

**From:** UVM Faculty & Staff < on behalf of Broadcast Center  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 30, 2020 10:04 AM  
**Subject:** Reaching Out



The University of Vermont

Dear UVM family,

In a week that was marked by the awful death toll from covid-19 exceeding 100,000, and the ranks of unemployed Americans swelling past 40 million, the incomprehensible killing of one individual still moved the nation. A friend of mine said she was just feeling numb. I have personally struggled to process the senseless actions on that video.

I do not have words of wisdom to share, or to explain the unexplainable. But I do know that we are all diminished when a lack of opportunity, coupled with fear and life-threatening circumstances, prevent the development of potential.

As a citizen, husband, father and friend, I stand in solidarity with all who are saddened and outraged by the events of this week. And as an educator, promoting a sense of safety and belonging among all our students and our community is foremost on my mind.

I acknowledge our shared responsibility to work toward a better tomorrow. A tomorrow where we feel compassion toward one another, and there is justice toward those who still suffer within our country.

Decades ago, Langston Hughes had to remind us that “I, too, am America”. Let us not wait for further reminders.

And at this time of pain, let us look out for each other and offer support and kindness... widely and unconditionally.

Please rely on our community resources at this time of need, including our Mosaic Center and our Counseling and Psychiatry Services. Write me if you have stories or ideas to share.

Wishing us all peace and fellowship,

Suresh

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Suresh Garimella  
President  
University of Vermont

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**From:** LCOM Office of the Dean <COMOfficeOfTheDean@med.uvm.edu>

**Sent:** Saturday, May 30, 2020 9:15 PM

**To:** Gilwee, Vicki M <vicki.gilwee@med.uvm.edu>

**Subject:** Message to the Larner Community from Deans Page, Zehle and Tandoh

Dear Larner Community,

In the setting of recent reminders of societal racism and examples of horrific police brutality, we share a sense of shock and outrage brought forth by these events—including the recent tragic death of George Floyd, captured on video. We recognize both the direct and indirect impact these events have on the members of our community. We understand that most of us are experiencing distress and fear for ourselves, our friends, our children and our families. We want to acknowledge the pain and grief that we, as a community, are all experiencing.

As part of the greater university, we strongly affirm the message sent today by President Suresh Garimella.

During a time when everyone has been deeply affected by the public health and economic impact of COVID-19, we must continue to acknowledge and address the racial disparities of the pandemic, as well as the recurring events of violent racism. As medical providers we know that health cannot exist where justice does not prevail. This is true today, tomorrow, and forever and our actions must reflect this.

As we grieve, let us honor the lives of the victims by engaging, individually or collectively, to address injustice, prejudice and racism in the world in which we live. We encourage each member of our community to rely on the resources listed below and to reach out to each other for support and solidarity. Through a commitment to our shared values, kindness, respect and cultural humility, we will become a stronger community when faced with this type of adversity and together advocate for change.

We also encourage you to reach out to us to share concerns or thoughts on how we can further strengthen our community by providing a sense of safety and belonging for all.

Richard L. Page, M.D.  
Dean

Christa H. Zehle, M.D.  
Senior Associate Dean for  
Medical Education

Margaret Tandoh, M.D.  
Associate Dean for Diversity and  
Inclusion

Resources:

[UVM Counseling and Psychiatry Services](#) (for students) at [\(802\) 656-3340](tel:8026563340)

[InvestEAP](#) (for employees) at [\(802\) 864-3270](tel:8028643270)

[The UVM Mosaic Center for Students of Color](#)

[The UVM Women and Gender Equity Center](#)

[LCOM Office of Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[UVM Prism Center](#)

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**From:** UVM Faculty & Staff **On Behalf Of** Broadcast Center  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 3, 2020 12:55 PM  
**Subject:** A Message to the UVM Family from Dr. Wanda Heading-Grant



My Dearest UVM,

I write to you to share what is on my heart. I am bursting with so many emotions, I need to share. As I wipe away tears that keep forming in the corners of my eyes, know I am thinking of all of you, my UVM family. I really appreciate the calls and texts from so many of you who wanted to make sure I was okay. I am also grateful for the calls where you shared your ideas, anger, and grief with me. Like many of you, I watched in horror the video showing the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers. I sobbed for George as if he was my own son or brother lying on the cold, hard concrete. I then wept for Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade, and soon I was crying for the many who have tragically lost their lives over the years because of racism and inequality.

Unfortunately, the killing of black men or women by police is not new; it is so common that initially many turned to the usual responses: hashtags, T-shirts, flags, and national leaders condemning this horrific act. Still, George Floyd's homicide seems different to me and so many Blacks or African Americans. Was it the cold, hard concrete he died on, the cry for his mama as he took his last breaths, the plea from so many to help him that was ignored, or was this just the final straw? I continue to reflect on why this tragedy has become a global call for change and action. Regardless, this hurts me to the core. I am exhausted. My Black and African American family and friends are exhausted. We are sick and tired of being sick and tired.

As an African American woman who is also the University's Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, I am yearning for justice, looking for accountability, praying for solutions, and wishing we could be together to comfort one another. This crime against humanity, coupled with the impact of COVID-19 on us as a society has forever changed us. Exactly how we let these events change us, is up to us. For me, I am choosing to remain hopeful and draw upon my faith as I push away my tears, so I can see a better future.

Despite the challenges we face and the fear we may feel, let us redouble our efforts and insist on systemic reform. I know we cannot take on everything, but we can have an impact at UVM, and in the communities where we serve that will branch out to advance critical social and cultural efforts everywhere. We must use our educational platform to share and enhance knowledge, understanding, ideas and solutions that not only address issues of prejudice and discrimination, but also transform lives for generations to come. We must endeavor to inspire professionals who

will be more just, equitable, compassionate, and anti-racist.

As we grieve and search for answers together, I ask that you look after one another, in particular for those of us that are Black or African American. I ask that you condemn any behavior that diminishes the humanity of others. This vicious cycle must be broken because if not now when? The world around us seems to be exploding right now, and we all deserve better. I know I could say so much more. This will not be the last time you hear from me. This work of racial equity has been my life's work, and I need help now more than ever. I need partners. Let us collectively work together and steadfastly to confront and address generations of institutionalized racism.

I am going to start by hosting a Teach-In to help catalyze action. In addition, I intend to create digital "Brave Spaces," to support and lift up voices from within our University that are committed to this work. I am asking you to join me, plan with me, lead with me, and when I reach out for your help, please answer my call in both your words and your actions.

This is my single story, so please listen to others who have stories they are willing to share. Your voice matters, and no one can take that away from you unless you give it to them.

In Solidarity for Change and Peace,

Wanda

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Wanda Heading-Grant  
Vice President  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion