

August 19, 2020

TO: Kalin Pont-Tate, BSU Co-Chair; Black Student Experience Tri-Chair
Evelyn Kennedy, BSU Co-Chair; SASI Communications Director
Ariana Turner, SASI Vice President; GCAP Marketing Director
Vincent Rasso, 2020-21 ASUCR Vice President of External Affairs
Roman Gomez, Queer Alliance Co-President; ASUCR Campus Organizing Director

The recent [Black Lives Matter](#) protests may be the [largest movement](#) in U.S. history. We, the faculty in the Political Science (POSC) department at UC Riverside, stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. We recognize this important moment and the shameful, long history of anti-Black violence that preceded it. We are broadly in agreement with the leadership of student organizations that have, in a letter dated May 31, demanded transformative action on our campus, and recognize our own silence as we witnessed two crises emerge this year that deeply affected our students and our Black students especially: the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted lives and learning on campus and the racist violence and injustice that endangers Black lives in the United States, memorialized most recently in the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Nina Pop, and many more. We acknowledge that students' call for action extends beyond placating allies of the oppressed, and that the May 31 letter seeks action centered on improving the experience of Black students at UC Riverside, re-evaluating the role of the UCPD, and crafting our performance and teaching in a manner that is responsive to their lived realities.

The POSC faculty feel an urgency to respond. We are committed to immediate action and are also in the process of developing a long-term strategy for improving the Black student experience at UC Riverside. We expect to engage with and listen to students and alumni and will host listening sessions throughout the next year to inform our path forward.

We commit to the following in the coming 2020-2021 academic year:

- **POSC Diversity & Inclusion Plan:** Form a standing committee comprising POSC faculty who are charged with: (1) designing and implementing the action items described below; and (2) building the department's longer-term anti-racist strategy to foster greater equity, inclusion, and diversity.
- **Faculty Recruitment and Retention:** Prioritize hiring a scholar of Black Politics above all other hiring needs until such a scholar is hired. Task a small group of faculty to explore available mechanisms even in this resource-constrained era (e.g., UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship, UCR Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowships) to hire a tenure track faculty member whose research and teaching centers Black Politics. Likewise, develop an action plan to recruit and retain talented Black scholars in all subfields within Political Science to the UCR POSC faculty.

- **Student Recruitment and Retention:** Support undergraduate students who identify as Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in pursuing doctoral degree programs through faculty-engaged advising and mentoring and increase recruitment and retention of BIPOC graduate students in UCR's POSC Ph.D. program through pipeline activities (e.g., faculty participation in Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, establishing collaborative projects with the Politics of Race, Immigration, and Ethnicity Consortium, etc.). We will seek frank feedback from BIPOC alumni of our doctoral program, including students who departed before completing degree requirements and re-examine our doctoral program admissions requirements and assessments.
- **Mentoring and Related Financial Support of Student Efforts:** Black and Latinx graduate students already play a leadership role in initiatives such as [POC Also Know Stuff](#). Going forward, we will recognize and compensate graduate students for their work and engagement in efforts to expand BIPOC inclusion in the department, as well as the discipline.
- **Departmental and University-wide Lectures and Colloquia:** Focus invitations for scholarly presentations in POSC during AY 2020-2021 on Black Politics, broadly defined, with a goal of at least 50% of the invitations to be on or about Black Politics. We will prioritize invitations to scholars whose work centers and celebrates Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander and Muslim American excellence in political science scholarship as well as scholarship that interrogates health inequities; the politics of policing and the carceral state; the links between policing and social service provisions like education, health, and other social welfare programs; alternatives to policing; defunding policies; and the (non-)democratic consequences of a political system rooted in racism and other forms of discrimination.
- **Curriculum:** Support faculty in reviewing course syllabi with an eye to inclusion and diversity through hiring a centralized team of research assistants to [use existing tools](#) to approximate the proportion of required readings authored by BIPOC scholars. Relatedly, we will re-examine POSC curriculum to identify gaps in course offerings and chart a path toward filling those gaps.
- **Career Development and Internships:** Develop a robust internship and career development program that links POSC majors to existing UCR job placement programs and skill development efforts.
- **Collaborations with UCR:** Where needed, rehaul/redesign institutional mechanisms and processes in place to sanction acts of discrimination based on race, sex, gender, religion, ethnic identity, and national origin in our academic community.
- **Town Hall Meetings:** Coordinate a quarterly forum and listening session over the course of the 2020-2021 AY to elevate the concerns of BIPOC students on campus and for faculty to listen to and inventory the needs of BIPOC students, and to hold ourselves accountable to the commitments outlined in this letter.

We recognize the historical disparities in the execution of these crucial labors. We commit to sharing the labors equitably, and we call on our administrators in CHASS, UC Riverside, and the UC system to provide the requisite support for these efforts. This includes recognizing faculty contributions to the efforts described above as service toward the university's goals in

promoting diversity and inclusion; such service should be compensated and valued when considering evaluations toward promotion and tenure.

Signed,

Members of the Political Science (POSC) Faculty

Cc:

Interim Dean of CHASS Juliet McMullin

Dean of Graduate Division Shaun Bowler

Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox

Acting Associate Chancellor Johnny Cruz

Interim Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor Thomas M. Smith

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Brian Haynes

Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer Mariam Lam

Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Christine Mata

Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Jennifer Brown

Chair of the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate Dylan Rodriguez

Chair-Elect of the Riverside Division of the Academic Senate Jason Stajich

UC Riverside Academic Senate, Executive Director Cherysa Cortez