



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
5/31/2020

Dear Valpo Students,

As Student Senate is the governing body duly elected to represent you, it is imperative that we remain vigilant about the issues facing our campus. Across the nation, our streets are filled with protesters seeking justice for the murders of George Floyd and every other Black American who has faced violence at the hands of the police. From Minneapolis to Valparaiso, our nation is getting a well-needed reminder that Black Lives Matter.

While I marched in the Chicago protests yesterday, I thought about Student Senate's duty to speak out against systemic and institutionalized racism at Valpo. Because we serve at a predominantly white institution, it is especially important that we amplify the concerns of students of color. To do this, we have to recognize our privilege as members of a society built on the oppression of Black Americans and people of color. We also have to recognize that Student Senate is not exempt from the institutionalized racism that stems from that oppression.

Next year, we are taking steps to make our meetings more accessible (live streaming all meetings, reading online comments from constituents, and more). Personally, I plan to meet with VUPD about the accuracy of Valpo Alert messages and what the department is doing to prevent racial profiling on our campus. I also hope to ensure that every employee at our university is required to take bias training regardless of their tenure status. We are ready to take action, but we cannot do so without the voice of every student.

If students who experience the most severe, systemic injustices feel unwelcome in our meetings, then Student Senate cannot accurately represent the will of the student body. It is with the hope that Student Senate can be a place where every student feels comfortable enough to express their concerns that I unequivocally say: Black Students Matter. Black Voices Matter. Black Lives Matter.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Steinhiser
Valparaiso University Student Body President
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