June 4, 2020

To the JMU Community,

The Fraternity & Sorority Life community at James Madison University is rooted in our collective values of education, leadership, service, brotherhood & sisterhood, and citizenship and social responsibility. It is in reflection of our shared values and commitment to building a legacy for future generations of Fraternal Members that we stand firmly in support of our black and brown Brothers and Sisters, and the Black Lives Matters movement, who are organizing and protesting against inequality, oppression, and injustice. We see you, we hear you, and we support you. Your voices matter.

As we grapple with the senseless killing of George Floyd, we must acknowledge the racist history of fraternities and sororities. Contrary to the values we now espouse, our founders marginalized and oppressed people of color by excluding them from our organizations and institutions of higher learning. While the fraternal movement has come a long way from those origins, we know there is still more work to do before we can claim to have a diverse and inclusive community free from racism. We commit to listening, learning, and advocating against systems of oppression and injustice that continue to hurt people of color within and outside of our community.

To get started we have committed to the following:

Education | Awareness: The objective is to build racial equity awareness and analytical capacity across our community, fostering an understanding of key concepts, such as institutional and systemic racism, implicit bias, racial equity and multiracial systemic solutions. Shared knowledge and conceptual clarity helps normalize explicit and constructive conversations about race.

Leadership | Capacity Building: The objective is to equip members, leaders, staff and partners with the skills, tools, strategies, resources and relationships to be effective leaders and advocates in the fight for racial justice in education.

Service | Action: The objective is to engage and activate members, leaders and stakeholders in on the-ground efforts to combat institutional racism and advance racial justice. Some actions are external — organizing to advance changes in our schools and communities — while others are internal — implementing equitable practices that change the association’s work.


In the coming days, weeks and months our actions will speak louder than our words ever can. The work of allyship is a continuous process and we will need to reflect and work as both individuals and organizations to be actively anti-racist. To that end, we are creating a section on our website with resources and learning for Members of our community to engage with. We will check in with our black and brown Brothers and Sisters and make space for them to come together as they feel necessary. As we begin returning to campus, we will
continue to build relationships and learn from our partners in the Center for Multicultural Student Services and the Intercultural Greek Council.

Sisterhood and Brotherhood allows us to come together and find a sense of belonging; a belonging and Membership that we keep for life. Our belonging also gives us space to be vulnerable, ask hard questions and push back against our own organizations shortcomings without fear of losing that belonging. We must take full advantage of the privilege we have as Members of such organizations and push ourselves to be better as individuals and as groups.

Fraternally Yours,

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Alexandra K. Swinimer
Assistant Director
Fraternity & Sorority Life

[Signature]

David J. Chew
Coordinator | Interfraternity Council
Fraternity & Sorority Life

[Signature]

Alexandra Johnston
Coordinator | Panhellenic Council
Fraternity & Sorority Life

[Signature]

Nicholas V. Donato
President
Interfraternity Council

[Signature]

Elizabeth L. Rice
President
Panhellenic Council