



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Dear Central State University Family,

Like many of you, I have spent a considerable amount of time over the past two weeks dealing with a myriad of emotions. Anger, frustration, exhaustion, and fear have all overcome my psyche over this time in ways I have never encountered before. I have also spent a considerable amount of time reading statement after statement from corporations and civic leaders pledging a commitment to the African-American community in a truly unprecedented manner. Gone are the benign statements of equality and generalities that left such statements of the past feeling empty. These statements seem to be different. They appear to signal a sincere desire to seek a path forward and to acknowledge and atone for the sins of the past, whether overt or covert. To that end I now find myself overcome with another emotion, determination.

We as your Board of Trustees struggled with the notion of whether we would put out a similar statement but concluded such a statement is unnecessary. We proudly stand as the only state funded HBCU in Ohio and since our inception in 1887 have been a beacon for the advancement of African-Americans through higher education and activism. Standing in opposition of racism and oppression of black men and women is innate and in our DNA. Our hearts certainly cry out for the families of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breanna Taylor and all those who have perished as a result of police brutality otherwise known as murder. The question for us all at this moment in time is how should we move forward? Be determined.

In 1958, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during his commencement address at Central State University told 172 soon to be Centralians, “[I]t is a great time to be alive. You are graduating at a time of the *dying* of an old world and the *birth* of a new one.” 62 years ago, this charge was uttered on our campus as a dream deferred. The time is now for this heavy load to explode. To explode with determination to realize the substance of that dream deferred. It is the charge of each of us to carry this dream to fruition. We all have a part to play in this.

As **Trustees**, we must take advantage of this moment in time to seek out and bring greater resources and opportunities to our students. Trustees must increase efforts to secure funding that will improve facilities and reduce the economic burden for students attending Central State University. We as trustees must challenge the corporations and political leaders who so profoundly state that they “stand with the Black community” and “#BlackLivesMatter” to put their money where their mouths are and provide economic support and workforce opportunities to our institution and students.

**Administration, Faculty and Staff** must implement these improved resources to provide innovative programming and instruction to *inspire* students to achieve their highest potential in preparation for the rigors of the workplace, public or civic leadership, graduate or professional

schools. We must develop modalities and institutes to provide students the opportunity to channel their desires to create solutions to historic and systemic injustices and study and develop tangible options for true societal change.

**Students** must arrive on campus with *a purpose*. A purpose to take individual responsibility for themselves and the outcomes you seek. Now is the time to push yourself academically, like never before. Take advantage of this time of social distancing to be introspective and arrive on campus this fall *determined* to work harder than you ever did before. It is *your* responsibility to be prepared when opportunity knocks on your door, and *it is coming*. You should also look to support one another and collectively make your voices heard.

**Centralians**, continue to be the walking, talking representations of the greatness of CSU! Renew your commitment to support Central State through your time, treasure and talent. You must give financially to your alma mater. Central State must increase its endowment and improve its ability to provide financial support to our students and we need your leadership on this. Challenge your employers, institutions and corporate bodies where you have influence to provide financial support, internship and post-graduate opportunities to Central State students to give action to the statements of support of the African-American community that I am sure many of them have made. *You must hold them accountable*.

We have the unique opportunity to be the manifestation of the words Dr. King uttered on this campus over 60 years ago, but we *all* have a responsibility to do our part. If we all direct our energy to being determined, we can make a dream deferred a *dream realized*.

Your partners in the struggle,



Mark Hatcher, Esq.  
Chair, Central State University  
Board of Trustees