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UCLA introduces steps to create a more inclusive environment for Black Bruins

Plans include a Black Student Resource Center, new faculty positions, fellowships, fundraising and research support

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Chancellor Gene Block and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Emily Carter sent the following message to the UCLA campus community today.

The ongoing principled protests around the nation — and around the world — calling for racial justice have been inspiring and humbling. In this moment we rightfully have been moved to ask

what more we can do to make UCLA a community where all will know that Black lives, Black intellects, Black aspirations and Black experiences matter. In recent weeks, we have heard concerns and suggestions from our faculty, students, staff, alumni and others.

In two letters of response sent to concerned faculty on June 18 and June 26, we proposed the following actions that we want to share with all of you now. We hope the following steps will ensure lasting change that will have a positive impact on our campus:

- **We will appoint a special faculty advisor** in the chancellor's office to advise on issues of concern to Black faculty, staff and students. We will ask stakeholders on campus to nominate candidates and will have the position filled by the end of summer.
- **We will create a Black Student Resource Center on campus** that will add to existing spaces. UCLA will provide funding this coming academic year to establish programs and staffing in the center. We have begun the process to identify the best location options for the Black Student Resource Center in the center of campus. Importantly, this critical space for students will include access to and collaboration with faculty and key Student Affairs staff. We will be meeting and working with student leaders from the Afrikan Student Union and Black Graduate Student Association to review these options.
- **We will expand the intellectual community devoted to Black life and racial equity issues across the entire campus.** We will work closely with the leadership of the Ralph J. Bunche Center and the Department of African American Studies in implementing programs to expand the ranks of graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and faculty, as described below. We will invest in scholarship across the career arc as follows:
 - **We will provide 10 summer graduate fellowship awards each year** beginning in 2021 for research, teaching and service related to Black life. Prospective and current graduate students from across all disciplines will be encouraged to apply this coming academic year. The program commitment is for five years, with potential renewal of the program upon review.
 - **We will create a postdoctoral community focused on Black experience.** Five postdoctoral positions, each renewable for a second year, will be funded for five years starting in 2021, with potential renewal of the program upon review.
 - **We will recruit 10 additional faculty members** over the next five years whose scholarly work — teaching, mentoring and/or research — addresses issues of Black experience. These faculty lines will reside in the Bunche Center with appointments equally balanced between North and South campus departments and programs.
- **We will allocate a dedicated staff member in External Affairs to provide development support** focused on issues related to Black life. In collaboration with academic leadership, we will craft multiyear fundraising goals and advance this agenda with leadership prospects, donors, volunteer boards and local and national foundations as a post-Centennial Campaign fundraising priority.

We also want to ensure that our campus offers the scholarship, environment and resources necessary to more broadly support and promote racial justice in our community and beyond. To that end, we are also committed to the following actions:

- **We will commit \$250,000 for seed research grants** on racial inequities and racial justice, including campus climate issues, each year for five years, with potential renewal of the program

upon review. A committee will be assembled by the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Creative Activities to outline the project description and eligibility criteria, followed by a call for proposals during the upcoming academic year.

- **We will commit to establishing a group similar to the current equity advisors** in academic units that will represent administrative units on campus and in UCLA Health. The group's mission will be to improve climate for staff and to advise on broader diversity and inclusion education.
- **We will allocate a dedicated staff member in Strategic Communications to amplify the voices of faculty, staff and students of color** and others whose work involves challenges to racism and structural inequality. We will vigorously look for opportunities to highlight and lift up the powerful work and compelling stories that need to be heard.
- **We will bolster the leadership roles that the ethnic studies centers play in the life of UCLA.** The Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, the American Indian Studies Center, the Asian American Studies Center and the Chicano Studies Research Center, which are housed in the Institute for American Cultures, have long been rightly recognized as intellectual leaders in the broader community. We will make sure they are equally recognized in the UCLA community as well. We will also ensure scholars within the ethnic studies centers, along with others who have essential expertise, will have representation and a leadership role in these specific efforts.
- **We will comprehensively identify opportunities on campus for additional recognition of Bruins of color** so that our built environment, landscape and programs embrace the diversity of the Bruin community.
- **We will expand the role of the Public Safety Advisory Council that is already in the process of being created**, and ensure that its members represent a diverse cross section of voices on our campus, including our own faculty experts. As a first set of tasks, the new council's work will include reviewing our relationships with external police forces and examining the responsibilities resting with our UC police force to see what work may appropriately be taken on by others and what must stay with UCPD to ensure campus safety. We commit to continuing our improvement in policing, both on campus and off, including how we can further address issues like racial bias and racial profiling, effective de-escalation techniques, data transparency and other pressing racial equity matters to ensure that we protect the safety of all in our community, including Black Bruins and other Bruins of color.
- **UCLA will employ trained mental health professionals who can respond to mental health emergencies, either to support police officers on these calls or — if appropriate — to respond in place of officers.** This approach has worked successfully in other communities and we expect it will better serve our campus, allowing police to focus on their public safety mission.
- **UCLA PD already has banned use of carotid holds, a practice not used in more than 15 years. We will work with the police and the campus community to identify additional use of force policy changes** to ensure that our policies conform to our principles of serving our community.

Our work to fight racism will not end with these steps. More changes will be coming to challenge the structural racism that exists in our education system, from kindergarten through graduate school, including at institutions like UCLA.

Every sector of UCLA should be combating racism and promoting racial justice. This is why we are especially enthusiastic about exploring a suggestion to use the Grand Challenge model — to solve large societal problems in partnership with local communities, along with students, faculty, staff and alumni — to achieve transformative change in society. We think there is great potential in taking up racial inequality and racial justice as a Grand Challenge that organizes and harnesses

the intellectual energy of the campus around the common goal of helping solve one of society's biggest problems.

More changes will be coming. Our deans are actively exploring how to improve their schools' efforts around equity, diversity and inclusion. We will reach out to Staff Assembly leadership and others to better understand the concerns of staff members of color and how we can ensure a supportive professional environment for all, including through new initiatives to benefit staff. We will also build upon UCLA Enrollment Management's efforts to recruit a diverse student body. And we are very pleased that the UC Regents unanimously support legislation that would overturn Prop. 209, which has hindered our aspirations to create a more diverse campus.

The above actions are a starting point for the transformative change needed to get us to that place of true equality, where we will honor our deepest values and fulfill our highest aspirations.

At this historic moment, every institution is being challenged to help create a society that is genuinely just and truly equitable, and that values the lives of all its people. With the partnership of our Bruin community, UCLA **will** rise to that challenge.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block
Chancellor

Emily A. Carter
Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

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