



IUPUI DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

A Message for Our Time
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Vice Chancellor

Justice **By Langston Hughes**

**That Justice is a blind goddess
Is a thing to which we Black are wise:
Her bandage hides two festering sores
That once perhaps were eyes.**

Amid the torrent of messages, statements, affirmations and re-commitments to creating a more inclusive and just society, the Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion stands ready to continue current and create new initiatives in response to the question “what can I do?”

Like all of you, we watched in horror the senseless murder of George Floyd which has awakened a new spirit of awareness and activism in the country and around the world. Unfortunately, Mr. Floyd’s murder was one of several committed against men, women and gender non-conforming Black Americans resulting from [white supremacy](#), discrimination and [racism](#).

Mr. Floyd’s murder happened while many Black Americans are [also mourning](#) the loss of friends and loved ones to the novel coronavirus that continues to [ravage our community](#).

Perhaps it is the combination of Mr. Floyd’s murder and the health disparities laid bare by COVID-19 that inspires so many profound statements and commitments to work for a change that is long overdue. The words and sentiments of Langston Hughes above have resonated with Black Americans for decades, years, [centuries](#).

To those of you [committed](#) to social justice, [eradicating](#) racism and [fighting](#) white supremacy, whether your commitment is new or old, [“welcome to the struggle.”](#)

I admit to feeling wary. We have been here before—opportunities to change systems of oppression continue to present themselves. Each time, once-exuberant interest fades when the “next thing” comes along drawing our allies’ attention elsewhere. These are difficult conversations, messy, unpleasant and uncomfortable. Indeed, the expectation that discussions of race and racism would create “feel good moments” is puzzling. When racism and injustice are embedded in our structures, practices and policies it calls for courage, stamina and continuous effort. Hence, my wariness. It is easy to *talk* about wanting change. It is much harder to *make* change. However, for those interested in more than a “check-the-box” approach, we welcome

you to join us as an active participant in initiatives, discussions and programming designed to fight the 'isms found everywhere, even on college campuses, even on our campus.

If you are truly committed to real change, I ask that you:

- *Opt-in* when invited to attend an event or training rather than opting out
- *Open* and *share* emails detailing a Diversity Lecture rather than deleting it
- See that *every* diversity initiative really is *about* and *for* you, even if you are White, straight, Christian and male
- *Listen* to the voices of those with experiences unlike your own instead of avoiding or trying to discredit them
- *Stop* requesting that your name be removed from diversity mailing lists
- If you are White, commit to participating in the White Racial Literacy Project (Listen to Toni Morrison explain why this is essential for White people [here](#).)
- If you are a person of Color commit to participating in the Racial Healing Project

Langston Hughes' poem "Let America Be America Again" includes the heartbreaking reminder that for so many "it never was America to me." With your participation in DEI and other initiatives we may achieve Hughes' dream:

**Let America be the dream the dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love
Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.
O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.**