

## A Statement From the Big XII Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education

September 25, 2020

The Big XII Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education acknowledges the pain, hurt, confusion, and hopelessness many people have been feeling following the ruling in the Breonna Taylor case. This past Wednesday was a day filled with emotion - sorrow, anger, fear, frustration, and grief. Today those may still exist. Unfortunately, we recognize these feelings have become all too familiar, particularly given the multitude of recent occurrences of social injustice, intolerance, and hatred across our nation.

We encourage you to take time to validate your feelings, and please know that you are loved, you matter, and you have a host of faculty, staff, and students on your campuses who care about you. Know also that whatever may come, the work for equity, inclusion, and justice will continue. We will continue to be at the forefront of our institutions' efforts, and you remain in our thoughts, and serve as motivation, and the inspiration of our work every day. We hope you are protecting your minds and spirits. Emotional and physical exhaustion from racial battle fatigue is real. You don't have to be Black or a woman to feel these emotions - they can be felt by all. The intersection of who we are as campus communities become ever more evident when we empathize with each other.

Know that we continue working while you take a moment to breathe deeply, recenter your minds and spirits, and focus on the task at hand to complete your journey on campus and beyond. As administrative leaders at our respective institutions, we are passionate about past, present, and future issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our roles across Big XII campuses position us to continue facilitating critical dialogues and communications among key stakeholders. Our unified voice, infused with an unprecedented resolve, is working together to better cultivate and strengthen our respective efforts to foster a genuine and authentic sense of belonging and inclusion across every Big XII institution.

We believe our institutions can individually and collectively shine as beacons of hope and what is possible in this set of circumstances that will prepare us all for a better and brighter future!

Yours in service,

Carol A. Sumner, Ed.D., Texas Tech University  
Meshea L. Poore, J.D., West Virginia University  
Bryan L. Samuel, Ph.D., Kansas State University  
Reginald Chhen Stewart, Ph.D., Iowa State University  
Jennifer Ng, Ph.D., University of Kansas  
Darren D. Kelly, Ph.D., The University of Texas at Austin  
Malcolm B. Foley, M. Div., Baylor University  
Jason F. Kirksey, Ph.D., Oklahoma State University  
Darron Turner, Ed.D., Texas Christian University  
Belinda Hyppolite, Ed.D., University of Oklahoma