

Faculty leaders voice their support for those fighting to end state violence against people of color



UCLA

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UCLA Newsroom is committed to promoting UCLA news, including faculty members' research and their appearances in outside media. We typically do not post letters from faculty about current issues or serve as an open forum of ideas. However, given the gravity of this moment, and out of a desire to illustrate how our community is united in showing support on these important issues, we have decided in this rare case to share the following letter from our faculty.

https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/faculty-leaders-voice-their-support-for-those-fighting-to-end-state-violence-against-people-of-color?sf234870257=1&fbclid=IwAR1TpIUlYqM-Wpv_jS0Q5KaG0Za1wCgt7ves0nxJvSjUYGAUT5SigcqvEqI

As leaders of academic units at UCLA dedicated to social justice, we stand in solidarity with those in Los Angeles and throughout the country fighting to end state violence against African Americans, Indigenous peoples, Latinx, Asian, and other communities of color. The murder of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department as well as the recent killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Robert Avitia are the latest manifestations of a structure of white supremacy that has taken the forms of genocide, slavery, colonialism, incarceration, and exclusion, and extended beyond U.S. borders through imperialism.

In this historic moment, the coronavirus pandemic is laying bare the dramatic inequalities that characterize U.S. society, disproportionately affecting communities of color both through illness and economic effects. Millions of people, without work, witnessed a staggering lack of leadership and callousness from all levels of government. That basic public health principles did not guide the nation's response has placed millions of people at risk, led to tens of thousands of needless deaths, required essential workers — many Black, Brown, and Indigenous — to engage in hazardous work with little protection, and exacerbated risk of infection and death among unhoused, detained and incarcerated populations and those living in other congregate settings. Despite the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on these communities and people living in poverty, more than 70% of the economic stimulus package went to corporations while many sat at home watching their businesses fail, their children go without schooling, their tables go empty of food and their rents come due. The righteous rage being expressed by protestors is not just about the on-going brutal murder of Black people, but also about long standing injustices at the core of U.S. society.

We affirm the solidarity among Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and allied peoples in our research communities to abolish obvious examples of state violence — militarized security forces, the expansion of prisons and border detainment. We also actively oppose the mass disenfranchisement of people of color through voter suppression, the erosion of social and economic support systems for the poor, the underfunding of and limited access to public education, mass evictions and banishment from neighborhoods and cities, and structural inequities in access to healthcare and psychological support.

Our campus units have long been engaged in research and teaching about these dehumanizing and unjust systems. Our staff and faculty members work closely with students of color, allies, and our community partners and movement teachers in the struggle against oppressive ideas and structures. We reclaim and tell our stories through the arts and produce knowledge across many fields of study. We provide compelling data about the costs of human caging, health inequities (including COVID-19), and hate crimes. For many years, we have fought alongside Indigenous people, laborers, the undocumented, the imprisoned, and those seeking gender equity. We help shape policies and the enactment of legislation. And yet, there is much more to do.

We recognize that higher education remains implicated in such structures of violence and dispossession. To that end, we renew our commitment to enacting principles of abolitionism so that our endeavors of research, teaching, and service are not complicit with the expansion of the police state. We offer spaces to discuss not only the past and the present, but to also work toward a just future. We remember those who have come before us and seek to continue the unfinished work of liberation.

In solidarity,

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