

A Statement from the MSCA on the Murder of George Floyd and Subsequent Uprisings

We, the members of the MSCA Board of Directors, stand firm in our support of the uprisings, protests, and actions against white supremacy, police militarization, and systemic brutality perpetrated against Black people throughout the country and the world. Rage and outrage and rebellion are suitable reactions to the dispassionate and every day suffocation of Black people. We recognize that the murders of unarmed Black people committed by police and vigilantes-- most recently of **George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and Tony McDade and countless others** - are vicious and violent symptoms of the greater historical disease of white supremacy, institutional racism, and structural inequality which continually threatens our members, our students and our teaching mission. It is not enough to simply condemn these as individual incidents.

We are workers who support our fellow union members throughout the country who are mobilizing against the pillars of white supremacy in a myriad of ways: transit workers refusing to transport arrested protestors, food service workers refusing to fill orders for riot police, K-12 unions successfully advocating for the removal of police from public schools and the defunding of police departments to fund schools and communities, health care workers on the front lines the COVID' 19 pandemic stopping to honor George Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds and cheering for the people protesting in the streets. We stand with union workers from all sectors who are out in the street protesting and the professors and teachers among us who have and will join them. We are teachers who are committed to learning and teaching about white supremacy, employing active anti-racist pedagogy, and committed to anti-racist curriculum reform in every discipline. We are researchers who are committed to the exposure of racist practices, histories, and current policies in our own disciplines. We are public servants committing to serving ALL of the public and the public good.

We teach at state public funded universities across Massachusetts that are charged with educating the middle- and working-class students of the Commonwealth - some, not enough, but some of those students are Black and Indigenous and Latinx. They are often denied equal access to quality education in K-12 and struggle with poverty and a host of other challenges, yet are also met on our campuses with outright hate - graffiti, slurs, confederate flags, open hostility. They are targeted by police on our campuses and then they experience systemic erasure of the experiences and histories of people of color in the curriculum and the classroom. Our Black, Indigenous, and Latinx students, faculty, and staff contend with the insidious colorblind racism which has plagued the academy for decades and resulted in a culture of silence around racial inequality and replaces work for change with a civility discourse that puts a chilling halt to real talk, work and struggle for racial justice. This silence is supported further by weaponized white fragility and respectability politics which denies and disapproves of anger, rage and any other emotional response from the victims of white supremacist systems and insists all will be well if we simply hire more faculty and staff of color - no matter that we do not change the climate of the campuses we may bring them to. Systemic change, real change in our universities requires us to do more- much more.

We propose the following actions/changes. We will work to see these changes enacted at each of our universities:

- Re-envisioning "Campus Police" as we know it and re-imagining what Campus "security" is, does, and needs to do on our university campuses. Campus police and security workers who are unionized should be collaboratively included in this re envisioning process.

- Immediately discontinue the use of all lethal force techniques and technologies by Campus Police and security at the 9 state universities.
- De-escalation training for all police and security personnel on the campuses
- Restorative justice training for police, security, and student conduct officials
- Comprehensive and critical anti-racist education for Campus Police and all Faculty, Staff, and Administration at every level - not just training but an education
- Comprehensive reform in the General Education core which addresses the need for all students to be educated on the history, policies, and mechanics of institutional racism and the history of resistance to white supremacy
- Faculty development funding for learning, creating, and enacting anti-racist pedagogies in all disciplines throughout our universities with clear follow through that effects changes in all departments and disciplines
- Institutional support for academic researchers, programs/departments that have expertise in history of white supremacy and the resistance to it as well as critical race studies so they can assist colleagues across the disciplines develop pedagogies and curriculum within each department/discipline/college
- Truth and reconciliation commissions/processes to be developed on each campus designed to heal the campuses from current and historical traumas around “hate” incidents and macro/micro-aggressions which are part of the very fabric of the day-to-day experience of Black and Brown people on our campuses in every role

We recognize these actions are a beginning. In no way can they alone or together be an ending. Anti-racist practices which divest in white supremacy are just that - practices - and they require continual self-reflection and commitment on the part of those with privilege every day, both individuals and institutions. The current pandemic which has shown the grit, courage, and resilience of our faculty has revealed again so clearly the racial disparities in our country in multiple institutional structures, law enforcement, healthcare, education caused by the “virus” of systemic institutional racial inequality which is at the core of our nation’s history. Unions and the union movement in the United States have historically both disrupted white supremacy and reinforced it. We are committed as a union to the dismantling of white supremacy in our institutions, in our classrooms, in our union, and in ourselves.