



**Be Bold. Shape the Future.
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Criminal Justice**

NMSU Department of Criminal Justice Statement of Solidarity

The NMSU Department of Criminal Justice stands in solidarity with nationwide peaceful protests calling for racial justice. The recent deaths of George Floyd, Eric Garner, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice and countless others represent ongoing systemic racism in this country. These deaths add to our nation's long history of systematic killings.

In the United States there has been an expansion of policing over the last fifty years that has resulted in unprecedented mass incarceration, militarization of police, and a prison industrial complex. Policing has been used as solutions to economic, social, political, and even health problems. Furthermore, increased immigration law enforcement in our cities has also been used as a solution for a broken immigration system. What is going on right now in the U.S. is more than just about law enforcement. It is about deep rooted structural and systemic inequalities that have been created and reinforced in all social institutions including higher education.

As a Department of Criminal Justice in a land-grant, Minority Serving and Hispanic Serving Institution where 57.8% of students identify as Hispanic / Latino, 2.4% identify as Black / African American, 2% identify as American Indian / Alaskan Native and 1.6% identify as Asian, we must reflect on how we have been complicit, as a Department and University, in contributing to systemic and structural racism. Furthermore, we call on all our colleagues across the University in all Departments to collaborate with our Department and begin real dialogue and efforts with the goal and purpose to end systems with racist, colonialist, and dehumanizing origins.

For these reasons we stand in solidarity with New Mexico Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's efforts to usher in a new era of public safety systems with the goal of ending systemic racism and ensuring equitable treatment and opportunities for all people. We stand ready to assist elected officials that wish to prioritize social and economic rights that end gross economic and social inequalities in this country that lead to the problems now being highlighted in cities and towns across the U.S.

To these ends, the Department is fully committed to contributing new ways of being and belonging at NMSU and in service to the communities we serve. The beginning of which is outlined in the action steps our Department will undergo effective immediately:

Action Items:

- 1). Fully support the development of African American Studies to become a program fully funded and implemented immediately in the University
- 2). Fully support establishing a "School for Justice and Social Transformation"
- 3). Fully support establishing an "Institute for Borderlands & Ethnic Studies"
- 4). Critically review CJ curriculum to respond to community outcry and align with what is a rapidly transforming society, in order to continue serving students whose aim is to truly serve communities. This would entail changing the undergraduate curriculum to include:
 - Adding CJ 414 Race Crime and Justice as a required course
 - Adding a Sentencing and Correctional Reform course
 - Adding a Critical Issues in Criminal Justice course

The Department challenges other Programs and Departments to reflect and take a stand of solidarity with individuals and communities that are and have historically been oppressed. We must make the necessary changes in higher education starting with our institution, if we are really willing to contribute to social change. There are infinite possibilities within this moment.