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Update from the President on the death of Minneapolis resident George Floyd

May 27, 2020 — Sent Systemwide

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Our hearts are broken after watching the appalling video capturing the actions of Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) officers against George Floyd leading to his tragic death. As a community, we are outraged and grief-stricken. I do not have the words to fully express my pain and anger and I know that many in our community share those feelings, but also fear for their own safety. This will not stand.

Today I am announcing two immediate changes regarding our relationship with MPD.

First, I have directed Senior Vice President Brian Burnett to no longer contract with the Minneapolis Police Department for additional law enforcement support needed for large events, such as football games, concerts, and ceremonies.

Second, I have directed University Police Chief Matt Clark to no longer use the Minneapolis Police Department when specialized services are needed for University events, such as K-9 Explosive detection units.

We have a responsibility to uphold our values and a duty to honor them. We will limit our collaboration with the MPD to joint patrols and investigations that directly enhance the safety of our community or that allow us to investigate and apprehend those who put our students, faculty, and staff at risk.

I write to you to express our overwhelming sadness, and our demands for accountability and justice. Our campuses and facilities are a part of the communities in which they reside. University students, staff, and faculty are day-to-day participants in the life of every community in this state, and we must act when our neighbors are harmed and in pain.

My heart is heavy and my thoughts are with the loved ones and friends of George Floyd.

Let our voices be heard and please take care,

Joan Gabel