

Subject: UofL to observe Juneteenth holiday June 18

Date: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 2:42:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time

From: UofL President

To: UofL President

Cardinal Family,

The University of Louisville will observe Juneteenth this year, and going forward, as a university holiday. This year, Juneteenth falls on a Saturday and so classes and all offices will be closed on Friday, June 18.

Juneteenth, short for June Nineteenth, marks the day in 1865 when the enslaved persons in Texas and other southern states were finally freed - more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Juneteenth represents freedom for our Black community and is a powerful reminder that racial and social justice are goals that are still to be fully realized. There is great success in our country's history, and there is also great failure. When we acknowledge both, we can understand our wholeness better and begin to heal the wounds of our past.

I want to thank the Black Faculty and Staff Association for spearheading this effort for UofL and working with my office to ensure we formally recognize Juneteenth as a university holiday. That recognition will include a celebration and multiple events leading up to Juneteenth. On June 14, the Office of the President and BFSA will kick off the inaugural Juneteenth Lecture Series with "Juneteenth: A Long Time Coming," a presentation by Vanderbilt University Professor Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, a globally renowned scholar of race, religion and contemporary culture. Dyson is a regular commentator on several national media outlets, a contributing columnist at the New York Times and a contributing editor for the New Republic and The Undeclared, an ESPN website. The event will begin at noon in the Swain Student Activities Center Ballroom.

Other events include:

- On June 15, the Employee Success Center will host a Learning Café, "Juneteenth - The Cost of Independence. The History of What It Really Means To Be Free" with guest Lamont Collins, founder of the Roots 101 African American Museum in Louisville.
- On June 21, the Office of Diversity and Equity and the BFSA will co-sponsor "The Taboo of Race: Color-Blind Racism and the Violent Brain" with guest speaker Dr. Oliver Rollins, a sociologist who explores the ways race, racism and other social processes of inequality impact the making and use of neuroscience.

Both events will be virtual and will begin at noon. Details on these and any other Juneteenth events will be shared in university-wide newsletters and available soon on the [UofL Events Calendar](#).

I also would like to take this opportunity to share with you that next week we will begin a national search for a vice president for diversity and equity. This position will be a member of the President's Cabinet and will oversee diversity and equity initiatives throughout the university. Dr. Faye Jones continues to serve admirably as the interim chief diversity officer, and I want to thank her now for her dedication and commitment to our faculty, staff and students.

Go Cards!