

From: [Kimberly A. Barrett](#)
Subject: Our Continued Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Date: Friday, May 29, 2020 7:09:52 AM

Dear Lawrentians,

As I write this I am grieving. Not for the loss of normalcy brought on by efforts to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in our lives, but rather our desire to rush back to a normal that for many is just not safe and never has been. The pandemic has put in stark relief the longstanding, deadly inequities in our society. As you are all aware, we are experiencing significantly higher death rates for people of color, including those from tribal nations, who contracted the disease, the consequence of centuries of economic and health care-related injustice.

Simultaneously, the type of violence we have come to see as all too normal is also plaguing us. The nation recently watched in horror as video was released of a young African American man, Ahmaud Arbery, being shot to death by white men while jogging. Although any murder is tragic, even more disturbing in this case was the fact that the prosecutors who were initially made aware of the incident did not think it was worth pursuing. Soon after this incident came news of the police-involved deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. These are just a few examples of how the need to make our society more just and inclusive continues and is perhaps even more urgent at times like these.

I share this with you to underscore that Lawrence University continues its commitment to creating a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse community, especially during these turbulent times.

We must be able to balance an immediate focus on the logistics of change required by the pandemic with the ongoing work of creating a more inclusive Lawrence and, by extension, world. I continue to be hopeful, even in my grief, that the deaths of Mr. Arbery, Ms. Taylor and Mr. Floyd, along with the many who have succumb to COVID-19, will serve as a catalyst for us to come together with renewed resolve to create a new normal in which we can all thrive, free from the imminent threat of violence based on our identity.

If you are also grieving and need support, please don't hesitate to utilize the campus resources available to all members of our community, regardless of where you may live at this moment. These include staff in the [Diversity and Intercultural Center](#), the [Office Spiritual and Religious Life](#), [Counseling Services](#), and the [Employee Assistance Program](#). Please reach out to me as well.

We are here for you, even at a distance.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Barrett
Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion, Lawrence University

Sent from my iPad