



University Student Government Association

USGA Statement of Solidarity and Call to Action

Dear UMB Community,

In light of recent action advocating for racial equality, the University Student Government Association (USGA) wanted to affirm our commitment to the actions that it will take to end the long-standing racism and prejudice in our society. As student leaders of the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), we are dedicated to the proposition that everyone is created equal and will strive to support all who learn and work at this University.

Over the recent years, we have witnessed appalling instances of violence, hate and racism against members of the Black community. Baltimore, Maryland has not been left unscathed. In 2015, the tragic events surrounding the death of Freddie Gray, resident of our own city of Baltimore, ignited feelings of grief, anger, and fear across the nation. People stood together to protest the systemic racism and discrimination that had plagued our nation for too long. Despite these demands for change, it is shameful that violent acts of racism and prejudice have continued to be left unchecked in our nation.

These are painful and difficult times for everyone who believes in and strives toward equality and justice. As a major public University, UMB not only serves a diverse campus, but also has a responsibility to the Black community, an integral part of the city of Baltimore. While overt physical violence has not taken place here at UMB, acts of mental and emotional oppression are an everyday reality for those living in the communities neighboring our University. Today, we stand together and demand accountability for the recent deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, and the countless other victims of violence, and condemn the institutionalized racism, discrimination, and hate that have enabled these injustices to continue. We stand in solidarity with our Black students, staff, faculty, and community members, and all those who fight back against racism, police brutality, and inequality.

USGA is committed to fostering an environment that ensures inclusivity, safety and equality for all, and this can not be accomplished unless the long-standing institutionalized racism and intolerance is addressed and changed. We know that we **must do more** when it comes to these injustices that have destroyed the fabric of our society. Over the following months, we will use our resources and platform to advocate and amplify the voices of our students and of the community, and work with UMB Administration (including the Faculty Staff and Senate Staff) to institute change and progress. As future leaders within the community, we also have to **hold ourselves accountable** and make our work and study spaces a safe and equitable place for all students. We call on our students to **act as an ally**, and speak against acts of microaggression that are an all too common part of the experience of students of color. We are committed to bringing about collective change within our school, our community, our neighborhood and hopefully our nation.

We recognize that the words in this statement alone are not enough to make a tangible, systemic change. Over the next few weeks, we will be releasing a comprehensive **call to action** and list of **future initiatives** we will be spearheading in the USGA. We are also including a **[list of resources](#)** and ways to stay involved, that will be updated regularly. Please **[reach out to USGA](#)** if you have any questions, concerns, or needs - we are here to help. We welcome your ideas on what you would like to see USGA do to provide further support.

Thank you.

(On behalf of USGA)

Sincerely,

Nivedita "Niv" Hegdekar

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If you have an issue that you would like to be addressed by the USGA, [contact us here](#)!

The University of Maryland, Baltimore is the founding campus of the University System of Maryland.
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