May 31, 2020

African American Student Services stands against all Anti-Black violence inflicted on our community. AASS is appalled by the actions of the officer who killed Mr. George Floyd and the other officers who watched this violence take place. Let us not forget that we are also mourning the lives of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Sean Reed, Tony McDade, and so many others who we must ensure do not just become a hashtag in the moment.

We are currently facing the COVID-19 pandemic which has disproportionately affected our community. But we are also in the full swing of another pandemic that continues to sweep through our country - the growing threats brought upon us by white nationalism and white supremacy.

As marches and protests continue to occur across the country, we recognize that some of you may be participating or considering participating in the near future. We want to encourage that if you are choosing to go out and participate in protests/marches, that you are staying safe, know your rights, allow others to know your location (and if possible - remain in groups), and remain vigilant. On that same note, we also want to remind you that large gatherings have the potential to be super spreaders for the virus, so again – whatever you choose to do we want you to take precaution and be safe.

We understand that there is intersectionality within our Black student community and not all of you may currently be residing here in Albuquerque, NM at the moment. We are aware that you all are experiencing this current trauma in different ways. For that reason, we sent out a survey last Friday to check in on you and see what else we can do to support students as you process during this time. Please consider filling out the survey if you have not done so. Our mission in African American Student Services is to cultivate Black Excellence through academic discourse, leadership development, holistic health/wellness practices and community engagement. We want to empower each of you to continue to stand against white supremacy and collectively work to dismantle these systems of oppression, especially through education and service to our community.

Please don’t forget that making change in our community does not have to be an either/or option and that it can include multiple ways to get involved. We are listing a few of these ways you can do so. This list includes but is not limited to:

1. Filling out your Census
2. Ensuring you are registered to vote
3. Consider registering for an Africana Studies course this summer or fall. Consider adding Africana Studies as a major or minor to your academic course of study
4. Stay at home to protect yourself and/or family or Go out and safely participate in marches/protests
5. Do your own research and ask questions
6. Use social media to share information and engage in conversations or consider taking a break from social media
7. Check in on your family and friends
8. Support Black Owned Businesses
9. Seek out Counseling Services or Case Management Resources at UNM SHAC
10. Participate in African American Student Services events

Again, this list is not comprehensive and we encourage you to share with us ways that you are getting involved that might not be listed above.

Remember that we are here for you all and we stand with you during this time as we collectively denounce police brutality and anti-black violence. Again, if you have not participated in the survey - please strongly consider doing so. This helps us better connect with each of you during this time. Survey Link: https://esurvey.unm.edu/opinion/s?s=122454

With Love,

Brandi Stone
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UNM African American Student Services