Dear Chaplin School Family,

Three words have impacted the American conscience more than ever, "I can't breathe" and have placed a spotlight on the systemic racism Black Americans face and have lived with in our country for hundreds of years. The senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Trayvon Martin, Tony McDade and Rayshard Brooks have left so many heartbroken and our nation at a crossroads.

We, the administration, faculty and staff of the Chaplin School want you to know that Black Lives Matter. We have a zero-tolerance policy and must speak out about racism and racial injustice. We hear your despair and acknowledge your grief. We are listening, learning and know our students are seeking answers and action.

Here are some of the ways we are working towards making a difference:

- **StartUP FIU** - The StartUP FIU Food Incubator at the Chaplin School is designed to develop food entrepreneurs from underserved communities and to create jobs within those communities. The program offers participants business opportunities, exposure and increased kitchen space to help entrepreneurs reach their economic goals. We are committed to backing black-owned businesses and have a long list of black business owners who have completed the program:
  - The Rumcake Factory
  - Nemo’s Uoowow
  - Caribbean Bites and Delights
  - High 7 Teas
  - Sweets Jalene’s
  - Heavenly Sweet Addictions

- **Black Hospitality Initiative (BHI)**: Established in 1991 by our partners at the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB), the mission of the BHI is to advance economic participation of Black Americans in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry through educational scholarships. BHI has awarded more than 450 scholarships and raised more than $3.5 million in scholarship funds and in-kind services.

We know, this is just the start. We want to hear from you - our students, faculty, employees, alumni, corporate sponsors and the greater community - with your thoughts and other action items we can put into effect, we will address inequality and racism. Chaplin School stands for diversity and inclusivity and together we can do better. We can no longer sit idly by and wait for change; we must be the makers of it.

Sincerely,

Michael Cheng
Dean, Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management