



HARVARD GRADUATE COUNCIL

12 GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS, ONE HARVARD.

June 3, 2020

Dear Members of the Harvard Graduate and Professional Student Community,

We write to you in the wake of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Sean Reed, David McAtee, and countless others who have been killed by racist violence. We know this violence is not new. It began with the enslavement of African people five centuries ago and continues to this day. We at the Harvard Graduate Council unequivocally condemn police brutality. We condemn the state-sanctioned killing of Black people and the willful, ongoing and historic neglect and divestment that has led to the disproportionate rate of Black people dying of heart disease, pregnancy complications, and, most recently, COVID-19.

We stand in solidarity with the movement for Black Lives, as well as our Black graduate students and community members. We support the [statement](#) from Black Harvard student organizations. In this time of mourning and incredible pain, especially for our Black peers, we want to ensure that every student knows about the resources available from Harvard to support them, which you will find linked below.

Black Lives Matter.

We must all work actively to dismantle systems of oppression. Without action, we are complicit in a racist system that devalues Black life, safety, and wellness. This complicity is exemplified by the three officers who stood by and watched as George Floyd was murdered. However, it is also exemplified by Harvard's own history and present struggles with racism. Harvard is an institution that was built on [slavery](#), white supremacy, and elitism which continues to manifest in what and how we are taught, who our professors are, who is admitted, and the experience of our students of color, and particularly our Black students. Harvard has taken steps to address these harms but we must all work together to do more. As members of this community, we must understand the history of our own institution and work to create a future Harvard that actively deconstructs racism within our walls as well as outside them. For non-Black students, and especially for White students whose racial privilege demands that they act, being anti-

racist means challenging individuals and institutions that are perpetuating racism through their words, policies, and practices, and holding their friends, family, and peers accountable to doing the same. It means taking intentional, daily action to unlearn racist ideas. Start by checking out the resources for allyship and actions for anti-racism at the end of this email.

We support the ongoing peaceful protests. We must use our voices to speak against white supremacy and racism today and everyday. We know many Harvard graduate students have been involved in these protests across the country and around the world. We condemn the violence that we have seen police officers using against these peaceful protestors. We stand with you. [Know your rights](#).

The [Movement for Black Lives](#) is calling on folks to participate in a week of action, which includes calling on your local elected officials and leaders to respect the rights of protestors, divest from police, and invest in Black communities. You can text ActionNOW to 90975 to stay updated and support the movement.

We encourage you to support the many Black-led grassroots organizations and bail funds in Minneapolis, Louisville, and elsewhere around the country. We recommend starting with [Resources and Accountability for Black Lives](#). This document is updated daily and includes active ways to support victims and their families financially, and ways to get involved through advocacy, grassroots organizations and bail funds, and legal support for protestors, among other ways.

Finally, we exist to serve the graduate student community. We know that many of you have also been consistently organizing and fighting against the many ways racism manifests in your Harvard experience and in the Cambridge and Boston communities. We are always here to uplift your concerns about your graduate student experience and advocate on your behalf, particularly as it relates to issues of racial justice. Please contact our Chair of Advocacy at advocacy@hgc.harvard.edu if there are any issues you want to discuss or ways we can support you.

In solidarity,

Harvard Graduate Council Executive Board