

Carleton

3 June 2020

Dear Carleton Biology Students,

As we reach the end of the term, we want to acknowledge that we do so at a time of unprecedented difficulty in our society. We also want to reach out to you in support. With the backdrop of a global pandemic - which has had its own disproportionate impact on communities of color and Indigenous communities - the racist, oppressive, and hateful events of this week are only the most recent examples of actions and inadequate responses that are far, far too common. For black students, our hearts break knowing that the killing of George Floyd is yet another reminder of the systemic racism and real threats that exist for you from people and institutions meant to protect all of us.

In our Biology courses, we strive to foster a learning community that prioritizes respect, mutual support, kindness, and the recognition of the wide range of gifts and perspectives that each of us brings to the table. We are inspired by our students' commitment to this work, and at the same time recognize that there is much yet to be done to bring justice and equity to our community and beyond. We are dedicated to engaging in that work ourselves, and to supporting students in standing up for justice, now and in the future. As biologists, we are also committed to doing our part to address issues that affect the biology and STEM community specifically, both inside and outside of the classroom. This includes, among many other things, addressing inequalities in representation in our department, in the broader STEM community, and in the healthcare system, as well as an honest reckoning of the intersection between genetics, genomics, identity, health, and social constructions of race. For those of you involved in protesting, supporting protesters and clean-up efforts, or donating your time and money, thank you. We recognize that each of us is engaging with these events in our different ways, and we encourage you to continue reaching out to us, to each other, and to your communities to give and/or receive support during this time.

We expect that focusing on your classes right now may be extremely difficult for some of you. If this is the case, please reach out to any one of us to discuss how best to support you. If you would like to talk about other issues inside or outside of biology, we welcome these conversations.

Sincerely,

Carleton Biology Department Faculty and Staff

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