

As an organization dedicated to the principles of equity, openness, empathy, and social justice, we wish to express our solidarity with our Black members, their families and friends, and our fellow Black educators in the United States and elsewhere in the world as they face racism and violence that endangers their rights, liberty, and even their lives. We are appalled by what’s currently unfolding in the U.S., as well as the systemic racism—endemic over the centuries and enduring today—that has coalesced to create this pivotal moment in history.

Elie Wiesel said in his 1986 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, “We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. [...] When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.” That time is now, as the violence in the U.S. and bubbling under the surface in other parts of the world reaches a crescendo.

Our Korean context may be far from where the current protests began, but their impact reverberates throughout the world; and human dignity and human rights are values that we must embrace and defend, by virtue of our common humanity and basic decency. Furthermore, anti-Black racism is, unfortunately, an insidious and too-often-tacit part of the ELT world, including here in Korea. It manifests in hiring decisions, educational discourses, learning materials, and more. The KOTESOL National Council stands against racism in all its forms and stands for justice. We stand with our Black members, Black teachers in Korea, and Black educators around the world. As James Baldwin wrote in 1962, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced”; we sincerely hope we are seeing progress and change in the making today.

Signed on June 2 & 3, 2020, by the following members of the KOTESOL National Council:

Lindsay Herron
KOTESOL President

Bryan Hale
KOTESOL First Vice-President
Gwangju-Jeonnam Chapter President

Rhea Metituk
KOTESOL Second Vice-President

David E. Shaffer
KOTESOL Immediate Past President
Publications Committee Chair

Wayne Finley
National Publicity Chair

Allison Bill
International Outreach Committee Chair
Jeonju-North Jeolla Chapter President

Travis Frank
Diversity Committee Chair

Phillip G. Schrank
KOTESOL National Treasurer

Reece Randall
Gangwon Chapter President

Lucinda Estrada
Seoul Chapter President

Daniel Jones
KOTESOL Financial Affairs Chair

Lisa MacIntyre-Park
National Council Secretary

Kimberley Roberts
Daegu-Gyeongbuk Chapter President

James G. Rush, II
Yongin-Gyeonggi Chapter President