Dear President Johnson and the Colorado School of Mines Administration,

I hope this correspondence finds you and your families well during these difficult times. On behalf of the Mines Graduate Student Government, I would like to thank you and your administration for your supportive and thoughtful responses to the murder of George Floyd and the issue of systemic racism in the United States.

Over the last several weeks, the graduate students of the Colorado School of Mines have received many emails from multiple different Mines sources on the topics of racism and the Black Lives Matter movement. These have had the unfortunate result of increasing confusion regarding Mines’ plans to combat these problems. The information provided to students has been vague and created concern that these statements are actions of performative allyship rather than sustainable demonstrable change to address systemic racism in the university. We do not believe this to be the intent of the Colorado School of Mines or its administration. Therefore, we, the Graduate Student Government, feel that a concise statement from your office outlining specific plans to combat racism in academia and the experiences of people of color at Mines would be of substantial benefit to the Mines community.

In order to support black, indigenous, people of color (BIPOC), other underrepresented minorities (URM), gender minorities, religious minorities, and sexual minorities a part of the Colorado School of Mines community and to achieve the diversity, inclusion, and access (DI&A) goals outlined in the Mines@150 strategy, we strongly recommend the Colorado School of Mines commit to the following action items:

1) Create a prominent diversity page on the Mines website. This page should be featured on the Mines homepage, prominently displayed, easy to access, and easily digestible by the general public. It should include a statement that uses clear and strong language supporting our BIPOC, URM, gender, religion, and sexual minorities. This page should also include links to programs, on-campus groups, and educational resources pertaining to DI&A.

2) Create resources for reporting racist or discriminatory behavior experienced by members of the Mines community which are easily accessible, such as in the webpage referred to in action item number one or a third-party reporting service.

3) Develop official guidelines and work with departments to ensure the Mines undergraduate admissions, faculty hiring, and graduate and postdoctoral hiring processes best allow for recruitment of BIPOC, URM, gender, religion, and sexual minorities. Publish these guidelines on the webpage referred to in action item number one.

4) Commit to inviting BIPOC, URM, gender, religion, and sexual minority speakers for seminar series within departments and outside of individual departments. Host regular seminars about diversity with incentives for attendance (i.e. food, swag, etc.).

5) Create a document to be included in recruitment materials and the Mines student and faculty handbooks that expresses Mines’ commitment to DI&A and provides information on programs, on-campus resources, and associations.

6) Require all leadership, faculty, postdocs, graduate students, athletic staff, trainers, and student athletes in leadership positions to take anti-racism, anti-
misogyny, and implicit bias training so they can be prepared to address inequality at Mines and in their future careers.

7) Reprioritize admission metrics as identified in the Common Data Set, category C7 to reflect a more holistic admissions policy. This includes but is not limited to, increasing the priority of personal essays, recommendations, extracurricular activities, character/personal qualities, volunteering, and work experience. Include the option for a diversity statement, providing an opportunity for applicants to voice their stories, struggles, personal growth, etc. resulting from minority status. Reduce the priority of standardized test scores (ACTs, SATs, GREs, etc.) and rigor of secondary school records, as these have shown bias towards non-minority students and a reflection of socio-economic status, rather than likelihood to succeed.

8) Establish one or more scholarship programs specifically for BIPOC, URM, gender minorities, religion minorities, and sexual minorities. As far as we are aware, no such official Mines scholarship programs exist.

9) Establish a grant to support faculty, staff, and student attendance at diversity conferences.

The goal of this call to action is to evolve Mines’ policies and practices to make actionable, quantifiable change for current and future students rather than performative allyship. We believe in the Mines administration’s sincere commitment to improving the experiences of BIPOC, URM, and gender, religion and sexual minorities who are a part of the Mines community. In response to this letter, we request a timely response containing a statement of support for this work, a timeline of when these changes can be implemented, and the publication of this response to the student body at large. The Colorado School of Mines Graduate Student Government intends to provide this document to the Mines community at large and to host it digitally for open access.

Thank you,

The Colorado School of Mines Graduate Student Government.

July 20, 2020