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## UA3/10/2 We Are One WKU

WKU President's Office - Caboni

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear WKU Alumni and Friends,

The senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, as well as other examples of racial injustice, are heartbreaking and disturbing. The WKU Community sends our heartfelt condolences to all those affected by these tragedies in any way. Please know that the WKU administration shares your pain, your sadness, your anger and your frustration surrounding racial injustices.

Too often we fail to engage in constructive dialogue after these incidents and miss the opportunity to effect change. We must come together to address the pressing issues occurring in our broader communities and confront the systemic struggles and challenges we face as a society. As an institution of higher education, WKU is dedicated to critical inquiry, community engagement and civic agency by offering diverse learning experiences where ideas are offered, examined and discussed. For that reason, we cannot remain silent because silence equals complicity. Embedded in our [mission](#) is a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion; but, as [President Caboni said last Friday](#), “We must continue to work together and stand up for fairness and justice for every person. We must do better.”

Our [WKU Creed](#) calls us all to share in the responsibility to participate actively in university life by seeking inclusion and respecting the rights of all people, celebrating and embracing diversity and encouraging freedom of expression. We also have an obligation to appreciate cultural differences, resolve conflicts fairly and promote truths and values essential to our communities.

It is imperative, now more than ever, that we join together in ensuring all members of the WKU Family — students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends — not only feel welcomed and safe, but experience our campuses as inclusive environments in which to live, learn and grow. To that end, it is essential for WKU to promote the kind of changes we seek in our global society.

In fall 2019, WKU restructured the existing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) team, recognizing that collaboration and honest dialogue is key to creating a stronger, more resilient institution capable of working through difficult issues now and in the future. The revised structure brings together leaders from our shared governance groups (Faculty Senate, Staff Senate and SGA), Academic Affairs, Enrollment and Student Experience and alumni. The DEI team will continue to work throughout the summer to provide the education and training needed to dismantle the foundations of power, privilege and oppression. Among the work that lies ahead of us, we commit to the following:

- We will implement implicit bias training for all faculty and staff this fall. This is part of the One WKU Academy, a year-long program to address campus-wide diversity, equity and inclusion.

- We will continue working with the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to codify a state-wide cultural competency program that provides standardized training protocols for students, faculty and staff.
- We will review and adopt new hiring policies that enhance recruitment of underrepresented minority (URM) faculty and staff to ensure that we are representative of the students we serve.
- We will combine campus incident response forms to a single place where all members of our community can notify appropriate individuals of issues and concerns related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- We will strengthen the partnership between WKU Police and other local law enforcement agencies to mutually advance inclusive justice for all individuals who come within the WKU communities.
- We will increase the facilitation of deliberative dialogues in which all members of our community come together, explore historical context, weigh ideas and better understand the complexities of the issues that we face.
- We will send monthly updates to faculty and staff sharing the work of the DEI teams and strategies under development.

Our work is ongoing. As we prepare to [return to campus this fall](#), we must remember that our charge to promote diversity, equity and inclusion is not the responsibility of just one individual or committee; it is the responsibility of our entire community. We look forward to engaging in meaningful work with you that moves us toward lasting, systemic change.

We hear you

We acknowledge you

We support you

***WE ARE ONE WKU***

Respectfully,

Timothy C. Caboni, President

Cheryl Stevens, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Molly Kerby, Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Co-chief Diversity Officer for Academic Affairs

Michael P. Crowe, Jr., Director of Student Conduct, Title IX Deputy Coordinator, Co-chief Diversity Officer for Enrollment and Student Experience