



Re: CALS: A Call to Action

June 2, 2020

Dear CALS Community,

This past week has been plagued with nationwide protests and unrest after the tragic and senseless deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. For many people, including members of our community, the level of pain, trauma, and hopelessness have become overwhelming. Today and every day we stand together with our Black students, faculty, staff, partners, collaborators, stakeholders, and the entire Black community.

As a global community committed to inclusion and diversity, we reaffirm our conviction that racism has no place in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences – or anywhere.

Being the cornerstone of Virginia Tech's land-grant mission, we are in a unique position to change the world and make it better for the next generation. The CALS Diversity Statement articulates our commitment to ensuring a welcoming, affirming, safe, and accessible climate for all students and employees. We recognize that awareness and the willingness to act with moral courage is essential. However, we must acknowledge that this is not enough. This is the time for action. In the [words](#) of President Sands and Vice-President Pratt-Clarke "we cannot continue to expect incremental change and the goodwill of the majority to solve a multigenerational problem."

We empower every member of our college community to take individual responsibility and (re)commit yourselves to the VT Principles of Community. Let's pledge to an intentional and unwavering effort to see one another as human beings and create learning and work spaces that reflect our fundamental and core values of community, diversity, and excellence. To succeed, all students, staff, and faculty must feel accepted, included, and respected.

Over the next few months, Chevon will be leading the development of a Diversity Implementation Plan in which we will identify specific action steps to address systemic injustice in programs across our missions. We are excited to continue our work as a college community, fully cognizant of individual differences. We are committed to empowering each individual to fulfill his or her potential for academic and professional excellence. Each plays an important role in planning, implementing, and realizing our goals. We can do no less if we hope to strengthen the fabric of our college for a dynamic future.

Thank you!

Alan Grant
Dean

Chevon Thorpe
Director of Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity