

UCLA Chicana and Chicano Studies Faculty Statement in Support and Solidarity with the
Bunche Center and the Department of African American Studies
June 15, 2020

We, the faculty of the César E. Chávez Department for Chicana and Chicano Studies, write to express our strong support for the demands and vision set forth in “An Open Letter to UCLA Chancellor Gene Block and Executive Vice Chancellor Emily Carter” on June 10th, 2020. As faculty who have dedicated their lives to researching and teaching Chicana/o and Latina/o histories, cultures, and peoples, we understand that our struggles for racial justice are interconnected. Black, Chicano, and Latino communities have been targets of police violence and structural racism that have led to the disproportionate arrests and incarceration of our communities. We stand at a historic conjuncture where it is incumbent for UCLA and all educational institutions to undo long-standing practices of racism, inequality, and hatred. The murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Dion Johnson, and so many others, have ignited an overdue conversation about structural racism across this country and the world. Thought leaders and communities are calling us to step forward and take actions, not only to attempt to “not be racist,” but to actively strive to create an anti-racist university.

It is time for UCLA to fulfill its mission as a public university engaged in solving the important social problems of our time. We encourage university leaders to implement research and funding agendas that align with this goal. We support the request for the university to divest from its partnership with police and instead reinvest in Black lives and Black study. We stand united in the call to action from the Social Justice Agenda of the Afrikan Student Union and Black Graduate Student Association, as well as the joint letter from the Department of African American Studies and the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies.

1. Fulfill outstanding Afrikan Student Union (ASU) and Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) demands, including their demands for UCLA to end its relationship with LAPD and other county, state and federal law enforcement departments, divesting from UCPD, and investing in a properly funded and located Black Resource Center.
2. Fund a series of Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellows dedicated to the study of Black life.
3. Endow the Bunche Center to sustain its research agenda on the study and wellness of Black people.
4. Endow the African American Studies Department to generate a sustainable curriculum on the study and wellness of Black people. Having been the first department of the ethnic studies interdepartmental programs, and the first to become a comprehensive department with a PhD program, we urge in particular minimally increasing the Department faculty to 13 FTE to support a doctoral program in African American Studies at UCLA. We feel this is a threshold objective for the research and scholarship of Black Life.
5. Endow the Bunche Fellows Program to support research by undergraduate students,

graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty members dedicated to the study of Black life.

6. Provide at least 10 new faculty lines to the Bunche Center and to the African American Studies Department.

7. Provide the Department of African American Studies with the spatial capacity to house courses and all of its faculty and interested affiliates within a shared space.

8. Hire more Black staff and ensure that pending budget cuts do not disproportionately impact Black students, staff, and faculty.

9. Appoint to the Chancellor's Office a Special Assistant for Black people and Black Matters.

10. Implement a process whereby Ethnic Studies centers and departments are chief stakeholders and of great consult on matters related to structural racism at UCLA.

We recognize the progress UCLA has made over the last decade, but agree that much more needs to be done to eliminate the vestige of systemic racism within higher education and proportionally involve Black students, faculty and staff in the life of this public institution. This action agenda is modest, within the campus' means, and should be enacted as reflective of its priorities that Black Lives Matter.

In Solidarity,

Maylei Blackwell
Associate Professor

Reynaldo F. Macías
Professor

Charlene Villaseñor Black
Professor

Otto Santa Ana
Professor Emeritus

Leisy J. Ábrego
Professor and Incoming Chair

Robert Chao Romero
Associate Professor

Abel Valenzuela

Professor

Raúl Hinojosa-Ojeda
Associate Professor

Chris Zepeda-Millan
Associate Professor

Genevieve Carpio
Assistant Professor

Gaye Theresa Johnson
Associate Professor

Jason de Leon
Professor

Susan Plann
Professor Emeritus

Alicia Gaspar de Alba
Professor

María Cristina Pons
Professor Emeritus

Eric Avila
Professor and Chair

Judith F. Baca
Professor Emeritus

Karina Alma
Assistant Professor