To the leadership of the St. John’s chapter of the AAUP and of the Faculty Association (FA):

We, members of the faculty, are outraged by the continued and rampant state-sanctioned brutalizing of Black people and their violent murders at the hands of law enforcement. The recent tragic deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade due to police violence and the disproportionate COVID-19 related deaths of Black and Brown people bring to the forefront the socio-economic and political injustices Black Americans and Indigenous peoples have faced for generations. Higher education institutions play a role in these patterns of inequity and violence because they remain a site for the reproduction of white supremacy and racist oppression within our curriculum, within the organization of our structures and within our administrative practices. St. John’s University is no exception to this.

On, June 6, 2020, the senior leadership of St. John’s University released a statement of commitment “to doing the work necessary for St. John’s to become an antiracist institution,” consistent with the university’s Catholic and Vincentian mission. This statement outlines the university administration’s concrete steps toward actualizing President Gempesaw’s urgent call for transformation of “our hearts and minds” and “to tear down the walls of institutional racism that surround us.”

We must truthfully acknowledge the fact that our unions, here at St. John’s, have for decades been complicit in helping the university maintain itself as a site for the systematic oppression of minoritized faculty, particularly, Black and Brown faculty. Policies, practices, and procedures which are rooted in white supremacy were put in place to benefit white cisgender male faculty, in particular those from previous generations. These policies continue to perpetuate the inequities that we currently observe amongst our faculty. Furthermore, we as members of the faculty, believe that in order to create a truly benevolent university in which all students can learn and thrive, in particular Black students who have taken on the burden and harm of raising awareness around issues of social injustice and pushing for social change on our campus, we must act deliberately and intentionally. We, as members of the faculty, affirm our commitment to making St. John’s University an anti-racist space in the ways we teach, learn, assess, and govern. We acknowledge that accomplishing such goals requires that the union leadership also take this stance in order for true systemic change to occur. **We therefore demand that the leadership of the AAUP and FA affirm their commitment to supporting faculty in creating and supporting the University’s position to become an antiracist institution.**

The following action items are ways in which union leaders can begin to demonstrate this commitment:

1. In recognition and appreciation of the need for more diverse perspectives, viewpoints and experiences among our faculty union leadership, prioritize building equitable representation of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups at all levels of union leadership, especially in upper
executive/officer positions. This shift will help to ensure that union representatives are equipped to enact anti-racist policies and negotiate on the behalf of all faculty. Every member of the union leadership must be committed to anti-racism. Further, White union representatives should be educated on the ways that white fragility, white privilege and white supremacy can interfere with the ability to truly represent all faculty and function to uphold systems of oppression.

2. Work closely with the university’s Equity and Inclusion Council, which includes faculty representation from all five colleges/schools and is responsible for recommending “institutional policy and practice changes needed to create an equitable and inclusive learning, living, and working environment.” Additionally, work closely with the Academic Center for Equity and Inclusion, through which faculty organize “scholarly and pedagogical activities that advance St. John's University's commitment to an inclusive and equitable University community” and fosters “personal and institutional accountability for the University’s mission of ‘respect for the rights of every person’ and advancement of the global common good.”

3. Broaden decision-making processes within union leadership. Historically and currently, decision making occurs primarily at the executive/officer level, controlled by a few members of union leadership, who are almost exclusively racially white, cisgender, men.

4. Increase transparency regarding labor contract priorities received from faculty by union leadership and that concern union leadership’s chosen contract negotiation priorities. Further, increase transparency surrounding contract negotiation developments, via direct observation at the bargaining table by union members – and specifically Black union members and other union members from historically underrepresented groups - and written communications to all faculty.

5. Strongly encourage all faculty to participate in the University’s bias reporting process as complainants, respondents and witnesses. There must be recognition that discouraging faculty participation creates additional obstacles for faculty complainants seeking a just result, making union leadership complicit in harming our most vulnerable faculty. Future bargaining negotiations should advocate for University policy changes to ensure that a finding of intentional discrimination is not required in order to substantiate a bias policy violation.

6. Provide faculty with a web-accessible statement regarding each union’s commitment to anti-racism and concrete action steps with regard to the advancement of equity, inclusion, and anti-oppression policies and practices.

Mindful of worldwide mobilizations to end racial inequities in health, economic security, and public safety, we call upon your leadership as we work to faithfully demonstrate that lives of Black students, faculty, staff, and administrators matter.

In solidarity,
St. John’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (159)

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Alejandro Quintana
Alexa Dicken
Alison Hyslop, Associate Dean
Amy M. King
Andrea Bergman
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Annalisa Sacca
Anne Cavolo Tedesco
Anne Ellen Geller
Anne Galvin
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Anonymous (name submitted) - Full-time
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Anonymous (name submitted) - Part-time
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Arturo Humberto Enamorado III
Barbara Koziak
Beverly Greene
Bobby Rivera
Brian James
Carmen Fernandez Klohe
Carolyn Abott
Carolyn Grimstead
Catina Bacote
Ching-Wen Yen
Christian de Briffault
Christine Angel
Christopher Cody
Christopher W. Bazinet
Clarice Spica Curry
Dana Chesney
Danielle M. Bacigalupo
David Brown
David Farley
David Rosenthal
Dawn Esposito

Deborah J Taranto
Dejan Trickovic
Diane Heith
Dianella Howarth
Dohra K. Ahmad
Dolores Augustine
Elda Tsou
Elissa Brown
Elizabeth Albert
Elizabeth Brondolo
Elizabeth DeLuna
Eric Raymer
Erin Kidd
Ernest V.E. Hodges
Faith Unger
Flora Keshishian
Florin Catrina
Frank Connolly-Weinert
Frank X. Vázquez
Gabriel Muteru
Gina Florio, Interim Dean
Granville Ganter
Heather Van Uxem Leeis
Ian Miller
James Connolly-Weinert
James Vorbach
Jasim Uddin
Jason Smith
Jean-Pierre M. Ruiz
Jennifer Travis
Jeremiah Hickey
Jeremy V. Cruz
Jiyun Kim
Joann Heaney-Hunter
John P. Agosta
Joseph Serafin
Juan C. Santos
Judith DeSena
Judith Ryder
Julius Doyle
Justin Lerner
Kareece Lopez
Kathleen Lubey
Kevin Rioux
Konrad Tuchscherer
Laila Shikaki
Lakshmi Vidyasagar
Lara Vapnek
Laura Schramm
Lauren Moskowitz
Lee Ann Brown
Lisa Outar
Marie Cotton
Mark Terjesen
Marlene Sotelo-Dynega
Matt Green
Matteo Ruggiu
Mauricio Borrero
Meghan Clark
Meghan Dunn
Melissa Mowry
Mellissa Bortz
Michael L. Ingergaard
Michael Molina
Michael T. Dempsey
Milton Javier Bravo
Mini Pothen
Monica Wagner
Mostafa Sadoqi
Nadine Agosta
Natalie P. Byfield
Nicholas Healy
Olga Jablonka
Paolo Rico Sarthou Tagatac-Chan
Paula Kay Lazrus
Peggy Suzuki
Philip Lukeman
Philip Misevich
Phyllis Conn
Rachel Hollander

Raj Chetty
Rami Alsaber
Rebecca Wiseheart
Richard J. Rosso
Robert Forman
Robert Lewis
Robert Tillman
Roberta Villalón
Robin Appel
Robin L. Wellington
Rochelle Robinson
Sanae Elmooudden
Scott D. Koski
Scyatta Wallace
Shanté Paradigm Smalls
Sharon Marshall
Siddique Mohamed
Sonia Adams
Sophie Bell
Stephen Sicari
Steve Mentz
Steve Puig
Steven Alvarez
Susan Rosenberg
Susan Schmidt Horning
Susie Pak
Tamara Del Vecchio
Tamara Issak
Tara Scarola
Tina M. Iemma
Tracey-Anne Cooper
William Alexander Morel
William Chaplin
Wilson McDermut
Zachary Davis
Zhuoyao Li

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Anna Martin
Brian Quinn
Chris O'Kane

Cynthia Phillips
Igor Tomic
Kirstin Munro
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Christine Chim
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Corinne Alois
Danielle Bonanno
Danielle Ezzo
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Gary Corn
Gladys Elchaar
Harlem Gunness
Hira Shafeeq
Jennifer Bhuiyan
Joanne M. Carroll
Josh Rickard
Judith Beizer
Khusbu Patel
Lisa Hochstein
Louise Lee
Manouchkathe Cassagnol, Assistant Dean
Marc Gillespie, Associate Dean
Maria Mantione
Michele Pisano
Nicole Bradley
Nissa Mazzola
Olga Hilas
Regina Ginzburg
Robert Berger
Sandra Beysolow
Sarah Smith
Sharon See
Somnath Pal
Tina Caliendo
Tina Kanmaz, Assistant Dean
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John Spiridakis
Joseph Rumenapp
Leah Mortenson
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Rebecca Louick
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