

Dear Colleagues:

The recent killings of African Americans in our nation and the protests occurring nationwide once again demonstrate the anger and frustration over years of racial disparity, violence, poverty and inequitable treatment. WSU President Kirk Schulz summed up many feelings in his recent letter when he said,

Black lives matter. Racial violence impacts our WSU family. As an intellectual community committed to learning and seeking truth, we must reflect on our own failures—individually and collectively.

Tomorrow (Wednesday, June 10), many people across the country in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and academia are collectively speaking out to advocate for change in their communities about the injustices impacting the lives of Black people and to also contemplate how we can end racism.

#ShutDownAcademia and #ShutDownSTEM is an initiative from a multi-identity, intersectional coalition of STEM professionals and academics taking action for Black lives.

Despite our intentions, we are not immune from the challenge of systemic racism and bias. Institutionalized inequalities pose numerous and unacceptable barriers to those who wish to achieve higher education, participate in our institutions, and work in our professions. Despite efforts to reverse this trend, few U.S. universities – including WSU – have made adequate progress on important and necessary diversity goals.

We must do better. We encourage everyone to use this time as an opportunity to show solidarity and recognize the injustices of systemic racism that exist.

As deans of the Colleges of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences; Arts and Sciences; Engineering and Architecture; Medicine; Pharmacy; Veterinary Medicine; and the Graduate School, and the Vice President of Research, we pledge to continue to improve our colleges' efforts in recruitment and hiring, as well as mentoring and employee training programs that can further create a culture of inclusivity and reduce bias and barriers. If you have thoughts or ideas on how we can improve, we encourage you to please share them with us – and your colleagues - at any time.

Sincerely,

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