



June 11, 2020

A Statement from the Acadia University Department of Politics

The recent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Regis Korchinski-Paquet, and Chantel Moore remind us once more that principles of equality and justice do not correspond to the lived reality of Black Americans and Black and Indigenous peoples in Canada. The protests against police brutality, now global in scope, demonstrate the reach of anti-Black racism as well as the difficult work that is required in the struggle to make real the promises of freedom, equality, and justice for historically marginalized communities.

While the immediate cause of the current protests is police brutality, we know all too well that anti-Black racism exists within the Academy—in classrooms, student residences, meetings, and conferences. It was a year ago, in June 2019, that Shelby McPhee, a master's student in our department, was subject to racial profiling and harassment on the part of another conference attendee at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Canada's largest academic gathering.

The Department of Politics condemns anti-Black racism and is committed to strengthening anti-racist practices in our curriculum, pedagogies, research activities, spaces of collegial governance, and campus and local community relationships. In our roles as professors, we are recommitting to creating classroom spaces where every student can engage and learn as an equal and respected member of the class. To our Black and Indigenous students and all students of colour: we are here to support you through your academic journey. We are here to listen and learn from you and your experiences. We believe that unlearning biases and questioning pre-existing beliefs represent an important part of a liberal arts education and that this work is our responsibility as well. Our commitment to anti-racist practice also means continually updating our courses so that what is taught and what is read reflects our commitment to amplify Black, Brown, Indigenous and non-Western scholarship and voices.

The solutions to the world's great problems are often found *through* political engagement in all its myriad forms. To the students engaging in the recent protests: your work is important, we support you, and we hope you are safe.