

Dear Ohio State Aviation Community,

This letter shares the express commitment of the Center for Aviation Studies to actively implement, in concert with other members of our Ohio State community, the deep changes needed to bring about greater equality for all. We reject and deplore racism, bigotry, hatred, prejudice, and disenfranchisement of any person with respect to rights enjoyed by citizens of the United States, especially when these are perpetrated through violence.

"Time and change" are words that are quite familiar at Ohio State. We all are now well aware that we are living in a unique time, and also in one that is experiencing great change. Change is essential, especially when it is long overdue. The necessity to bring about deep change is now before us, and has been made manifest both through the fullness of time and recent events, including the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. Tragic outcomes and societal inequities experienced by people of color - and indeed by anyone - are unacceptable in any society, much less in our 21st Century United States of America.

The Greeks had two separate words for time - *Chronos* and *Kairos*. Chronos is our normal experience of linear and accessible time. It is the 'time' that expires between '11:00 and 2:00,' or 'between lunch and dinner.' We often deal with this time in Engineering - assessing the velocity of a vehicle in 'meters per second,' or understanding the exact "Greenwich Mean Time" to render our position from a satellite.

Kairos is a different word, meaning 'deep time,' or 'in the fullness of time.' As aviators, we can perhaps experience this kind of time when we are in the air, realizing our special connection to all who fly, who love the skies, and who have paved the way for us to 'slip the surly bonds of Earth.' This 'Kairos time' is a key part of the mission of Ohio State. Our purpose is not only to produce 'this year's crop of graduates,' but also to build benefit and solid foundational footings for our society that will last for centuries, and that will fortify generations to come.

These two times intersect, and often in very pronounced ways, when we are unable - as people, teams, community, or society - to make necessary changes in the context of our linear time. We are often then compelled to face the implementation of deeper changes, made obvious, apparent, and immediate through the lack of progress made in the fullness of time.

This is our situation now. We face the deep challenge of social inequality, racial injustice, and the fact that many among us do not fully enjoy the promise of America that "all are created equal." This problem has persisted in 'Chronos time' for centuries. We have known about it. We have discussed it. We have fought wars over it. We can point to some change for the better over linear-time. But this change has simply been insufficient in the fullness of time.

We can no longer work as we have been in 'Chronos time' to make the essential and fundamental changes required, and that are indeed tied to the very purpose of The

Ohio State University. This requires us each to leave our comfort zone, our 'areas of specialty,' to listen, to learn, and to enter into a oneness and solidarity with those who have not been granted the fullness of our Nation's promise. Therefore the challenges we face are as internal - deeply personal and specific to each and every one of us - as well as external, in asking 'How do we work together to build a better and more just community for everyone?'

Aviation is a powerful, modern, and global activity, connecting our world in ways we could never have imagined. And yet fewer than 3% of all commercial pilots are Black. Fewer than 1% are Black women. These are but two statistics that are unfortunately mirrored within Ohio State's aviation program, and within our peer institutions.

Changing these statistics, and indeed the very fabric of our community, will take time. But it begins with a series of specific steps. Here are the first - but certainly not the last - steps that we are taking in the Center for Aviation Studies:

- This letter expresses our solidarity with, and participation in, the ongoing struggle in the United States to bring equality for all, and makes known our disgust and outrage at the violent and unnecessary killings of Mr. Floyd, Mr. Arbery, Ms. Taylor, and other people of color.
- We have posted this letter publicly on CARMEN, as part of the Center for Aviation Studies Group, and intend to share it widely beyond our community as well. It serves as one outward sign of our inward commitment to bring about meaningful change.
- We have built, and shall further fortify our emerging annual *Diversity in Aviation Conference and Workshop*. In only two years, this has become a vital and global forum for promoting critical and necessary conversations on diversity in Aviation, while also bringing forth ideas and initiatives to address the lack of diversity in the industry. While the 2020 format may be different due to Covid-19 concerns, we shall continue to use this emerging, important, and strategic forum to identify areas in which equality in aviation can be improved, and to take specific steps to realize that improvement. Students have been welcomed to this conference at no cost to them, enabling them to directly interact with leaders from across Aviation. This policy shall continue.
- We are committed to learning. No person in the Center for Aviation Studies has a full understanding of the depth and breadth of experiences of prejudice, racism, and inequality. Therefore we must all seek to learn and listen, in order to best understand how to create and implement positive, sustainable change.
- We are close to finalizing the final draft of the five-year strategic plan for Ohio State Aviation. The document is not yet public. However, Diversity and Inclusion are one of the four strategic areas identified for improvement. As a part of this plan, we are including the following:
 - A portfolio of co-curricular resources and opportunities for students to help them succeed, and to improve overall recruitment, retention, and completion rates.

- Improvement in diversity among our ranks of faculty and instructors in the program. We shall transition the Ohio State aviation program into a role model for other institutions by far outpacing the historic national averages of the diverse workforce in the industry.
- Further improvement in outreach and engagement. We have collaborated in the past with the Driving Park Community Center, the United Way, Women in Aviation, Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals, National Society of Black Engineers, the Ohio Memorial Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen, and more. We must continue these relationships. We must also do more. To the best of our ability, we shall support any initiative from student organizations to help attract diverse and under-represented populations to collegiate aviation.

These steps - like the essential dialog we all must have - will not completely solve any problem, especially in 'Chronos time.' They are only the beginning of a very long journey. We all have significant work to do as individuals and as a team in order to move our landscape toward a more diverse, equitable, and non-discriminatory aviation community. Throughout history, we have seen time and again that change can be created by individuals, and by small groups of people. Together, and through the coordinated actions of the faculty, staff, and students at Ohio State Aviation, we will create that change in the industry.

Our friends, family, and colleagues in under-represented and communities of color continue to be in pain, and these steps alone will not relieve this pain. But equally, suffering and injustice cannot be relieved as long as we continue to remain silent. Therefore, the OSU Aviation Community leadership, along with the College of Engineering and The Ohio State University, understand that a time for more significant and purposeful action has come. We look forward to working, learning, and progressing with all of you.

Kind regards,



John M. Horack, Ph.D.
Interim Director, Center for Aviation Studies
Professor and Neil Armstrong Chair, Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering
Sr. Associate Dean of Engineering

and the leadership team of #OSUAviation.