

Standing Up for Racial Justice and Inclusion for All

Posted on [June 4, 2020](#)

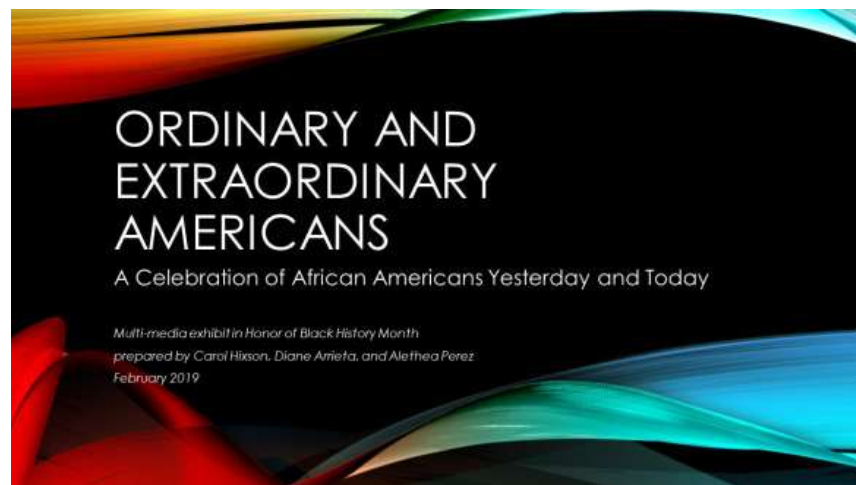
<https://faulibrarydean.wordpress.com/2020/06/04/standing-up-for-racial-justice-and-inclusion-for-all/>

I have written in this forum before about how one of the [core values of the FAU Libraries](#), and in fact all libraries, is to support diversity and inclusion for all. It is one of seven [strategic goals](#) for the FAU Libraries, reaffirmed in November 2019, where we pledged to “Enhance the libraries’ leadership role in promoting diversity and inclusion for the Libraries’ patrons and staff.”



Progressive Black Men’s Poetry and Pajamas evett in the library October 9, 2019

As nice as those words are, and as much as we have worked sincerely to promote tolerance, awareness, and inclusion through our library programs and services, it is not enough. The death of George Floyd and the subsequent protests and reaction to those protests have made it clear that much more is needed.



It is time for a call to action, as we heard this week from the Board of Governors (BOG) of the State University System of Florida. In an [open letter to all faculty, staff, students, and alumni of the State University System](#), the BOG stated that *“It is time for everyone to examine the inequities in our society, recognize the conditions that have created those inequities, and work to repair the racial divide and restore equal justice for all Americans.”* In this same letter, they went on to say, *“As a powerful and influential voice in Florida, it is time for the State University System, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni, to actively engage in finding solutions to peacefully eliminate racism and discrimination. This will be a critical mission of our twelve state universities, as it is our duty as societal leaders to help end prejudice and to promote social justice for all.”*

On May 31, FAU’s President John Kelly sent a message to all members of the FAU community where he said:

“Diversity and inclusion are part of Florida Atlantic University’s DNA. We all should be proud that FAU is one of the most culturally diverse universities in the country.

For this reason, among many others, it can be difficult to make sense of violence on the streets of America’s cities that is fueled by racism, ignorance and hate. Needless killings, like that of George Floyd in Minneapolis, can be particularly hard to fathom.

FAU condemns all acts of violence. It is vital we come together in the face of ignorance and hate peacefully. As a center of higher learning, FAU is a place of dialogue and thought, and where ideas are nurtured.

As we continue to deal with the effects of [COVID-19](#), we must not lose focus of what is right and just, but we must do so in a respectful and considerate way. We all must consider our actions in our daily lives and how these actions, no matter the intentions, may affect those around us.”

The past few months have been so hard for us and everyone else in the country, and the world. I thought that my heart was broken with the loss that we have all been experiencing. It turns out, I didn’t really know what it means to have a broken heart.

I didn’t know how much more of my heart remained to be broken until the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 and the subsequent protests, riots, and ongoing expressions of hatred and violence cropping up throughout the country, from all levels of society.

Because we need to mend many broken hearts and because we have been enjoined to do this by the Board of Governors and FAU’s President John Kelly, I pledge to do my personal best in these efforts. and to encourage everyone in the FAU Libraries to do better and to be better. The only way I can go on is to fight with every ounce of my being for fairness, equity, inclusion, justice. And simple kindness. As President Kelly said, Diversity and inclusion are in FAU’s DNA. It is a point of pride for us. But we must do more to ensure that all students and faculty are able to enjoy the benefits of being a member of the FAU community. We have much more work to do.

I leave you with the following statement from a prominent social scientist who sought to explain why “Black Lives Matter.” It may help to explain the anger and frustration exploding around us for those of us who have never lived with it on a daily basis.

“But then, if it’s the case that we can care about citizens and the police, shouldn’t the rallying cry just be All Lives Matter? No. because the humanity wasn’t stripped from all lives the way it was stripped from the lives of black citizens. In order for slavery to work, in order for us to buy, sell, beat and trade people like animals, Americans had to completely dehumanize slaves. And whether we directly participated in that or were simply a member of a culture that at one time normalized that behavior, it shaped us. We can’t undo that level of dehumanizing in one or two generations. I believe Black Lives Matter is a movement to rehumanize black citizens in the hearts of those who have consciously or unconsciously bought into the insidious, rampant, and ongoing devaluation of black lives. All lives matter, but not all lives need to be pulled back into moral inclusion. Not all people were subjected to the psychological process of demonizing and being made less than human so we could justify the inhumane practice of slavery.” Brené Brown, Braving the Wilderness, Random House, 2017, p. 59

Be well and safe, everyone.