



IBHE Statement on Racism and Equity

June 8, 2020

We condemn racism and the racial inequality that has led to the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others. We condemn the institutional racism that leaves the Black community with less access to health care, fresh food, safe streets, and yes, access to high-quality education.

We are leaders in a higher education system that offers opportunity for individuals and society. Opportunity for growth and transformation. Opportunity for inquiry, questioning, discussion, understanding, and insight. Opportunity to build community and strengthen bonds. Opportunity to secure and share an economic future.

Higher education works by asking hard questions to challenge our thinking, to help us grow and change.

The times call on us now to ask hard questions of ourselves. Are we doing everything we can to ensure Black students can access the opportunities that higher education provides? Are we listening when our colleagues and students of color tell us their experiences? Are we making every decision with a focus on achieving equity? Have we looked at our cumulative decisions over time and do we see equitable results?

These are uncomfortable questions, but this is not a time to be comfortable. There are wide gaps between Blacks and Whites in college enrollment, retention, and graduation across the state and within institutions. Across the state a smaller percentage of Black students have a college degree than White students. And these patterns have been long-standing.

To change this historical inequity, we need to listen, reflect, engage in dialogue, look at data, and act based on what we learn. We have to break down barriers that have hindered Black students' access to college and their success.

We believe in the power of higher education transform individuals and societies. Let's use that power to end the racial injustices that have endured far too long.