



IUPUI

**RICHARD M. FAIRBANKS
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Indianapolis

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

June 1, 2020

Dear FSPH Community,

As students, practitioners and researchers of public health and health administration, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to live a long and healthy life. Your neighborhood, home or job shouldn't be hazardous to your health. And neither should the color of your skin.

During these uncertain times, it is more important than ever to stand by our colleagues of color. I have been proud of the work our students, faculty and staff do each day towards diversity and inclusion. And now, I cannot stand by silently while our friends, neighbors and colleagues live in fear.

Recently, a student wrote to me and shared: "I have come to the realization that no matter our accolades, degrees, or position in the society, the color of my skin, the color of the skin of my husband, father, uncles, children, my entire family, will always be seen as a threat to my White counterpart and this leaves me heavily grieved."

This breaks my heart. Our students, faculty and staff of color have worked hard and deserve to feel that their accomplishments speak for themselves, that their skin color is a celebration of their unique experience and their perspective is one to be respected rather than ignored.

In public health and health administration, we work to break down the barriers created by systemic racism to allow everyone the opportunity for health. Not only do we need to stand by our colleagues, but we need to lead the way in breaking down these barriers.

Our words and actions have power. By not calling out racism, we become complicit in allowing a culture of racism to continue that harms everyone. We must be allies to our colleagues and friends.

Black and brown lives matter. They matter when we aren't recording video. They matter when we aren't on social media. And they matter when no one is looking.

Many of you are already acknowledging and fighting back against injustice. I am proud of the work our students, faculty and staff do each day to overcome the seen and unseen forms of oppression that hold us back.

However, we are all in different places as we acknowledge and push back against racism. And if you are just beginning to be an ally, [it can be tough to know where to start](#).

Educate yourself. We all work and study in academia. We are used to doing our research. Learn what you can and brush up on history. And own up to your mistakes.

Listen. Having white privilege doesn't mean that your life isn't difficult. But it does mean that you aren't targeted because of the color of your skin. Pay attention to what is happening around you and learn how to identify racism. Uplift your colleagues of color without speaking for them and taking away their voice. Make an effort to understand how others' experiences have been different than your own experience.

Stand up. Build networks and support leaders of color. Call out injustice and discrimination when you see it. Learn and use the [5D's of bystander intervention](#).

In public health and health administration, we solve problems each day to create opportunities for others. In the words of Maya Angelou: "Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in this world, but it has not solved one yet."

Let us continue to dismantle hate and make the world we live in equitable for everyone.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul K. Halverson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul K. Halverson, DrPH FACHE
Founding Dean