

From: On Behalf Of Suresh V. Garimella

Sent: Friday, August 28, 2020 7:39 AM

Subject: A call to community

Dear UVM family,

In my recent communication to you reflecting on [our first year together](#), I described how we will survive *and* thrive into the next two centuries. I mentioned the need to work together as a community, support each other, and communicate with respect as we strive to be an even more outstanding university.

I write to you again today to share my deep sadness that Black lives continue to be violated. This only strengthens my resolve that we must continue to honor all Black lives through our words and our actions.

We have work to do to combat racism, promote social justice, and foster greater civic responsibility. To that end, I am pleased to announce several university actions I will be leading.

Davis Center

This fall, I will be working closely with Vice President Heading-Grant and other community members to dedicate a prominent area in the Davis Center to honor and celebrate our common commitment to unity, respect, diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging. The working group for this effort will include students, faculty and staff and will have an initial focus on honoring the work—and struggles—of African Americans, particularly those who have touched UVM.

Scholarship

In addition, we are initiating a focused fundraising campaign to establish a scholarship program for students from historically underrepresented groups to attend UVM. The President's Common Ground Scholarship will build upon our [shared principles](#) to further extend the opportunities presented by a vibrant, equitable, affordable and accessible education.

Black Lives Matter flag

In the fall of 2016, UVM was the first institution of higher education in the United States to fly the Black Lives Matter (BLM) flag. Since then, thousands of other institutions across the country have followed our lead. After the first BLM flag flown was stolen, our community came together to hoist a second BLM flag handmade by former Director of Student Life Pat Brown and his wife Amy. It was a powerful demonstration of our community values.

This fall, we will commemorate that flag during the annual Andrew Harris Legacy Breakfast celebration, which will be held Sunday, October 4. The flag will then be permanently and prominently displayed in the University's Mosaic Center to signify UVM's continued commitment and dedication to Black lives.

Our community's pride in UVM is well-placed, but we must continue to protect and extend the value we place on diversity, equity and inclusion. These steps represent another step forward.

Be well, and thank you.

Suresh

Suresh Garimella
President
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