



Black Student Union at University of California Merced
May 31, 2020

Call to Action Statement

Dear UC Merced Community, Students, Faculty, Staff, and Alumni,

We are writing this letter with heavy hearts and deep sadness. As I am sure you are all aware of the recent events in Minneapolis, Minnesota. On May 25th, 2020 our Brotha George Floyd was brutally murdered by four officers of the Minneapolis Police Department. While George Floyd was being restrained by three officers, specifically Officer Chauvin decided to place his knee between Mr. Floyd's head and neck. For eight minutes and 46 seconds, Officer Derek Chauvin intentionally kept his knee on George Floyd's neck until Mr. Floyd was lying on the ground. Motionless. George is seen in the video pleading for his life and screaming "I cant breathe". This senseless act of violence was committed by officers in broad daylight while bystanders of the event begged and pleaded for officers to let George breathe. However, the officers had different intentions that day. Since George's untimely and preventable death, the event has gone viral on both social media platforms and local news outlets with American citizens crying out #BlackLivesMatter. Sadly enough, George Floyd's murder was only the most recent injustice endured by Black individuals within the past few months. Our Sistah Breonna Taylor and Brotha Ahmad Arbery were murdered in cold blood due to racist rhetoric and law enforcement's abusive use of power.

The Black Student Union at the University of California Merced would like to offer its deepest condolences and love to the family of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmad Arbery. George was a 46 year-old Houston, Texas native that would undoubtedly still be here today if it weren't for the color of his skin. Black individuals have been targets of abuse, oppression, discrimination, and prejudice for over four hundred years. This is no anomaly. This is America.

For this reason, as a community we are troubled by the silence of the University of California Merced. UC Merced holds the highest population of Black Students in the University of California system, yet 6 days have passed and the Black community on campus has not heard anything from the university. This is highly unacceptable considering the trauma we as Black students are currently enduring at the moment. The University of California Merced's Office of

Campus Climate and Compliance Office is committed to “*enhance campus climate, encourage inclusion, foster respect and promote community.*” With this, the University of California Merced is obligated to “*provide direction, guidance, and resources to assist the campus in creating and maintaining a positive and healthy learning, working and living environment.*”

Call to Action

- **The Black Student Union demands that the University of California Merced release a statement regarding the recent acts of violence within the next 72 hours. We are sick and tired of being ignored and deprived of resources. As a community of 5% Black students, we demand that the institution speak up! We are demanding the university SAY HIS NAME.**
- **We also demand that the University give Black students emotional resources such as on demand Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) support considering the recent occurrence of events that have been broadcasted all over the media platforms. Countless Black students are struggling mentally and emotionally. Black students deserve an outlet of support during these sensitive and emotionally triggering times.**
- **Finally, we demand the resources to create a safe space with a Black mediator to discuss our feelings and emotions that have been brought upon after these events. We demand the university fund a remote workshop where Black students can express these emotions.**

In essence, the nonexistent reaction of the University is highly unacceptable. As we have stated before, we are giving the University **72 hours** to respond to these events. We have drafted this statement because we are sick and tired of being deprived of fundamental resources that are crucial for the personal and academic success of Black students on our campus. We are demanding support from our campus administration, faculty, staff and community which gets so much praise for having the highest number of first-generation and minority students. We will not stop until we are supported. Moreover, it should not even be a question whether or not there should be more emotional support at such a crucial time. The university's silence is speaking volumes.

Thank you,

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