

To the Buffalo State Community:

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” That line, penned by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” is as true today as it was when it was written in April 1963. More than half a century later, our country still struggles with massive and complex forms of injustice. The recent and highly publicized killings of more black men and women have demonstrated the horrific and inhumane ways that racial disparity and hatred still flow in contemporary society. These men and women and countless others who have lost their lives or their livelihoods to racist acts are our fathers, sisters, sons, brothers, aunts, friends, and neighbors. We cry and we grieve with the families of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and so many others whose lives have been taken in unjust and precipitous ways.

The widespread unrest following these acts has been swift. Our understandable anger catches in our collective throats. How could such heinous acts still be occurring within our communities today? How can such inhumanity be tolerated—or worse, encouraged—by some groups? What can we do to break the cycle of injustice that seems impervious to common sense, legal remedies, and the goodwill of so many decent people? We are all wrestling with these difficult questions.

As you experience deep feelings of anger and grief over these unspeakable injustices, please allow careful thought and wise counsel to guide your response to these actions. As members of the Buffalo State College community, we stand for justice and fairness, and we use our voices and our critical analysis to decide how to express our concerns in nonviolent ways.

As Martin Luther King Jr. also reminded us, “Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love.” Do not let your emotions be hijacked by those who do not have justice as their aim.

This is a time to connect with your friends, family members, and established community groups to discuss what thoughtful action looks like. We were already charting our way through the COVID-19 pandemic storm, and now we have a new storm to weather. This racist storm is not a new one, but we must remain calm and thoughtfully plot our course of action in response to the events before us.

I have faith that all members of the Buffalo State community will continue to stand for justice everywhere, and I have faith that together, through connection and discussion, we will find a way to lend our voices, expertise, and intellect to navigate the current storm.

Sincerely,

Katherine Conway-Turner
President
Buffalo State College