

“We all have the responsibility to do and be better by listening, learning, and acting for positive change and equitable justice in the world and social justice for all at Sandhills Community College.”

With those words Sandhills Community College’s Black Lives Matter Committee – now renamed the Committee for Social and Cultural Inclusion – reacted in May and June of 2020 to the murder of Raeford’s own George Floyd and how his death reminded us that other people of color have been felled by police violence in clear disproportion to their numbers in our population.

The recent conviction of Derek Chauvin, as welcome as it was, does not free us from the responsibility to seek solutions to problems of policing in America. Rather it obligates us to look holistically at the system that put Derek Chauvin and George Floyd together in the situation where they found themselves on May 25, 2020.

It asks us to look as well at other dimensions of social equity and the groups for whom that equity has too long been denied. It requires us to act.

A first step to that action is to tie these urgent concerns to our college’s existing mission. We can’t provide “education of the highest quality to all the people of the Sandhills” without acknowledging the special obstacles that many of our students have to face in society. So what can we do?

Teaching itself can be a vehicle for activism, and education – true education – can be a means to combat racism. When that education is based on the values of RESPECT, HELPFULNESS, INTEGRITY, OPPORTUNITY, and EXCELLENCE, it becomes not only a way to defeat racism, but also a means to build a true community. We accept the challenge of combating racism, and we will do it in a way that is consistent with our values.

Sandhills Community College aspires to be a college of inclusion and equity, where ALL are welcome and where barriers to full participation in all phases of college life are removed. Our college is aware that some of our students have had lives where the color of their skin has not always impacted their chances for success and social inclusion in a positive way.

We recognize that the facts of our nation’s history put black citizens at special disadvantage in America. Two hundred years of slavery, having the rights of slaveholders embedded in the articles of the Constitution, and 100 years of Jim Crow life have put black persons under special strain in the United States and have made black/white relations especially complicated. Trying to improve those relations is difficult and sometimes awkward work, but it is work that must be undertaken if our college is to be true to its values and mission.

Sandhills Community College commits to exploration of these matters as part of our students’ educational experience and to create opportunities for the college community to share in these explorations. The college further commits to open dialogue and invites comment about its own practices that either advance or impede the journey toward social equity. We realize that we are not perfect and we encourage discussion of the ways we can improve.

Finally, Sandhills Community College commits without reservation to being a college of inclusion and equity. It will judge itself to be a successful institution only when those ideals are achieved.