



June 4, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We are horrified by the senseless death of George Floyd and the many other racial injustices we've witnessed recently. As we collectively grapple with outrage and sadness, one thing is clear: the sometimes subtle, often tragic, and always systemic and structural racism that plagues our country continues to be one of the most daunting social problems we face today.

The distress and anger being expressed nationwide bear out what we already know: that we are compelled to lend our voices and our support in calling out and working against such racism, both overt and structural. We recognize the many individuals in our Illinois community college system who battle against this racism daily, and especially those who regularly face it in real and personal ways, often unnoticed or unbeknownst to many of us. Like you, we stand committed to rooting out this systemic racism in any way we can and to making real policy changes to that effect.

During this time, it is important to support our friends, colleagues, students, and co-workers who are suffering most from this racism and its effects. We endorse the ICCTA's message of lifting up communities of color and those who are underrepresented. We encourage you to follow the request of our good friend and ICCTA Executive Director Jim Reed asking that you submit your #CCLiftUp stories to Kim Villanueva at [iccta@communitycolleges.org](mailto:iccta@communitycolleges.org), who will share them with the ICCTA community—the community college community.

As a system, if we work together, we can affect change in our corner of the world. We can examine the barriers that exist now in our own system and systematically work to remove them. We can urge and incentivize culturally responsive teaching. We can work together to create spaces to celebrate our differences. We can create and strengthen pipelines for persons of color into and through education and do so more explicitly and more directly. Community colleges already offer an environment of hope and inclusiveness, where any student, no matter his or her background, is welcome to come and learn. This is a strength we can build upon.

We stand with all of our Illinois citizens no matter their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability status, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Now, more than ever, we must commit to taking on these issues within our own system, more directly and more concretely.

Lazaro Lopez  
Chair

Brian Durham  
Executive Director