are mothers, fathers, sons or daughters, we all want to feel safe in our community, to feel protected by the law and to feel respected as a people. Unfortunately, this basic human right is not always extended to the community members of color. A friend of mine shared in her post yesterday, “Having a black son makes your pray in a different way.” It is unconscionable that in our country and in our neighborhoods, parents would fear for the life of their children for no other reason but the color of their skin.

At NOCE, one of our institutional pillars is celebrating the unique diversity of our community of students, faculty and staff. Diversity is essential and is based on the central values of justice, equity and respect... words until they become actions. For change, real change, to happen we need to commit personally to examine our own biases and actions, enter into dialogue with others, acknowledge our own weaknesses and build each other up. We all have a role and responsibility in creating an equity-minded organization that NOCE can be, to be a good listener, to be a good learner and to be a good builder.

My call to action today is to choose to set aside own bias when interacting with one another and making decisions, to show respect and acceptance to all members of our campus, and to enact systemic changes in our school’s policies and practices that lead to empowerment of all people who set foot on our campus, regardless of their race and ethnicity.

Grief is unsettling and draining, difficult to process alone and takes time to heal. You have confidential resources available to you.

I invite students to make an appointment for [Counseling and Student Services](#) and attend [ARISE Lab Open Office Hours](#).

I invite staff to participate in the [CCC State Chancellor's Office webinar](#), *A Call to Action*, on Wednesday, June 3rd from 9 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. and I look forward to seeing you at the [Pastries with President](#) on Thursday, June 4th at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

In unity,

Valentina