



June 19, 2020

Letter to the ACCESS Family and our Community:

Over the past month, many local and national businesses and non-profits have released statements in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others. The ACCESS College Foundation joins these organizations in standing in solidarity against racism and social injustice.

Systemic racism exists in every part of our country creating disparities in many “success indicators” including wealth, the criminal justice system, employment, housing, health care, politics and education. Census statistics support the fact that higher educational levels lead to increased wealth, employment opportunities, home ownership, access to health care and increased community volunteerism. Therefore, expanding educational opportunities is where the ACCESS College Foundation wants to continue doing our part.

Services we provide to our students and our community are more critical than ever. We acknowledge that we have work to do and here are a few of the action steps we will more fully incorporate into our culture:

- We will continue to build an environment of cultural competence for our staff and students so we all make a difference in creating a just society.
- We will commit to having open dialogue about the experiences of our students and find ways to better support them through their journey.
- We will continue to ensure that our ACCESS team is reflective of our community.
- We will continue to increase the diversity of our Board of Directors to ensure that it is also reflective of the community we serve.
- We will utilize our Alumni Committee of current and former ACCESS Scholars to help us drive our program services and culture.

All lives can't matter until black lives do. With ACCESS, black lives have mattered every day since our inception in 1988. We feel compelled to build on our commitment to all members of our community. We stand together in calling for an end to racial injustice and inequities and will work even harder for a more equitable, inclusive, and peaceful future. In the process of fulfilling our mission, the ACCESS College Foundation will listen, learn, and lock arms with our staff, board, and community to stand against injustice of all types and to improve the futures of our students and this community for all generations to come.

With my sincere love for all,

Bonnie B. Sutton
President and CEO