June 9, 2020

To: The ECU Community
From: The Faculty in the Department of Sociology
Subject: ECU Sociology United Against Racism

As academics who document and teach about inequalities and racism, the faculty of the ECU Department of Sociology collectively condemn the patterns of police brutality that continue to take the lives of women and men of African descent. With heartfelt agony and condolences, we remember the unnecessarily lost lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, and too many others—lives cut short without justification. Sociological research tells us that these are not isolated incidents but are examples of a broader historical pattern of systemic racism and impunity for abuses of authority. This pattern can and must be broken.

We confirm the statement by our national professional organization, the American Sociological Association, that “Institutional racism in all its forms must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.”

Research also teaches us that grassroots social movements are the modern tools needed to amplify voices and to confront and end unjust systems. At this moment, protests are critically and urgently needed. We oppose the use of military tactics to suppress protest actions and harm protesters. We implore our leaders at all levels to end unjustified attacks on activists and journalists. Especially in this moment of a highly contagious and deadly virus, activists should not be herded into super-spreading places such as jails.

In solidarity with communities of color, we call for the end to racist violence of all kinds. We also call for proactive, research-based initiatives to end discriminatory acts that harm people of color through other means, including injuries to their physical and mental health, livelihoods, residence options, and families. Our hearts go out to all who are hurting at this moment. We send our support to all of our students and colleagues, and invite you to share your agony, your questions, your ideas, and your struggles. Although we are at a physical distance from one another right now, we continue to be here for you at this moment, as your hurt has been heightened. We pledge to collaborate with our colleagues across ECU to confront these ongoing challenges on our campus, in Greenville, and beyond, and to move forward toward a different world: one of social justice and equality.

We can all move forward by building our knowledge base about racism. In our Sociology classes at ECU, we offer the vocabulary and research knowledge to stimulate deep discussions about race. Other resources can

be found here:

https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist

http://www.blacklivesmattersyllabus.com

https://stephenslighthouse.com/2020/06/03/scaffolded-anti-racism-resources/

Sincerely, on behalf of the Faculty in the Department of Sociology,

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