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Statement on Ongoing Black Lives Matter Protests

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Over the course of this summer, communities across the country and the world have rightfully taken to the streets to protest the deep, systemic racial inequities and injustices that plague nearly every facet of society. Unfortunately, we have also witnessed threats to our right to peacefully assemble. We have seen and heard – even on our very campus – incidences of law enforcement employing unnecessary, dangerous, and sometimes illegal tactics to quash free speech and the freedom to assemble, the very rights that need protection now more than ever.

Going forward, it is clear that people will continue to protest the abhorrent practices of police officers, as well as the perpetual dehumanization of Black lives in the U.S. and beyond. This past Sunday's police shooting of Jacob Blake is just another example of how these issues continue to devastate our communities. The Student Government Board supports any and all people who choose to exercise their first amendment right to peacefully assemble. SGB also strongly opposes and condemns any unlawful interference in protest, whether by the University, the City of Pittsburgh, or federal law enforcement.

To our fellow students who are joining the struggle for a more just society: we hope you will remain engaged in the fight for racial justice – on campus and off – as the academic year continues. As you do so, especially during this pandemic, please remember to take the proper precautions to remain safe and healthy during protests, rallies, marches, or any other large gatherings, such as wearing a face covering, practicing hand hygiene, not photographing or filming protesters' faces, and bringing a friend or peer to accompany you.

Additionally, please be aware that SGB continues to provide free legal consultations to Pitt undergraduate and graduate students. Please contact us at sgb@pitt.edu or 412-648-7970 for more information. Finally, we acknowledge that the events of the past few months, along with the ongoing pandemic, are traumatizing for many. Students are encouraged to contact the University Counseling Center at 412-648-7930 for additional information on how you can get help.

In Solidarity,

Eric Macadangdang

2020-2021 Student Government Board President

Cedric Humphrey, Tyler Viljaste, Ben King, Annalise Abraham, Kathryn Fleisher, Katie Richmond, Victoria Chuah, & Victor So

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