In stark contrast to the strong performance during the first four months of 2019, U.S. equities suffered in May as a result of trade tensions between the U.S. and China along with slowing global growth concerns. The S&P 500® lost 6%, while the S&P MidCap 400® and S&P SmallCap 600® lost 8% and 9%, respectively. The VIX® ended the month at 18.7, still surprisingly low by historical standards.

The market struck a defensive tone, with Low Volatility taking the lead. Across sectors, Real Estate was the top performer and sole sector with positive performance, while Energy languished from the weakness in oil prices.

International markets also posted losses, with the S&P Developed Ex-U.S. and the S&P Emerging BMI down 5% and 6%, respectively.

Fixed income performance was mostly positive, with Treasuries outperforming corporates.

Commodities and especially Energy felt the pain stemming from a possible economic slowdown, driven by oil demand concerns, with the DJCI and S&P GSCI down 4% and 8%, respectively.