



Dear Carolina family,

Amidst a global public health crisis, we are all reminded of yet another illness that has affected this country for generations and, through its insidious nature, continues to do so today: racism. It is etched into the fabric of this nation and has manifested itself in many forms throughout history including, but not limited to, violence, deeply-rooted discrimination, police brutality, mass incarceration, and systematic oppression. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these systematic and institutionalized forms of oppression have been further exposed and exacerbated with the disproportionate toll that the coronavirus has had on communities of color, and especially black communities.

Most recently, we recognize and mourn the death of George Floyd by the hands of the Minneapolis police department. We also mourn the loss of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Monika Diamond, Sean Reed, Nina Pop, Tony McDade, and all individuals, known *and* unknown, who have lost their lives to prejudice, gender-based violence, systemic bigotry, and white supremacist ideology.

We, the Executive Board of the Residence Hall Association, stand in solidarity with the families of these victims, protesters around the country, and all those in pursuit of justice, not just for the lives that have been lost over generations, but for the lives of those who continue to face discrimination every day. In addition to uplifting and recognizing the importance of the lives of black men, we would like to recognize black women, black trans women and men, as well as other black members of the LGBTQ+ community. These individuals are not only critical figures in the fight for social justice, but often victims of violence who rarely receive the attention and justice they deserve.

To the past, present, and future black students in our community – we see you. We hear you. You are valued and your life matters. *Every black life matters.*

RHA is committed to ensuring that everyone in our community, not only *feels* supported but is *actively* supported through intentional programming, recognition, and advocacy. We stand in solidarity with our campus partners in advocating for the mental health of black students; prioritizing your mental health is crucial. Remember to take care of yourselves. To all students in need, we encourage you to explore the mental health resources provided through Student Wellness at UNC, Counseling and Psychological Services, and nationally recognized resources whose links can be found at the end of this statement.

Advocacy is not just a pillar of our organization. It is a philosophy our student leaders live by. The students at this university represent identities that span cultures from around the world, and in times of outrage, fear, hurt, and deep pain, it is our responsibility to stand up for each other, educate ourselves, offer support, and condemn bigotry in all its forms. RHA and Carolina as a whole are stronger together as a community- unified in the pursuit of **justice, equity, and inclusion**.

We would like to commend the advocacy and leadership of campus leaders and organizations across the University including the Black Student Movement (BSM), Black Congress, the Caribbean Students Association (CSA), the Organization for African Students' Interests in Solidarity (OASIS), the UNC Executive Branch, and the Carolina Union Activities Board (CUAB). We encourage you all to read their statements and the many others of organization leaders across campus. We would especially like to

thank Black Congress, the Campus Y, and the UNC Executive Branch for compiling a list of informative resources for all students seeking to support communities and protesters around the country through donations, petitions, and financial support. Please visit the Carolina Union website link at the end of this statement for a comprehensive list.

In closing, our lives and destinies are intertwined. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said:

“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

The responsibility falls on all of us to do our part in dismantling systems of injustice and oppression. We encourage you to do your part and should you choose to engage in peaceful protests around the country, we advise you to wear face coverings and be cognizant of your surroundings. Be empowered and stay safe.

In Solidarity,

Residence Hall Association, 2020-2021 Executive Board

### **Mental Health Resources:**

Student Wellness

<https://studentwellness.unc.edu/>

Counseling & Psychological Services

<https://caps.unc.edu/>

National Institute of Mental Health Resource:

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/index.shtml>

National Alliance on Mental Health Resource Guide

<https://www.nami.org/Support-Education/NAMI-HelpLine/COVID-19-Information-and-Resources/COVID-19-Resource-and-Information-Guide>

Coronavirus Crisis Text Line:

[https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/get-help-coronavirus/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjPTJ2q7j6QIVFQIICR0dYwDgEAAYASAAEgJ5d\\_D\\_BwE#for-healthcare-workers-6](https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/get-help-coronavirus/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIjPTJ2q7j6QIVFQIICR0dYwDgEAAYASAAEgJ5d_D_BwE#for-healthcare-workers-6)

### **Additional Resources for Donations, Petitions, and Financial Support:**

Summarized Resources from the Chair of the Carolina Union Board of Directors:

<https://carolinaunion.unc.edu/news-and-events/news/message-our-executive-director-unc-community>

UNC Office for Diversity & Inclusion

<https://diversity.unc.edu/yourvoicematters/>