

Message to the Penn State School of International Affairs on supporting our Black community and developing concrete action steps.

Dear Members of the SIA Community,

Thank you to the students who participated in our Student Listening Session this week. I appreciated Black SIA students sharing their experiences and concerns. We have been listening and hearing with the goal of amplifying their voices and working in partnership to take concrete steps to create a welcoming and inclusive environment, be antiracist, and address racist violence, police brutality, and racial profiling, and their profound – and often deadly – impacts on the Black community.

The recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Sean Reed, Nina Pop, Christian Taylor, and Tony McDade follow the losses of so many others. It is unacceptable that our Black friends, neighbors, colleagues, and community members have to be afraid for themselves and those they love. Although I never will be able to completely understand what our Black community members are experiencing, I stand with them, hear them, and value them. My heart aches and I grieve with them.

Last Saturday, I indicated my commitment to collaborating with our community to make progress. I think it is critical that we turn that commitment into meaningful action at the School of International Affairs. Director Gartner and I want to make sure that we listen and amplify Black voices in the way that we do so. I have reached out to SGA leaders and look forward to listening to them and others in our community in developing concrete action steps for the School of International Affairs.

A commitment to antiracism includes work on implicit and explicit bias in ourselves, our community, and the broader society. Those developing public policy have an obligation to promote justice and fight bias and hate that includes protecting Black lives and Black human rights. We need to be honest about our own biases and work on them. We need to call out racism when we see it, and then help to stop it.

I also think it is important that the School of International Affairs contribute to needed law and policy reform and advocacy, something that those in public policy are uniquely situated to positively impact. I plan to listen to our community's ideas on what form that contribution might take here and collaborate to implement them in ways that build upon efforts taking place elsewhere.

Unfortunately, over the past several days, there have been reports of racist behavior on social media by individuals reported to be Penn State students, and also other racist comments and abhorrent social media posts by individuals reported to be Penn State students. I join the University in condemning all racist comments and hate-filled actions, which do not reflect our values. The staff are verifying individuals that may have been involved and reaching out to those in question.

Finally, I wanted to build upon the resources shared to list some university resources for students, faculty, and staff to obtain mental health assistance and report concerns.

- The [Center for Counseling and Psychological Services](#), 814-863-0395, provides assistance for students. The [Multicultural Resource Center](#), 814-865-1773, also provides individual counseling and educational services
- The Employee Assistance Program, 866-799-2728, provides assistance for faculty and staff.

- Students and others who believe they have been a victim of discrimination or bias may contact the following offices to report the issue: [Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity](#): 814-865-5906; [Report Bias](#); [Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs](#): 814-865-0909; [Affirmative Action Office](#): 814-863-0471
- Anyone who wishes to file an anonymous report may call the 24-hour Penn State Hotline at 800-560-1637 or report online at <https://hotline.psu.edu/>.
- If at any time, you or others feel threatened or unsafe, call 911 or University Police at 814-863-1111.
- If you're not sure about where to get support, you can contact Grant Littke, (814) 865-3809 or gbl3@psu.edu. In addition, you can contact the University Office of the Vice Provost for [Educational Equity](#) at 814-865-5906 or Office of the Vice President for [Student Affairs](#) at 814-865-0909.

We have work to do. I look forward to doing it together.

Warmly,

Hari