



Letter from the Office of Community Engaged Learning

This past week, members of the Des Moines community and those in cities across the world, have come together to attend public vigils and protest racial violence to demand justice for Black individuals who have lost their lives to systemic racism and police violence including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and [so many others](#). The Office of Community Engaged Learning & Service affirms our commitment to racial justice.

We acknowledge the grief and outrage that so many are experiencing, and recognize Black community members are experiencing collective mental health trauma and have been for generations because of racial violence and systemic injustice in this country. As a Drake community, it is important we work hard to ensure anti-racism is embedded into our work.

In the Office of Community Engaged Learning & Service, we hope for students to first be able to know themselves, understand the complexities of the world, and take creative action.

There are many ways YOU can [affect change](#). Please feel free to reach out if you want to discuss what strategies you are interested in and what organizations are available in your local area to take action.

One strategy already mentioned was protests and demonstrations. [Know your rights as a protester](#). In addition to protests and demonstrations, below are a few examples of types of social change strategies and how you can apply them in the current moment:

Start with yourself. There are countless books, articles, films, and podcasts to help you educate yourself and navigate difficult conversations with loved ones about race, and commit to an ongoing journey of developing critical consciousness. Drake's Office of Equity & Inclusion has a [Social Justice Toolkit](#) with information on identities and how to begin/continue your anti-racist work.

Below is a non-comprehensive anti-racism reading, listening, and viewing list from Black creators to start or continue your actively anti-racist journey:

Books:

[How To Be An Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi](#)

[Me and White Supremacy Workbook by Layla Saad](#)

[Sister Outsider by Audre Lorde](#)

I know Why The Caged Birds Sing by Maya Angelou

[So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo](#)

[The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander](#)

[The Black Family in the Age of Mass Incarceration by Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)

Black Feminist Thought by Patricia Hill Collins

[Heavy: An American Memoir by Kiese Laymon](#)

[Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson \(book & film\)](#)

[Rachel Cargle, the Great Unlearn](#) monthly syllabi

Films and TV Shows:

13th (Ava DuVernay)- Netflix

When They See Us (Ava DuVernay)- Netflix

Selma (Ava DuVernay)

Queen and Slim (Melina Matsoukas)

American Son (Kenny Leon) - Netflix

Podcasts:

[CodeSwitch podcast](#)

[Pod Save the People podcast](#)

[1619](#) (NY Times)

[Intersectionality matters! Podcast hosted by Kimberlé Crenshaw](#)

Community Organizing & Advocacy - This involves supporting an idea or cause through public and private communications and collecting evidence to support one's position. One local organization that has been leading the way locally in Des Moines to advocate for systemic change is [Des Moines SURJ – Showing Up for Racial Justice](#). Typically they meet on Drake's campus and currently have opportunities to support virtually.

Policy, Governance, & Voting involves mobilizing others to influence public policy through formal political channels and participating yourself. Visit [vote.org](#) to check your registration, figure out how to register to vote, get election reminders, and more. You can write a letter, email, or make a phone call to elected officials to advocate for an issue you care about. Find contact information for your elected officials [here](#). If it is your first time contacting elected officials and you are nervous, you can invite your friends to join you on a video call to send emails and make calls together while keeping it on mute. This way you feel connected to others and know you have support if you need it. Attend City Council Meetings and voice concerns over racial discrimination policies.

Philanthropy and donating money is another way to contribute to social change if you have the means to do so. There are several funds across the country set up and managed by Black individuals most directly affected by racial violence and injustice that you can donate to. To stay updated on opportunities to donate, follow Black-led organizations and groups like the Movement for Black Lives, local Black Lives Matter chapters and other local affiliated partners on social media. You can also support local Black-owned businesses.

Volunteering and direct service is another way to create change. To find out about virtual and in person volunteer opportunities that practice strict health and safety protocols to prevent COVID-19, visit [Drake's volunteer page](#) that is updated on an ongoing basis.

Additionally, mental health is essential to sustainable activism. In addition to the [Drake Counseling Center](#) as a resource for all Drake students, below are a few community resources specific to mental health for Black individuals.

[Black Mental Health Directory](#)

[Therapy for Black Girls](#)

[Therapy for Black Girls Podcast](#)

[Liberate meditation app](#)

[The Safe Place app](#)

This is not a comprehensive list of actions and resources available to be actively anti-racist. And we know this may seem overwhelming. Our ask of you – pick one thing you can start with. And then another. Educating and preparing ourselves to be actively anti-racist is an ongoing process. If you learn in community with others and apply what you are learning throughout all aspects of your life, you can inspire those in your own spheres of influence to educate themselves and take action as well. Take time to listen. Understand that you'll make mistakes - apologize and work to do better next time.

Connect with us on social media @drakeservice on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) to learn more, and to share with others the action steps you are taking.

Sincerely, the Office of Community Engaged Learning & Service

(Resources compiled with help from staff in this office and Drake alumna Jamie Willer)

Drake University | Community Engaged Learning & Service 2507 University Ave, Des Moines, Iowa 50311

T 515-271-2454 W www.drake.edu/ce/

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