

MARIAN UNIVERSITY

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Unity Center

June 8, 2020

To The Black Marian Community Members & Black Community At Large,

We, the Unity Center Team, hope this message finds you in good spirits and hopeful. We want you to know you have been in our thoughts and prayers, as the battle for equality and equity has gained traction both positively and negatively. Within these recent happenings and voicings during protests, we want you to know that we see, hear, empathize and stand with you. Not only in the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and Dreasjon Reed at the hands of police brutality and racist actions, but for other forms of systemic oppression and inequalities, all which impact education within the Black community. In a time where individuals of power consider you “thugs” while protesting, while claiming Covid-19 protesters “very good” people while doing the same actions, we want you to know you are valued and always considered when doing our work. We recognize the daily struggles and battles of being Black in America, such as: code switching, being the token Black person, dealing with microaggressions, being the spokesperson for all Black people, all while feeling out of place in institutions and environments where you feel as though your Blackness isn’t recognized or respected. These struggles, and a multitude of others, have been “tipped over” by the consistent viewing of black people murdered with no justice, while being held to the same justice and laws as other humans, which have been historically enforced harshly and unjustly for Black people. This is directly impacting our Black communities and Black Marian Community, which serves as the reason why the focus is on Black Lives Mattering. In this time, we suggest the following:

- SELF-CARE!
 - Whatever that looks like, and if you need to explore to find it, now is the time.
- Take all the space or none of the space you need. Don’t be afraid to TAKE A BREAK.
- Don’t feel pressured to speak.
- Find outlets and space where your input matters.
- Don’t feel pressured to carry the Black voice at work or in the classroom.
- Don’t take more burden on than you can carry.
- Find a comfortable support system and community, don’t battle alone.
- If you feel the need to protest, please be safe and make sure those around are there for the same purpose.
- Know what your triggers are.
- Create boundaries.

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Black Mental Health Resources

- [Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective Took Kit](#)
- [Association of Black Psychologists Self Care Tool Kit](#)
- [Black Mental Health Alliance - Therapist Connection](#)
- [Inclusive Therapists](#)
- [Directory of African-American Therapist](#)
- [Black Women's Health Imperative](#)
- [Sista Afya](#)
- [Emotional Emancipation Circle Support](#)
- [Marian Counseling Services](#)
- [Indianapolis Recorder](#)
- [Ourselves Black Magazine](#)
- [People of Color Classroom Resources](#)
- [Mental Health Screening Tool](#)
- [Anxiety Disorders Association of America](#)
- [Autism Society of America](#)
- [Suicide Prevention](#)

Some of our focuses within the Unity Center are to advocate, accommodate and support the needs of minority communities at Marian University and foster an inclusive environment where individuals of diverse backgrounds feel that they matter. And at this time, our Black students, faculty and staff are in need of that support and initiative. We want to inspire action, promote inclusion, promote experiences, change behaviors, bring awareness, support transformation, and start transformative conversation, which we plan to do by completing some of the following action items:

- Champion the Marian University Black Faculty & Staff Network
- Champion the [Union for Black Identity](#)
- Continue Talk it Out Tuesday, success coaching, lounge hours and other forms of safe space
- Assist with scholarship searches
- Promote and explore incorporating the [My Brother's Keeper Program](#)
- Promote and explore incorporating the [Black Women's History Boot Camp](#)
- Partner with [Black Women's Health Imperative](#)
- Partner with Marian Police on how to promote and review [restrictive force policies](#) in various communities
- Partner with and promote organizations within the [National Pan-Hellenic Council](#)

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- Promote how to *effectively* be in [solidarity](#)
- Provide a voice to those who may feel voiceless
- Encourage the Marian community to dismantle racism by:
 - Noticing the incident, prejudice, or bias act
 - Naming and calling out the problem
 - Assuming personal responsibility to address it
 - Choose an intervention strategy in which to address, act or speak on racism issues:
 - Direct – Address the system or aggressor and come between them and the targets
 - Take appropriate and effective steps to call out racism
 - Indirect – Address the target that was harmed with empathy
 - Empathize, support and space to those impacted
 - Distanced – Address the harm and impact
 - Become more educated from both sides to become a change agent
 - Take action

We would like to note that refusal to name, address or call out injustice is, at its core, a refusal to give up comfort. Diversity, equity and inclusion is an uncomfortable space for **EVERYONE**. To bring about effective change within these efforts you must be teachable, correctable, patient, consistent, and vigilant. A refusal to give up power and ignore injustices, displays a person as a privileged individual. If you're uncomfortable speaking up and taking a stance, imagine how much more and how much longer those that have been oppressed and impacted feel. Often times, discussions and actions are not political matters, but human matters, specifically civil rights and fair treatment. There are a lot of negatives present in the world, and we encourage those within our Franciscan Catholic, Christian based institution to empathize with those directly impacted. We encourage the Marian community to not fall victim to the [bystander effect](#), promote more relationship building and sensitivity, and explore ways to shine our Franciscan values into this community. If anyone would like more information or guidance how to properly move forward, the Unity Center has a tool kit document that can assist with the start of that initiative.

Yours in unity,

Davyd Hall, MBA

He/Him/His ([what's this?](#))

Director of Unity Center/Assistant Director of 21st Century Scholars

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter" – Martin Luther King Jr.