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Gardner-Webb University Condemns All Forms of Racism

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Gardner-Webb University Condemns All Forms of Racism

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Office of University
Communications

June 2, 2020



Hopes and Prayers for Peace and Unity

Our nation is, sadly, broken and divided. Struggling to emerge from months of suffering at the hands of a global pandemic, Americans witnessed the tragic and inexcusable death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer in Minneapolis on May 25. That event has since unleashed a fury of protests across the country, calling on all of us as a people to do more—and to do better—in pursuit of justice, fairness, and civility.

It is incumbent upon us as citizens, as neighbors, and as friends to categorically condemn racism. Communities everywhere have to confront the continuing reality that, as a society, we are not yet where we thought we were. Not even close. People are hurting. They are frustrated, angry, and indeed outraged. They want answers, and they want action. More to the point, *WE* all want answers and *WE* should all want action.

In this regard the Gardner-Webb University community is no different than many others across the land. We have to clearly and authentically speak out against all forms of racism, and on behalf of our faculty, staff, and students I want to issue precisely that statement here. We stand firmly opposed to hate and discrimination. We stand firmly opposed to injustice and insensitivity. We stand firmly opposed to the kind of daily disregard that fosters despair. Further—and perhaps most importantly—we commit to finding a way for love, respect, and reason to triumph. We owe that to each other.

If the story of our country teaches us anything, it is that we cannot simply wish our troubles away. Instead, we have to find common purpose and actually work to make progress...even when the cameras are turned off and the headlines drift to some new issue. We can't go numb; instead, we have to get busy. We can't diminish our allies; instead, we have to leverage the power and the comfort that come from banding together.

At GWU, now is the time for us to band together. In my eleven months at the University, I have heard a lot about our sense of community and about our sense of family. This is an opportune moment to embrace our gloriously diverse mosaic and to work in concert as a force for good. There is so much pain in the world right now, and I suppose the essential point of this humble message is that I hope we can somehow transform pain into progress. Progress can be made right here at home, just as it can be in every city, county, and state. Now, let's get to it.

With hopes and prayers for peace and unity,

Bill Downs

President