**Striving to Build a Better Future for Our Black Community**

**Message from the Recreational Sports Leadership Team**

Recreational Sports Student Employees,

This past spring included two dates of historical significance, the anniversary of the [Tulsa Race Massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulsa_Race_Massacre) and **Juneteenth**. These events and the recent violence against Black Americans - the shooting deaths of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and Rayshard Brooks - provide horrific reminders of the systemic racism that permeates our society.

Student Affairs leaders, Dan Larson (Vice Provost for Student Affairs), Kevin Dougherty (Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students), Damoni Wright (Associate Vice Provost for Student Affairs, Engagement and Inclusion) recently sent a message to Rec Sports and other departments within the Division of Student Affairs. An excerpt from their message is quoted below:

“As we watch, listen and read about the death of George Floyd at the hands of police, we are struck by the use of words and phrases like “restore justice,” “sad and tragic” and “fairness.” To restore justice, you must have begun with justice. The continued brutality is not just sad or tragic. It is morally reprehensible. We must recognize nothing will bring fairness when there continues to be protected systemic disparities, hatred and even worse -- disregard for human life that persists among some people for our communities of color, specifically our African-American/Black communities.

What we can offer each other is our solidarity. We can offer our commitment that together we will confront circumstances in our community, where behavior, language and mindsets reinforce and perpetuate harm. We can offer support, an opportunity to talk, discuss and activate. We can offer a time and space to reflect together.

At times such as these, we want you to know: We see you, we value you, and we are here for you.”

As together, we strive to build a better community; Recreational Sports will not be a silent bystander. We are committed to individual growth, shared resources and engaged advocacy. However, we recognize we have much to learn ourselves and are committed to ongoing reflection, education and action.

As a values-driven organization, it is important that we reflect on our values and recognize how social and racial justice are in alignment. A few examples are as follows:

**We care about people by extending respect and building trust:** Part of demonstrating this care is being a strong ally to friends, colleagues and participants.

**We are solution oriented and educators:** We will help our administrative and student staff connect to pathways for more learning with professional development dollars, training and action.
As part of this commitment to learning, Recreational Sports administrative staff are immediately committed to the following:

- Engaging with social justice professional development opportunities. All Recreational Sports administrative staff are required to complete:
  - *Speaking of Transgender: Everybody Changes* training. This training is about respecting and advocating for gender diversity in changing rooms.
  - Either the Social Justice Education Initiative for Faculty and Staff or the Search Advocacy Training (workshop provides an overview of inclusive employment principles).
- Increasing racial justice resources. Recreational Sports has purchased eight copies of *White Fragility* for administrative staff to check out and will continue to enhance our library of racial justice literature.

Whether you are finding your own voice or pursuing a position for systemic change, we support you and want to provide you with resources where Black thought leaders can be heard.

Join us on the journey to:

- **Learn:** [Partners on campus, amazing voices in our community, books, listen](#)
- **Act:** Use your voice and influence to help create systemic change through public service, communicate with or become an elected official, join organizations and take leadership roles.

Looking for something specific to Recreational Sports? Consider one of the following:

- Attend a Recreational Sports Advisory Board meeting to listen and give feedback to affect policy change. Meetings start fall term and details can be found on the [website](#).
- Sign up to check-out *White Fragility*.
- Talk to administrative staff about situations that make you uncomfortable or submit an anonymous, [online report](#).
- Refer social justice resources to miles.dodge@oregonstate.edu in Rec Sports’ Office of Student Initiatives, for potential integration with On-Ramp career readiness curricula and professional development content.

We recognize this work is long term and we have much more to do. In the meantime, we want to keep the conversation going. Let us know how we can further support your journey towards [Anti-Racism](#) and how we as a department can support our Black community.

Sincerely,

Leadership Team

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