

## Our Commitment for Equality in Our Organization and in Our Communities

We are committed to addressing social justice and systemic inequities. The unfolding of events in recent weeks surrounding the tragic killing of George Floyd has shaken many of us to our very core. Seeing the brutality as it happened, was and continues to be shocking and distressing. This most recent occurrence of violence and blatant racism is a reminder, and is symptomatic of a reality in which earlier and current generations of Black and/or African Americans have been living -- a reality with multiple indignities borne out of implicit and explicit bias, and systemic and structural issues that perpetuate racial inequities and injustices.

Many of us have begun to dialogue about the deaths of George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, Ahmaud Arbery, James Scurlock, and many others...far too many others. Like most, each of us has experienced a wave of emotions -- anger, outrage, fear, helplessness, and sadness. Moreover, as faculty/staff in Extension with the mission of "helping enhance the lives of others" through research-based education, we have also asked ourselves... "what is our role?" What can we do so that we are serving everyone in our communities? How can we take purposeful and meaningful action to promote equity for every person and every community that we serve? What personal work can we do to push ourselves to be uncomfortable and expose our own biases and racism? How can we best stand with our colleagues, peers and with the people in our communities who are Black?

We do not have all the answers. However, we do know that as an interest group, *Reaching One Reaching All* (RORA) is committed to fairness and equity, to diversity and inclusion, and to promoting social justice. We are moved and energized to take actions that lead to a wiser and more compassionate world. We believe that we must work together to inspire hope, and to explore and dismantle systemic racism even within our own university and Extension system. Collectively, we want to identify and remove the barriers that breed inequity in our work. We must move beyond words and intentions and take actions that ensure that minorities and marginalized individuals have equitable access to Extension careers, Extension programs and Extension resources across the state. And we must use our position as trusted community leaders to engage our communities to do the same.

To begin the process, we pledge to:

1. Create opportunities for thoughtful dialogue with our extension colleagues and our communities to build understanding and empathy around current issues and systemic problems of bias, racism, diversity, and inclusion – issues that particularly impact our African American colleagues, friends, and constituents.
2. Work with our extension community and with the diverse communities we serve to identify barriers to extension careers and programs.
3. Work with Extension and University administration to dismantle barriers that minority and marginalized communities face in accessing Extension programs and opportunities.
4. Engage with the UNL Office of Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that we are engaged in Inclusive Excellence not just on campus or in metropolitan areas, but throughout the state of Nebraska.

Again, as an Issue Team, we cannot claim to have the answers. Nonetheless we are committed to taking actions that may be uncomfortable, scary, hard, and may also expose our own inadequacies and insecurities as we engage in this difficult work.

In community and with utmost humility,

The *Reaching One, Reaching All* Team, <https://culturalcompetence.unl.edu/about>  
(signatories include members of RORA and other Extension Faculty/Staff and supporters below)

Jackie Guzman, Extension Educator - The Learning Child, Panhandle Research and Extension Center  
Maria de Guzman, Adolescent Development Extension Specialist and Associate Professor  
Evan Choi, Children and Poverty Extension Specialist and Associate Professor

Holly Hatton-Bowers, Early Childhood Education Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor  
Georgia Jones, Food Specialist and Associate Professor  
John Porter, Extension Educator  
Surin Kim, Entrepreneurship Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor  
Sandra Barrera, Community Vitality Extension Educator  
Jayne Hutton, Extension Educator and Unit Leader for Nebraska Extension in Douglas and Sarpy Counties  
Tiffany Sessions, Extension Educator, Douglas and Sarpy Counties  
Leonardo Gonzalez, 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator  
Cardinal Farrington, Facilities Manager, Panhandle Research and Extension Center  
Harrison Boateng, Technical Consultant, Panhandle Research and Extension Center  
Jackie Guzman, Extension Educator - The Learning Child, Panhandle Research and Extension Center  
Maria de Guzman, Adolescent Development Extension Specialist and Associate Professor  
Evan Choi, Children and Poverty Extension Specialist and Associate Professor  
Holly Hatton-Bowers, Early Childhood Education Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor  
Georgia Jones, Food Specialist and Associate Professor  
John Porter, Extension Educator  
Surin Kim, Entrepreneurship Extension Specialist and Assistant Professor  
Sandra Barrera, Community Vitality Extension Educator  
Jayne Hutton, Extension Educator and Unit Leader for Nebraska Extension in Douglas and Sarpy Counties  
Tiffany Sessions, Extension Educator, Douglas and Sarpy Counties  
Leonardo Gonzalez, 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator  
Cardinal Farrington, Facilities Manager, Panhandle Research and Extension Center  
Harrison Boateng, Technical Consultant, Panhandle Research and Extension Center  
Deepak Keshwani, Associate Professor Biological Systems Engineering  
Hannah Opfer, Office Associate  
Meredith Kuce (Hein), Nutrition Education Program/SNAP-Ed