

# Black Lives Matter.

We, as the members of the Residential Education and Housing Department, definitively say that Black Lives Matter. Period. The issues we are facing now in the United States have long existed before the tragic deaths of too many Black men and womxn in 2020, and these commitments listed below are only the beginning of our work.

As President Kathryn Foster and Vice President James Felton stated in the summer of 2020 in their joint Standing Together message, “we cannot continue to ignore this problem. Racism is not just a person of color issue. It is everyone’s issue, which makes it everyone’s responsibility to actively work against it—today and every day.” Collectively, the work of the College-Wide Taskforce on Anti-Racism, Campus Diversity Council, Faculty Senate Anti-Racism Committee, Student Government, and others is being realized through the Black Lives Matter Call to Action and changes to TCNJ’s operations and structure.

Through TCNJ’s Residential Education and Housing Department, we are committed to doing the difficult work necessary to grow and sustain a supportive and constructive community in which everyone can feel safe and valued. In order to grow, our community must practice these perspectives, despite the discomfort. Our work cannot be comfortable if it’s going to be done correctly. Our statement on this discussion is late, which is inexcusable in today’s society. Today, we’re sharing these commitments as we look ahead to the future, and we hope you are ready to work with us and hold us to our commitments.

As a predominantly White institution, we commit to elevating and centering the voices, contributions, and successes of our students, staff, faculty, and friends who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. We are refocusing on directly addressing internal and external actions of racism and hate whether conscious or unconscious, and we will continue our dedication to make our spaces a home for thousands of students each year. We commit to continuous, transparent evaluation of departmental policies to dismantle systems of bias through task forces, external review, and student feedback. For additional information and resources, please go to <https://diversity.tcnj.edu/>.

## A Commitment to Accountability

We commit to regularly discussing and sharing updates and changes on the status of our commitments yearly while creating space to reflect, discuss, and act upon those updates more regularly. We commit to providing avenues for our community to share meaningful feedback for improvement. We commit to dismantling biased assessment practices and challenge data to show the whole picture in order to amplify the voices of students who identify as BIPOC. We commit to providing these updates to our Assistant Vice President and Vice President of Student Affairs to maintain our accountability to the College.



## **A Commitment to Residential Students**

While we commit to the holistic success of all residential students, we commit to centering the experiences of students who identify as BIPOC by amplifying their stories and shifting power, control, and well-being to BIPOC. We commit to promoting the success of these students and honoring their lived experiences through events, intentional conversations, group dialogues, and visual aides. We commit to offering learning and support spaces for residents in physical and online environments. We recognize that BIPOC are disproportionately offered disadvantageous housing options in this country, so we commit to offering a housing plan 365 days of the year to our students, which is to be implemented in Fall 2021. Our residential curriculum, Holistic Opportunities for Meaningful Engagement (H.O.M.E.), stands on the pillars of Responsible Citizenship, Cultural Competence, Identity Development, and Wellness Practice. We commit to regularly evaluating how H.O.M.E. creates inclusive environments for all members of our community.

## **A Commitment to Student Staff**

We commit to developing and supporting student staff with safe and intentional spaces for learning where dialogue related to racial equity, inclusive excellence, and social justice occurs. We commit to actively providing training, resources, and professional supervision to help our student staff navigate the challenges of conflict coaching, restoring communities after bias incidents, and addressing microaggressions. We commit to supporting student staff during and after times of crisis, as these moments can bear too much weight for one person to manage. We commit to updating student staff evaluations to allow for reflection on their work towards meeting our commitments. We commit to reviewing our staff training and end of year reports each semester to ensure that they are in-line and meeting our commitments.

## **A Commitment to Professional Staff**

We commit to providing a learning environment for professional team members through dialogue, partnerships, and inclusive education. We strive to live up to TCNJ's Black Lives Matter Call to Action in all aspects of our work and prepare all of our team members to lead the necessary social change. We commit to providing active and continuous training for all professional staff members. We commit to supporting staff who prioritize their health and wellness. We commit to creating opportunities for additional professional staff feedback solely for reflection on their work towards meeting our commitments.

## **A Commitment to Hiring and Employment**

We commit to the continual improvement of our student and professional staff recruitment, selection, and retention practices in order to properly mirror the population of BIPOC within the state of New Jersey. This includes, but is not limited to, recruiting for more diverse hiring pools on all levels, decreasing bias in marketing and interview processes. This includes, but is not limited to, examining word choice, evaluating messaging, varying advertising/marketing locations, standardizing interviews, and reviewing and adhering to our inclusivity goals. We commit to providing the support necessary to both select and retain the best individuals to represent our Department and College at all levels of our Department.

