



June 2, 2020

Dear UA Little Rock Community:

In September 1957, nine Black students enrolled at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Met with violent protests and vicious racist remarks, these nine students led the march to end segregation of public schooling systems in America. On their first day of class, Governor Orval Faubus utilized the Arkansas National Guard to block their entry, yet equality and justice prevailed. Under the direction of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, federal troops were sent to Central High School to escort the Little Rock Nine into the school. This was just 63 years ago.

UA Little Rock is approximately 3 miles away from where the heroic actions of nine brave students ultimately changed our future for the better. Yet, today we find ourselves still advocating for the basic human rights of Black Americans in a system that has far too often failed to protect them. These demonstrations were sparked by the murder of George Floyd-- though this incident is only one out of hundreds of instances of police brutality against Black citizens in recent memory.

Described as being the most diverse university in Arkansas, UA Little Rock has a moral obligation to speak out against racism in our community. We pride ourselves on inclusion, and make extraordinary efforts to ensure that each student, no matter their race, ethnicity, or background, has an opportunity to excel. Yes, there is always room for improvement, and the SGA knows and acknowledges that. Thus, it is extremely important that we use our voices to make a positive change in society.

To our Black students: we hurt with you, and we see now more than ever that change must occur in our country.

To the entire student body: we encourage you to participate in meaningful dialogue that addresses how we move forward.

Continued



We, as a society, simply cannot return to our "normal" past, because our past empowered violence and heinous attacks against the very foundations of our democracy and its citizens. We must speak out against racism and hold each other accountable.

In doing so, we will overcome this as a more cohesive, loving, and stronger community.

We encourage you to reach out to our Multicultural Center, Counseling Services, and Diversity Council to establish aspects of inclusion, respect, diversity, and equity as a standard way of living. Above all, think about how words and actions have a deeper meaning than their superficial denotation alone. Your words will always have a lasting impact on those around you.

Respectfully,

Landon DeKay
SGA President 2020-2021