

All weekend, we have struggled to find adequate words with which to respond to what is going on in our country right now. At a time when Black and other minority communities are suffering from the disproportionate effects of Covid and from police and vigilante violence, on top of decades and centuries of pervasive and systemic racism, words fail us.

However, inadequate as they may be, we'd like to share three thoughts.

First, we are men who are not members of the groups who've been targeted by racism and police violence. Neither of us can ever truly know what our colleagues who come from the communities that are most directly affected are experiencing. But our hearts are with you. We are committed to making the department a supportive and respectful place for everyone; if there is anything we can do to come closer to that goal, please talk with us. We are here to listen and to learn.

Second, one of the most important things we can do is to continue to prioritize efforts to make the department a diverse and inclusive community. We have made progress, but there is more we can do. As we hire and recruit faculty and staff in the coming years, this will be one of our most central goals.

Finally, justice is one of the guiding principles of the work we do in health policy and in medical ethics. We are proud of the exceptional work that so many of you do to promote justice in health; examples include Norma's research on low-paid workers in long-term care, Dom's work on mental health in prisons, Risa's national leadership addressing health disparities, Atheen's research on social determinants of adverse health care outcomes (including how police shootings of unarmed Black men affect Black communities), and Christina's work on nutrition in poor communities (these are just a sample—we apologize to those whose work we have omitted). Research aimed at advancing justice is at the center of the department's mission, and we will do whatever we can to support your efforts to pursue it.

With gratitude and respect for all of you and hopes that the country and our city can come together and that we can help with that process.

Steve & Kevin