

From: Official ESU Email

Sent: Monday, February 1, 2021

Subject: A message about Black History Month to the campus community from Interim President Kenneth Long - Monday, February 1, 2021

Warriors,

As the country recognizes and celebrates the contributions of African Americans during Black History Month, I want to share my thoughts with the campus community as the first African American to serve as president in ESU's 127 year history.

Since our last celebration of Black History Month, we have witnessed a period in our country that will be remembered for many generations, for many different reasons: the COVID-19 pandemic will forever change the way we live; the election of the first Black and Asian woman as Vice President of the United States has shattered the glass-ceiling and hopefully awakened the dreams of so many women and girls; and the attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6 will be remembered as one of the most tragic days in our history, alongside September 11, 2001 and December 7, 1941. While each of these moments will be fixed in our minds indefinitely, for me none of them compare to the images we've seen of the suffocation of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. This senseless murder and other killings of Black and Brown people have sparked a cry for social justice, tolerance and racial equality across our country and throughout the globe. The loss of Black and Brown lives are fundamentally why the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement is not only necessary, but essential to our democracy. The core tenants of the BLM movement are rooted in the principle "that all men and women are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This is not a political statement, these are basic human rights in a civil society and a message that resonates in *The Way of a Warrior*.

As we celebrate the achievements of Black people over these next 28 days, I encourage every ESU Warrior – students, faculty and staff – to broaden their personal understanding and stand against social injustices, racism and discrimination. The first step is to become informed and educated on matters of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). A good place to start is with our colleagues and friends who lead ESU's efforts as members of our Diversity and Inclusion Committee. During Black History Month and throughout the year, I ask everyone to consider attending some of the committee's events and workshops and lend your support to those most affected by inequality. Each of you can be an agent of change.

Only with your actions can you begin to see the change we all want to see in our University, in our world and in one another. Join me for ESU's Black History Month keynote address by Dr. H. Bernard Hall, assistant professor of urban teacher education at Drexel University, on February 17 at 6 p.m. as he talks about "We Goin' Ultra Black: Overcoming Internalized Racism and Developing a Positive Cultural Identity" (<https://quantum.esu.edu/insider/esu-announces-black-history-month-keynote-speaker/>). Look for more details to come about a virtual presentation of ESU's Inclusion Poster Project, where you can see – first hand – the artistic expression of ESU students from art + design working with peers in from modern languages, philosophy, and religion to express their views on DEI. And visit the Diversity and Inclusive Excellence webpage (<https://www.esu.edu/diversity/index.cfm>) from time to time to learn more about other campus initiatives so you can be part of the campus discussions and support others who are already making a difference in the way we embrace diversity at ESU.

I remain hopeful and optimistic about our future, knowing that we possess the ability to work together as a campus community to help one another heal, grow and continue to build a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Thank you.

Kenneth Long
Interim President

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