Dear Students,

The Gantt Multicultural Center team is alongside many of you experiencing a range of emotions over the last few weeks. In addition to navigating a global health pandemic that has claimed the lives of so many (disproportionately in Black and Latinx communities), the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Nina Pop, Tony McDade, (and the countless others that may have not been caught on video or been elevated to national news) troubles us deeply. Though we have never met their families, we join in their calls for justice.

Our nation has witnessed continued rampant violence perpetuated against Black people over centuries. This trauma to the Black community is collective, generational and re-lived over and over, often with no resolution of justice, further compounding the frustration and pain.

From a history of widespread lynching (1882-1968); to the brutal murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till (1955); to the bombing of 16th Street Baptist Church killing Four Little Girls (1963); to the LAPD beating of Rodney King (1991); to the many names added to this haunting list of racist violence through today, we understand as well as feel the heartbrokenness and desperation for change that we know many of our campus community is experiencing right now.

The unrest across our nation impacts our local Clemson University community and we encourage you to feel what you are feeling, find supportive circles for your own mental health, and engage in the level of action you are able to take on within your capacity and capabilities to promote change.

We highlight and honor the leadership of young people from all backgrounds across the nation, including our students, that have utilized their voices, platforms, demonstrations, social media and kitchen tables to ensure we do not lose sight of enacting reform for communities of color to have true freedom to access all constitutional rights afforded to them. This includes fair treatment at the hands of all levels of law enforcement and the criminal justice system, as well as access to previously denied resources to break cycles of inequity in housing, healthcare, economics, education and many more discriminatory systems of our society that linger from centuries of unjust laws and practices.

We also appreciate the leadership in this time of our Clemson University Police Chief Greg Mullen for openly speaking against the improper and inhumane policing that led to George Floyd’s murder and his commitment to engage campus-based and community-based organizations as a proactive measure for our local community.
OUR COMMITMENT:

In the Gantt Multicultural Center, as we make it our effort to celebrate the invaluable contributions of Black people for the good of society through programs including Black History Month, the MLK Celebration and Donning of the Kente; we will also continue to educate and provide awareness to our entire campus community on the history, context and systems that have caused us to arrive where we are today in a moment of racial misunderstanding, dissonance, and turbulence.

By recently bringing speakers to our campus such as Sybrina Fulton (mother of Trayvon Martin), Nekima Levy-Pounds (former President of the Minneapolis Chapter of the NAACP), and hosting an MLK Panel consisting of Law Enforcement/Students/Community Organizations, our goals have always been to allow students spaces to hear directly from local and national voices and engage in dialogue around equity to help advance our campus forward in greater understanding and action.

We will continue this work at Clemson University and listen to our students for direction regarding the concerns and issues impacting them, encouraging avenues for our brilliant students to make connections and have their voices heard in all spaces.

In partnership with the Center for Student Leadership and Engagement, we invite you to join us in a conversation on Race and Racism in the time of COVID-19 that is part of the Embracing Community Virtual Dialogue Series tomorrow (June 3) at 12pm at bit.ly/EmbracingCommunityRace.

In order to provide resources and an action plan, the Gantt Multicultural Center will be posting in the near future potential strategies to call for change on our website. At the same time, we will be sharing commitments the Gantt Center will also take in continuing efforts to educate, advocate and work towards full safety and inclusion of all identities at Clemson University.

We look forward to working alongside our wonderful students, staff, faculty and community to that end,

The Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center