

Letter from **Dianna Carrizales-Engelmann, PhD** , Assistant Dean for Administration, Director of Equity and Inclusion, College of Education to COE students, June 4, 2020

Dear COE Students,

I wanted to add my voice to the general outcry that has shaken our community and our nation these past many days. Like so many of you for the past 10 days I have been emotionally raw. Exhausted. Angry. Struggling to find the words when so many have already been spoken and so few have helped. No matter how compassionate or articulate the words, no matter how swift or delayed the justice, our communities are still in pain, and our brothers and sisters are still gone. Something is still wrong. I had hoped to send a message on behalf of the college, but I found it hard to strike the right tone in this moment as college administrator and woman of color. So I share these remarks on my own behalf.

We are in an educational setting in which we are taught to think. We are taught how to think, what to think, what to think about what others thought, and so on. We problem solve, we grow old thoughts into new ones via research. We bring thoughts to life by development. We put thoughts into action via practice. But when things like the murder of George Floyd land in our laps, thoughts can take a back seat. Because when this happens, we don't think, we feel.

This message is about those feelings. In this institutional setting where it often seems that feelings must take a back seat to thought, it is alright for us to feel. All the feelings from all the murders of Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others; the murder and senseless losses related to the criminalization of Black skin that we know about, the ones we don't know, the ones that occurred before our time, the ones that didn't make the national news. All the feelings from the injustices big and small that cut daily and happen slowly before our eyes, the commonplace injustices that provide the perfect context for a murder to appear... casual?

Why do I encourage you to feel? Because the feeling of one person is a tool, but the feelings experienced simultaneously by an entire community is a force.

In my sense of loss and failure, I have a hope that whatever action or momentum we each take away from this moment, whether in our professional roles or in our personal lives, will be powered by that force.

But specifically, I have a hope for you. Maybe your generation's placement in this moment as students practicing new ways of thinking, maybe this puts you at an important intersection of combining structured thinking with the power of raw and impassioned emotion. Maybe your generation's recent and historical misfortunes can be what fuels your specific legacy from this period of time. I am so sorry that there is still so much work ahead for you. But if you can be the generation that continues to master that crucial mix of thought, and emotion, and compassion, perhaps yours may be the generation that finally heals the nation.

In full transparency this is no easy feat, conversations and exchanges I have had this week with the SOURCE group and others have been dominated by our feelings. I do hope you have been having those conversations and continue to have them when and wherever they come up. Because thinking about your feelings is a good place to start.

There are many other words that I have shared with SOURCE students and others as we process and attempt to heal that I considered sharing with you today, but I know that at a time like this, words can appear many. You are looking for more.

With you.

Dianna

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