



April 20, 2021

Dear UMB Community;

I, like so many at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), was horrified by the brutal and senseless death of George Floyd last year in Minneapolis. Across the country, people watched the video of Derek Chauvin with his knee planted firmly on Mr. Floyd's neck. I felt a real sense of helplessness as Mr. Floyd suffered. George Floyd's death sparked a wave of cries for justice — cries that continue. The trial of Derek Chauvin, the officer being tried for Mr. Floyd's death, will end soon. I understand the significance of this moment for the UMB community and the nation.

As an institution actively working on becoming anti-racist and committed to our core values including diversity, civility, and leadership, it is incumbent upon the UMB community to name injustices and inequalities and support those who may be affected by the trial's outcome. I encourage our community to respond with care, respect, understanding, and civility regardless of the outcome of the trial.

Mr. Floyd's death led to tributes and protests in all 50 states and in countries across the world, an increased public focus on racial and social injustice, increased activism, and new legislation at the local, state, and federal level. Events over the last year were the impetus behind the expansion of a social movement demanding accountability, equity, and the reevaluation of inequitable systems in this country — including policing and the judicial system.

Maryland lawmakers passed the [\*Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021\*](#) that takes action to address police violence such as prohibiting a police officer from preventing a citizen from recording, limiting the use of force, and requiring each county to have a police accountability board. The legislature intends that these steps will help build trust and accountability, and I hope that this occurs. However, we know that there is much more to be done — especially as we continue to see even more examples of inhumanity, injustice, and death.

I commit to working toward positive change and addressing oppression here in Baltimore and at UMB. As a community, we must redouble our efforts to acknowledge and end the structural racism that is taking the lives of our fellow citizens. I ask that you listen to each other in any conversations about the trial and

systemic racism with the intention of deep understanding. We must have these necessary conversations and need to listen actively to each other, without judgment, while seeking to learn from one another. But I also understand that students, faculty, and staff may be feeling a range of emotions related to this trial and ongoing events that may sometimes be hard to articulate. Please be kind to one another.

UMB also acknowledges the *additional trauma* inflicted on the Black members of our community in seeing racial discrimination. Resources such as the *Toolkit for Managing Symptoms of Witnessing Racial Trauma*, the *Student Counseling Center*, and the *Employee Assistance Program* are available to members of the UMB community. I hope that you access these resources as needed to take care of your health and well-being.

To be true to our mission, UMB must address issues of structural racism and inequality directly through educational programs, our community engagement work, and our academic pursuits. I am thankful to all who share experiences, resources, suggestions, frustrations, and ideas for how we can face and defeat this pandemic of injustice. This work must be a priority for every member of the UMB family — I know it is for me.

Sincerely,

**Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**  
*President*

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This note was authorized for distribution to the University of Maryland, Baltimore community by the Office of the President.

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