



Action Plan: LWTech's Work To End Systemic Racism

Dear Colleagues,

As I stated in my email to the college on May 31, the murder of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, at the hands of a white Minneapolis police officer, has ignited in all of us new level of sadness, frustration, anger, and disappointment in the systemic racism, oppression and violence that people of color, specifically black people, experience in our country every day.

In addition to the alarming number of unarmed black people killed while in police custody, the country has also been saddened and horrified by the systemic racism that plagues our health care system and how that has directly manifested in the disproportionate deaths of black and brown Americans from COVID-19. The common denominator is systemic racism and anti-blackness that runs generations deep in our country. Now is our time to dismantle those systems on our campus, in our community, and in our country.

I want to convey to you that it is an immediate priority for me, and Executive Cabinet, to provide the necessary resources for our college community to do this important and necessary work. I also want to acknowledge that this is a very painful time for our black students and colleagues. Oftentimes, the burden to lead conversations about race, racism, injustice, inclusion, and inequities falls disproportionately on colleagues of color. I do not want to repeat this past practice.

Below are the Action Steps for the college to guide us in the coming months:

Actions Taken to Date:

1. Executive Cabinet members, the Board of Trustees, and I have sent out messages of support and solidarity to the campus. These messages are available online: <https://www.lwtech.edu/news/black-lives-matter/>
2. Over the past week, I have on two separate occasions convened members of executive cabinet Dr. Suzanne Ames, Dr. Ruby Hayden, Leslie Shattuck, Cathy Copeland, and Meena Park, along with Dr. Sharon Raz, Sheila Walton, the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council (EDIC) leadership team Audry Bernal, Cara Henry, and Meisha Wangerin, and members of the Associated Student Government (ASG) leadership team Pablo Bautista, Lulu Corona, Foram Joshi, and Ellienn Tatar, to discuss ways that we as a college community can take action, and how we can best support our black students and colleagues.
3. All social media accounts now have a message in our profile that says, LWTech stands in solidarity with the Black community. We will not and do not condone racist or hateful messages on our social media accounts. We've additionally pinned this to our Facebook page, so the message remains prominent.
4. The Communications and Marketing team created a slider and landing page on the college website, similar to our COVID-19 response page, that publicly communicates LWTech's stance on racism and hate, provides resources to the college and our community, as well as statements from college and ASG leadership, and documents the actions we are taking as a college community to combat systemic racism. This web page will be updated regularly. Additionally, a message of solidarity is currently the first thing anyone sees when navigating to our website.

Short Term Action Steps:

Thank you again to the EDI Council and the Bias Response Team for their invaluable feedback on these actions.

1. Courageous Conversations

On June 19, 2020 from 10am to Noon via Zoom we will host conversations using a technique known as race based caucusing with outside facilitators. All employees are strenuously encouraged to attend. I will attend and participate along with Executive Cabinet.

This method, creates space for black colleagues and colleagues of color to gather separately from white colleagues to provide comfort and support to each other without having to worry about expectations of educating and putting the wants of white colleagues above their own needs.

This also creates space for white colleagues to gather to help one another process national events without doing unintentional harm to colleagues of color and looking to them to teach white colleagues about actions to take.

These will not be one and done conversations, but on-going as long as they are needed.

2. Special COVID-19 Personal Leave

We have extended this leave so it may also be used as mental health and self-care in recognition of the trauma of national events. Requests made by all eligible employees should be considered with significant support from supervisors.

3. Re-Examine Relationship with Kirkland Police Department

Vice President Bruce Riveland will convene a taskforce to re-examine our partnership with Kirkland Police Department. The taskforce will include representation from: EDIC, Campus Public Safety, Students and/or ASG member(s), folks who identify as Black and/or African American, Student Conduct, and High School Programs. In addition to recommendations about the college's relationship with KPD, the taskforce will also recommend the best way to communicate the nature of this relationship to our community.

I will work directly with KPD Chief Harris on implementing the recommendations.

4. Examine Instructional Requirements Related to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Vice President Dr. Suzanne Ames will convene an Instruction taskforce to update global outcomes and consider a mandatory class focused on EDI for all LWTech programs. This will be a faculty driven process.

5. Examine Supports for Formerly Incarcerated Students

Vice President Ruby Hayden will convene a taskforce to examine how the college can better support students previously involved with law enforcement and/or who were formerly incarcerated. The taskforce will minimally contain representation from: EDIC, financial aid, advising, and instruction.

6. Long Term Planning

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council will continue to reflect upon additional action steps the college can take and provide those recommendations to executive cabinet. These long term actions may include items such as:

- a. Planning mandatory In-Service sessions in September using race based caucusing, and time for the community to be together.
- b. Continuing to engage and affect citywide conversations around inclusion and anti-blackness.
- c. Engaging with local high schools to create a welcoming space on LWTech's campus for black and brown students.
- d. Reviewing college policies review with equity lens.
- e. Conduct training about anti-blackness and anti-racism.

Thank you for joining me in this vital work. I look forward to your ideas, concerns, hopes, input, feedback and continued dialogue.