



# MILES COLLEGE

DR. BOBBIE KNIGHT  
PRESIDENT

June 2, 2020

Dear Miles College Family,

Miles College has a rich history steeped in civic engagement, peaceful protest and nonviolent demonstrations. One of the hallmarks of this institution is our willingness and ability to confront injustice where we find it. Our students have been on the frontline of both peaceful demonstrations and community organizing. There is no better evidence than noting Miles College's pivotal role as an epicenter of the Civil Rights Movement in Alabama. In recent times, Miles College has led efforts to advocate for voting rights reform – statewide and nationally. As an institution of higher education, we both value and employ the persistent methods of our predecessors to bring about change and social justice. We will continue to build on that legacy.

Today, we find ourselves reliving the horrific injustices that have plagued our nation for far too many years with the murder of Mr. George Floyd at the hands of the very people who are sworn to protect and serve. I was personally horrified by the video circulating of Mr. Floyd's murder. Since watching the video and hearing the pained cries of Mr. Floyd, I have not been able to sleep peacefully. I offer my condolences to his family, and I stand with those who protest the injustices that have fueled the divide between our communities and those who police them. I pray that the demonstrators stay safe and continue to remain focused on eliminating police violence towards people of color.

At the same time, I am disturbed by those who have attempted to hijack a peaceful and purposeful movement – a movement that has drawn global attention and support. I applaud our SGA students who – in Miles College fashion – made their voices heard at the peaceful protest in Kelly Ingram Park Sunday afternoon, and who stepped up to assist businesses with clean-up efforts after Sunday night's destructive acts.

I want you to know that I recognize the challenges you have been experiencing during the past few months dealing with a worldwide pandemic that has disrupted all of our lives. I commend you for your perseverance in the face of adversity, and I challenge you to allow your passion and voice to invoke change and to stand against injustice in true Miles College tradition. As your President, I stand with you.

In this spirit, I believe I owe it to the students, to the alumni and to the community to explore how our historic institution can continue and elevate its storied tradition of civic participation and engagement. With so many issues facing our community and society in general, I am establishing a task force to study and recommend how to advance our efforts around civic involvement and the fight against injustice. We will build on the legacies left to us by Dr. Lucius Pitts, Judge U. W. Clemon, Dr. Autherine Lucy Foster, Dr. Richard Arrington, Jr. and Rev. Frank Dukes. I look forward to reporting back to you regarding our findings.

In solidarity,

President