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June 3 — Update from the President

June 3, 2020 — Sent Systemwide

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Last week, I wrote to you with sadness and outrage over George Floyd's murder. Our community is continuing to process his death and the resulting protests and calls for action. I am hopeful that we can raise our voices and advocate together for accountability and justice. We must also support our community members who have been hurting for far too long.

We see you and we support you.

Over the last few months, we have been asking you to stay healthy and safe, but those words have taken on a new dimension in recent days.

We know these words are not enough given the incredible loss our community has endured. We are in mourning. We share in the grief and pain, as well as in the responsibility to do more and do better. In the hard days to come, we recognize that wounds take a long time to heal, but in the face of tragedy, we are committed to honoring our community and to ensuring that every member of our University family feels safe and supported.

We are asking ourselves what we can do — immediately and moving forward — to advocate for and support our community. I want to thank and celebrate so many of you who are already actively serving. Whether it is those in our own [Community-University Health Care Center holding a food drive](#), or our students and alumni [cleaning up damaged neighborhoods](#), or individuals quietly donating to a local organization or cause, Fred Rogers' advice in crises to "look for the helpers" is visible and appreciated.

If you are seeking ways to be part of the solution, our [Office for Equity and Diversity offers some good places to start](#). The University of Minnesota Alumni Association, in partnership with the Black Alumni Network and the Multicultural Alumni Network, has also listed [several organizations that need assistance](#), whether through your time, expertise, or financial contributions.

George Floyd Memorial Service — June 4

Tomorrow, June 4, I'm closing the University at noon for all employees except for those who are identified as essential out of respect for the planned [memorial service for George Floyd](#).

I encourage all of us to reflect on and honor the memory of Mr. Floyd's life. His death, tragic and unnecessary, reminds us that our lives are lived well when they are lived in service to each other. We have no greater purpose than a commitment to be good to each other, to be good to ourselves, and through those acts to create a just world.

So I ask you to commit to kindness. Commit to justice. Commit to community. We share our lives with those around us and we are enriched, immeasurably, by the relationships we form, the experiences we have, and the justice we can create.

Let our voices be heard and please take care.

With warmest wishes,

Joan Gabel