Chair Cowles, Trustees, Chancellor Malhotra,

By the time this written testimony is entered into the minutes, it will have been 23 days since George Floyd was killed by a police officer in Minneapolis.

The members of MSCF were profoundly affected by this tragedy. Many of our members were present during the protests, the marches, the rallies. Many of those same members were present to help clean up areas of Minneapolis and Saint Paul that were damaged during those protests. We donated supplies, food, and money to assist in the recovery from this tragedy. We felt the pain of our communities and heard the cries for justice. MSCF has responded and will continue to respond.

As proud members of the labor movement, we understand racism and racial injustice to be incompatible with our values. We believe it is our duty as a labor union to fight against all forms of racism, while at the same time acknowledge our own imperfect record in this struggle. We know we have much work ahead of us, and we are ready to do this work.

However, we are a labor union of professional educators, and so we also have a clear understanding of the profound responsibilities of our profession in being a part of eliminating racism in our world. It is here that we must also acknowledge the work ahead as educators and members of the higher-education community.

Unfortunately, George Floyd’s name is part of a list that is too long of racism’s victims. Will this time be different than Jamar Clark? Will this time be different than Philando Castile? Sadly, even since George Floyd’s death, even more names have been added to this list.

We have spent a lot of time talking about how we can be a part of ending this ongoing travesty. We were very proud to have attended the Minnesota State Indigenous Men and Men of Color Workgroup webinar, and have been holding listening sessions among our members to further process the conversation started there. Yet of all the things we have discussed and will continue to discuss, one thing is certain: nothing will change until organizations and institutions that have long term and sustainable resources make a commitment to using those resources in every way possible to make change happen.

MSCF is committed to this work for the long haul. As members of the Minnesota State community, we hope the Equity 2030 initiative can evolve further, and go deeper, and become the connecting drive that aligns the tremendous resources of the Minnesota State System to be part of driving generational change in higher education that addresses long standing inequities in our country.