

Good morning. I would like to preface my remarks by thanking Representative and Trustee Kevin Christie for his untiring work and advancing the racial Justice package S 24, S119 and S124 in the Vermont House.

I am here today to express my very profound sadness that the Black Lives matter Flag is no longer flown in front of the Davis Center, There should be no alternative to its placement.

I am therefore calling on you Trustees of the University of Vermont, that in upkeeping the mission and values of this great institution, you will commit to actions that are aligned with the mission and guiding values, an effort that will help prevent systemic racism and oppression of people of color.

A first step by you honored Trustees, is to call for the return of the Black Lives matter Flag to the Davis Center, it is indeed a small step but a very significant one, this is important at a time when centuries of pain and marginalization suffered by Black Americans is being recognized in different way.

The faculty, staff, students and indeed the entire community strongly support the flying of the Black Lives Matter Flag to help send the message that black lives do matter and that systemic racism in its many forms is so contrary to our common ground and to our community's values.

If the removal of the Back Lives matter Flag is governed by a policy, I ask that you not only review the flags' policy but review all policies to identify discriminatory practices or negative stereotyping.

Finally, President Garimella paid tribute to the late John Lewis and quoted from his 2007 commencement address at the University of Vermont, calling on all to build an all inclusive world community, one that values the dignity of every individual.

What would the late John Lewis say if he knew that UVM removed the Black Lives Matter Flag? Please let us honor his wish through solidarity with Faculty, Staff and Students with the return of the Black Lives Matter Flag for unnumbered days to be.

Thank you.