

June 18, 2020

To the FSU community,

Tomorrow, Friday, June 19, is Juneteenth, a day that commemorates the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of slavery in the United States, but even more, it is a day that recognizes that the Declaration of Independence's promise of equality has not been applied equally to all Americans.

In the Emancipation Proclamation, President Abraham Lincoln says this:

“...upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution, upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favor of Almighty God.”

It took almost two and a half years for these words, announcing freedom to all formerly enslaved people in the United States, to get all those who needed to hear it. It is just as critical now, 145 years later, as it was then, for us to pick up Lincoln's mantle and “invoke the considerate judgement of mankind” as we consider how we responded to this “act of justice.”

Please take a moment to read the message from Chancellor Perman below. I strongly encourage you to explore the resources he provides to learn about the history and cultural significance of Juneteenth, as well as educational and thought-provoking articles and programming on furthering a mindset that addresses systematic racism in our society.

As the chancellor did, **I am granting four hours of Juneteenth leave for employees tomorrow afternoon** (Friday, June 19). I invite you to take that time to think about where we are as a nation and where we need to go from here. And when we come back, let's begin to have conversations in our departments, with our peers and across the campus to think about what we can do *together*, with the “considerate judgement of mankind” to be the change we hope to see.

Sincerely,

Ronald Nowaczyk, Ph.D.

President, Frostburg State University

*(Staff members, please watch for an email with instructions on how to fill out your timesheets for this day.)*

**From Chancellor Perman:**

Dear Colleagues:

This Friday is [Juneteenth](#), a day commemorating the end of slavery. It was June 19, 1865, that Union soldiers arrived in Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and that the slaves were now free. It's vitally important to note that this was 2½ years *after* the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, which should have brought freedom to all who were enslaved.

We acknowledge the significance of this day, but we must acknowledge, too, how much work remains to end slavery's abiding legacy of violence, oppression, and injustice.

As Black Americans' liberation struggle continues, Juneteenth can be a reckoning for us, a rededication to the ideals we say are foundational to this nation: equity and opportunity for all. It can be a way to show up for one another, to support one another—to talk about how race shapes our lives, and to share in the joy of emancipation.

On Friday, beginning at noon, I'm granting leave to all employees at the USM central office so that you may pause for a moment, reflect on the fight for freedom and equality—then and now—and joyfully celebrate Black history and culture, Black resistance and resilience.

Here are some resources to get us started:

- [The Historical Legacy of Juneteenth](#) (National Museum of African American History & Culture)
- [Juneteenth: Our Other Independence Day](#) (Smithsonian Magazine)
- [What Is Juneteenth?](#) (PBS: This web site also hosts *The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross*, a video series on African American history, culture, and perspectives.)
- [First, Listen. Then, Learn: Anti-Racism Resources for White People](#) (Forbes: This article includes an extensive reading list for adults and kids, videos, and movies on race and racism.)
- [How to Talk to Your Kids About Anti-Racism: A List of Resources](#) (PBS Social)

I know this spring and summer have held a hard lesson for many of us. On Juneteenth, I hope we vow to keep learning. I hope we vow to confront—fully and finally—the pain and indignity that slavery has left behind.

Sincerely,

**Jay A. Perman**

Chancellor

University System of Maryland

[chancellor@usmd.edu](mailto:chancellor@usmd.edu)

[usmd.edu](http://usmd.edu)