

Administration of Justice

Letter of Support for Our Students

Dear Students,

We hope all of you are safe during these turbulent times. As your ADJ faculty, we wanted to send this note out to all of you because, like it or not, you are now a part of history that will be spoken and written about for decades. One day your children will ask you what it was like to live through 2020, much like some of our children asked us about Rodney King and O.J. Simpson, like we asked our parents about the Civil Rights protests, the Vietnam and Korean Wars, and World War II.

By now, all of you have seen the film of George Floyd's killing. We will attempt to address this senseless act because we would certainly address it in class if not for the COVID 19 class closures. As you probably suspect, the use of force (UOF) was inappropriate and violated every UOF policy of modern policing. In our minds, it was also criminal.

Police are generally authorized to use the minimal amount of force necessary to handle a situation. "Force necessary" is determined by what a reasonable and similarly trained officer would have done. Once Floyd was handcuffed and compliant, he was no longer a threat and any UOF after that was inappropriate. It does not matter what Floyd did or did not do prior to that point. The kneeling on his neck by the officer was unnecessary, excessive, and will be addressed and handled in our criminal justice and civil court systems. The failure of his partners to act to stop the excessive force is also a clear violation of policy, and criminal. Once handcuffed, the officers should have rolled Floyd onto his side and sat him up, especially if he was not resisting.

We suspect that most of you are angry after seeing the way this incident was handled and if not, you should be. Some of you are shocked that something like this can happen in 2020. We, too, are extremely angry. So are all the good police officers and others who work within our criminal justice system who work hard every day to make a difference in this evil world. We all took an oath to serve our communities, to safeguard lives and property, to protect the innocent, the weak and the peaceful against violence or disorder. Our oath includes to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality and justice and to behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to our profession. We continue to follow that oath in our educational endeavors to teach and educate the next generation of public servants.

You are our future. The system has failed you in certain areas. We have become complacent. The police brutality displayed during George Floyd's arrest has gone on for decades and we should have eradicated it by now. We have not. Don't do the same. Become part of the solution and not the problem.

There is no career more honorable than public service. Remember that. Those of you with integrity who had planned to become police officers, correctional officers, or enter other careers in public safety should continue with your plans. We always need more good officers who will serve and protect all people, treat people fairly, and be brave enough to speak up against the bad officers who taint the profession. If, however, you harbor racist ideologies or want to get even with certain groups because

somebody stole your lunch money in junior high, take a hard pass. This is not the career for you, we within the profession don't want you, and we will do everything in our power to run you out of this honorable profession if you get in.

If you are interested in affecting social change through education, politics or some other avenue, we need you too! Pursue your studies and training with diligence and passion. You will become the ones who will write the future policies and laws for the rest of us.

Whichever option you choose, please remember that you will need commitment. Commitment to plan and strategize, to work hard even when you're tired, to act with integrity when others will not, and to avoid activities that distract you from your purpose. So, be angry, but don't make any spontaneous life-altering decisions while you're angry. We need you to be the next leaders; we love you! Don't take yourself out of the game by acting up in the streets before you can affect the change in the world we desperately need. Remember, we take an oath and that oath also includes protecting the First Amendment rights of all. If you choose to assemble, demonstrate or protest, do not riot or participate in criminal behavior. If you stay home you will not be judged. If you participate in the cleanup of our communities do so in a dignified and safe manner.

Stay safe everyone. If you need to talk, do not be afraid to reach out to any of your ADJ faculty as we all stand united for your best interests and success.

With respect for all,

/s/ Dr. Sigrid Williams, Norco College

/s/ Dr. Oliver Thompson, Riverside City College

/s/ Dr. Melissa Matuszak, Riverside City College

/s/ Kristy Paine, Associate Professor, Moreno Valley College

/s/ Scott Barnett, Associate Faculty

/s/ Val Graham, Associate Faculty