June 2 2020

To our Black colleagues and friends at McMaster,

We write to share our sadness and outrage of the death of George Floyd at the hands of police violence. As Indigenous members of the McMaster community with deep commitments to community-based learning and organizing, we are attuned to the local: our Black colleagues and friends including faculty, staff and students at McMaster. Responses to the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet draw attention to the realities of anti-Black racism in Canada. We stand with you during this time and share in the grief, sadness and rage that is impacting so many.

We know that for centuries settler colonialism has proceeded and continues to be accelerated by the devaluation of Black and Indigenous lives. The criminalization of Black and Indigenous peoples has become normalized as a state-sanctioned imperative and must be called out. The statistics in the U.S. are alarming; members of Black and Indigenous communities are significantly more likely to be killed from police violence (Edwards et al, 2019). Similarly in Canada, Black and Indigenous peoples experience police violence at a disproportionate rate (Marcoux and Nicholson, 2018). We generate power in collective efforts to confront and name these injustices. As such, we stand in strong solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and condemn anti-Black racism in its many forms.

We recognize that protest is resistance – resistance to being killed, devalued and exploited. We support resistance to white supremacy that always has, and does, act to disempower the very people and places it relies upon for its own survival. We are committed to continuing to name anti-Black racism as a function of white supremacy and settler colonialism, to celebrate the nexus of Black-Indigenous lives and resistance, and to build strong ties with Black organizing and advocacy on campus and in the community.

In solidarity,

Vanessa Watts, Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies & Sociology, Six Nations of the Grand River

Dawn Martin-Hill, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies & Anthropology, Six Nations of the Grand River

Chelsea Gabel, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies & Health Aging and Society, Metis (Rivers, Manitoba)

Kaitlin Debicki, Assistant Professor of Indigenous Studies & English and Cultural Studies, Six Nations of the Grand River

Allan Downey, Associate Professor of Indigenous Studies & History, Dakelh (Nak’azdli Whut’en)

Jordan Carrier, Indigenous Student Success Advisor, Hamilton, ON (nêhiyaw)

Carrie McMullin, Program Administrator, Indigenous Studies Program, Six Nations of the Grand River
Brittany Vincze, Counsellor (Student Wellness Centre and Indigenous Student Services), Six Nations of the Grand River

Tracy Bomberry, Outreach & Events Coordinator, Six Nations of the Grand River

E. Victoria Bomberry, Administrative Assistant - McMaster Indigenous Research Institute, Kanien'kehá:ka - Six Nations of the Grand River

Kari Hill, Indigenous Recruitment & Liaison Officer, Six Nations of the Grand River

Adrianne Xavier, Full-time Lecturer, Indigenous Studies, Six Nations of the Grand River

Rick Monture, Associate Professor, Indigenous Studies & English and Cultural Studies, Six Nations of the Grand River

Bonnie Freeman, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Six Nations of the Grand River

Randy Jackson, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work and the Department of Health, Aging and Society, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation

Shylo Elmayan, Director of Indigenous Student Services, Anishinaabe, Hornepayne/Long Lake 58 First Nation

Valerie O’Brien, Research Coordinator, McMaster Indigenous Research Institute, Cree, Weenusk First Nation

Bernice Downey, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing & Dept. Of Psychiatry & Behavioural Neurosciences, Indigenous Health Lead, Faculty of Health Science, A/Director, McMaster Indigenous Research Institute

Indigenous Staff, Indigenous Students Health Sciences (ISHS) Office

Johannah Bird, PhD Candidate, Department of English and Cultural Studies, on behalf of the McMaster Indigenous Graduate Students (MIGS)

Mina Linklater, Indigenous Students & Studies Program Support Assistant & 2020 Welcome Week Planner

Sage Hartmann, Katrina Hartmann and Emily Howse-Hackl, on behalf of the Cooperative of Indigenous Studies Students and Alumni Executives 2020-2021 (CISSA)

Maggie Powless-Lynes & Rhea Murti, co-chairs of the McMaster Indigenous Health Movement, 2020-2021
