

AAUP-Augusta University Chapter: Statement in Response to the Murder of George Floyd and Protests

The recent murder of George Floyd by four police officers in broad daylight and on video has unleashed a wave of protests and calls for justice. The killing of Ahmaud Arbery while jogging down the road from us and the death of Breonna Taylor while she slept in her own bed are more examples of the injustice of our society. The COVID19 crisis and its economic repercussions have also highlighted the depth of racial disparities in the United States. The protests are not just about these tragic deaths, we recognize that they represent accumulated frustrations over the continuing racism and racial disparities that exist in this country. We also reflect on the continuing salience of the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. who said “a riot is the language of the unheard.”

Institutions of higher learning have also been places where systemic racism has been performed and preserved, but this can change, and we can be part of the solution. Many in the AU community have done amazing work toward this end. We must not stay silent and we must practice anti-racism to embody Augusta University’s values of inclusivity and compassion. Many of us, our colleagues, patients, and students are hurting right now. One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist. There is no in-between safe space of "not racist." The claim of "not racist" neutrality is a mask for racism. (Ibram X. Kendi, author of *How to Be an Antiracist*, p. 9) Find [here](#) a discussion on practicing anti-racism.

We stand in solidarity with the protesters and all their allies. The AAUP supports the right of people for peaceful protests and call for an end of police violence against protesters. We call for systemic changes and for justice not only for George Floyd’s family, but also for those who have been victimized by white supremacy in all its forms.