

As the UTC Honors College, we believe that we should lead the charge on campus in creating positive, proactive spaces in which our students and community can learn and grow and change. Moving forward, we commit to stand up for the rights of our students emphatically and continuously.

We acknowledge the systematic injustices against people of color in our country, particularly the Black community. Furthermore, the police violence towards people of color is intolerable and as your community, we stand with you in demanding reform. The very foundations of our nation rest on racist actions, assumptions, and convictions. All of that must change. May that change begin with us, both personally and institutionally.

The role of education in that change can be, should be, and will be primary moving forward.

In the UTC Honors College, we as an administration commit to working towards abolishing both racism and injustice through promoting safe spaces for people of color, through our curriculum, through events and education from and for our staff, and by listening to our students, like yourself, as you share about how we can best improve in this area. In addition, the more we learn – and particularly, the more *I* can learn – about the day-to-day lives of our students of color, the better we and I can guide our College overall.

Starting on Tuesday, June 16 from noon-1pm and every noon thereafter, I will offer an open Zoom/open door to hear from you, the students of the UTC Honors College. I want to hear from any and all of you, about the actions we can take to move our College and institution forward, to work toward being an anti-racist organization. I want to know how you're doing. And if you'd rather not zoom, but have ideas or thoughts or suggestions, please send them to me in any way you see fit.

In addition, Dr. Jayda Coons, one of our new Honors Humanities faculty members, has launched a virtual book club to start on June 18 with a selection of texts from the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The 1619 Project*. In her words: "To better engage in the historic movement we are witnessing and participating in at present, the Honors College will be holding Virtual Book Club meetings throughout the year focused on racial inequality, Black history, and antiracism." The first of these is June 18th; we will post more information on Canvas about them and hope you'll join us.

For our students of color, we acknowledge your exhaustion and do understand that it is the role of white people to seek education, to make these shifts, and not burden you with pleas for helping us navigate this. However, if you would like to join us and guide

us in this process, we will certainly welcome any insight or guidance that you may want to offer.

We know that we will not get all of this right. We know that we may need to apologize more as we move forward when we do not get this right. However, we commit to moving forward, to pressing through the ambiguity, the discomfort, and our own errors, in order to do what is needed so that we can stand in solidarity (plus action) with people of color in our country. Black lives matter to us in the UTC Honors College and we commit to making the appropriate changes to ensure that our students and our community know that we stand for justice, the end of racism, and for making our world a space where people of color thrive.

With care,
Dr. Linda Frost
Dean of the Honors College