

GSM Student Leadership statement of support

June 2020

Dear GSM Community,

Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd – we are faced with the reality of prejudice and bias that continues to plague our society. Race relations in the United States can often feel like it moves two steps forward then one step back, and events such as these make it easy to feel like we have not learned anything in the past 400 years.

Although it has taken time to join in on the conversation, as the student leadership of the GSM, we felt it is necessary to acknowledge the injustices due to the deeply ingrained systemic racism in our country. As future business leaders, we have a responsibility to think critically about our actions and intentions.

Even here, within the graduate program at UC Davis, African-American, Latinx, Hispanic, and non-east Asian students are underrepresented due to the state of income inequality and lack of access to generational wealth and resources in America. Amidst this larger storyline of media, political parties, skin color, and wealth, we exist as a microcosm of the problems and ideals reflected in society. We will not be able to solve racism in a day. However, we can choose to acknowledge that inequality does exist. We can accept that the road to change begins with a small step forward.

GSM community, in all things, we ask you to remain authentic to yourselves. Some of us are fortunate enough to have never had to deal with law enforcement outside of getting a traffic ticket. Some of us will be forever grateful to the police who have helped us out of a bad situation. Some of us have experienced racism and abuse of power at the hands of the police who are supposed to protect us. Our different backgrounds and life experiences are bound to affect our opinions on the recent tragedy and protests. For many of us, this is the first time we are having these difficult conversations with our friends, teams, and colleagues, and we must remember to approach every interaction with respect and as an opportunity to listen, learn and understand.

Do not let this time pass you by. Whether it is coming to terms with your own inherent privilege, reaching out to a community member in need, supporting forces fighting against racism, or educating yourself more on the underlying history of our society, it is time that we took a stand against racism and the inequality that has spawned from it. We are shaping our path forward together, each of us learning every day, but we believe – despite the hurt and hate that is so prevalent at this moment – that the power of hope is alive and a spark for change and progress has been lit.

As student leaders of the GSM community, to foster a spirit of understanding, safety, and positive change, we plan to put into effect the following items:

1. **Extend connections** to build pathways to graduate business school education focusing on working with UC Davis African Diaspora Center and other on-campus groups for underrepresented students. (*LGBTQIA Center, Undocumented Student Center, Women’s Resource Center, Chicana/Latina Collegiate Association, etc.*)
2. **Commit to [Diversity Training](#)**
3. **Research other funds supporting** underrepresented minorities in business schools such as the [Color of Change education fund](#)
4. **Honor Juneteenth** – June 19 is an incredibly important day in the history of the United States. Known as Juneteenth, it marks the ending of slavery which occurred in 1865 – more than two years after President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. While this may be unique to U.S. history, we believe that equality and fairness should be honored and celebrated everywhere.
5. **Support black-owned businesses** during GSM-Associated events ([Forbes](#) for more information)

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