

Dear Colleagues,

Yesterday I held the first of five upcoming Zoom meetings with individual units in our division. When I originally scheduled the meetings, the purpose was to check in to see how you are doing. Arguably, with the emergence of COVID-19, this past semester was one of the most challenging we have faced as an institution. I know many of you are tired and have been through a lot. I wanted to see for myself that you are okay, you are taking care of yourselves. What I did not know, *what we all did not know*, was the horrific death of a black man on May 25 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the midst of COVID-19, would bring up very raw and strong emotions in us all. It was not so much that he died; people die every day. What struck us so deeply was how Mr. George Floyd died—and at the hands of those who took an oath to protect and serve.

As your vice chancellor, I immediately wanted to draft a message to all of you following Mr. Floyd's death. But as a black man, it was the *last thing* I wanted to do. I had no words. Like many of you, my emotions were heightened. Shock, anger, disgust, and sorrow—I have felt them all the past several days. I was just coming to grips with the thousands of people dying from the coronavirus, many of who were Black Americans. But Mr. Floyd's senseless death was like a blow to my stomach, knocking me to the ground.

I became encouraged by the peaceful protesters—not those opportunists who took advantage of Mr. Floyd's death by rioting and provoking violence. I became encouraged by the hundreds of thousands of peaceful protesters across this nation and the world who decided to come together and say, "Enough is enough!"

What happens next? I wish I knew. What I *do know* is, if change is coming, REAL CHANGE, we must do it together. If we are to live out the values we hold dear as a campus community, setting an example for students who are the future of this country, then we must recognize there is strength in numbers. With so many heightened emotions, with so much at stake, now is *not* the time to show a lack of restraint. Now is *not* the time for divisiveness. Now is *not* the time to strike out against loved ones or those we consider our friends and colleagues. Now is *not* the time to become less than what our predecessors dreamed and hoped we would become. Now *is* the time to stand together as colleagues, as a division, as a campus, as a university, as a city, and as a nation.

In the coming week, I look forward to connecting with the rest of our units. I know you have questions about the upcoming academic year, along with a desire to discuss the events of the past several weeks and its impact on you and those around you. Now, indeed, is the time for us to listen and to be heard.

In closing, I would like to share links to a message we have posted on the Student Affairs' social media sites, Twitter and Instagram, to show support for our fellow Jaguars:

- <https://twitter.com/IUPUIStuAffairs/status/1268293699517272066>

- <https://www.instagram.com/iupuistudentaffairs/>

Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment to IUPUI students, to each other, and to your fellow Jaguars across the campus community!

In Jaguar Pride,

Eric

Eric A. Weldy, Ed.D.

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Division of Student Affairs

University Hall, Suite 4041

301 University Blvd.

Indianapolis, IN 46202

317-274-8990

eweldy@iupui.edu

studentaffairs.iupui.edu

