

## UCSD DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND OTHERS

The members of the Department of Sociology stand in solidarity with our Black students, faculty, staff, and all others who are hurting, grieving, and outraged by the tragic murders of George Floyd and so many others at the hands of racism and organized brutality. As sociologists, we know that these heinous, anti-Black crimes are not anomalous, but endemic to a racist system that affects the daily experiences and opportunities of Black Americans and other communities of color through physical, economic, structural, and psychological forms of violence. These recent acts of racial violence and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on communities of color are acute reminders that equality is a racialized privilege available to the very few. We stand in solidarity with all who seek to make fundamental and lasting change to our shared, collective future.

This is an extraordinarily difficult time. We were already living through a pandemic when searing racial violence convulsed the nation. The wishes that many of us had in earlier days of this pandemic for everything to return to "normal" have been replaced by the realization -- and not for the first time -- that even that "normal" reality is terrible for so many. It's no wonder that people are choosing to risk their safety, both in the face of this virus and with the threat of physical violence, to take a stand against that "normal."

In advocating and building a common, anti-racist future, we must forever bear in mind that racism is not unavoidable but is animated by the countless actions, expectations, and decisions we take in our everyday lives. In times like these, every single one of us must actively oppose forms of racism that often dominate the lives of too many. Here, we invite our colleagues, friends, and allies to think of specific and concrete ways in which they can contribute.

1. We encourage faculty, graduate students, and staff to consider the effects of the current environment on the mental, emotional, and physical health of students, particularly those that are more likely to be directly exposed to racial violence. As we head into finals week, we will take into account the immense trauma that our students are experiencing. We believe it is particularly important to rethink how we deal with changes to the evaluations and assessments, bearing in mind that apparently color-blind policies (for example, extensions and interruptions) can and will have racialized consequences. In offering support, we urgently ask our colleagues to err on the side of compassion and generosity.
2. We invite faculty, graduate students, and staff to actively vocalize support for Black Lives Matter and other anti-racist movements in the classroom and in their communications with students. This involves being proactive and recognizing that the social agendas of these movements involve a critical defense of people whom the system has failed. Now more than ever, students need to be exposed to principled, informed views on the depth of systemic racism in contemporary societies. Skirting around discussions of racism does not help. On the contrary, as a phenomenon that cuts across most aspects of social life, there are ample opportunities to discuss these topics with our students in ways that are consistent with both our educational objectives and our social goals. When possible, we also invite colleagues, allies and friends to support financially and logistically the efforts of anti-racist movements.

3. We recognize the importance of valuing the difficulties faced by everyone in these troubling times, but we urge faculty, staff, and students to avoid generalizing arguments and policies in ways that amount to “all-lives-matter-isms” that avoid concrete solutions and interventions. We should be solidary, but remember that particular communities are routinely exposed to overwhelming levels of injustice, exploitation, and violence and that these individuals are likely to suffer disproportionately from the current crisis.
  
4. We encourage our friends, colleagues, and allies to see this moment for what it is. The mass uprising in the streets has given us a rare historical moment. We sense that we stand on the hinges of history. A post-segregationist racial order is closing. Brave activists in the streets have given us the gift of re-examination and pose the questions: “What should racial democracy in America look like and how can we get there?” As professional sociologists who value public sociology, the moment is ripe to ask a series of additional questions: How may we re-think the relationship between sociology and the social change that activists are demanding? How should we reconsider our role as individual sociologists? How should we proceed from this point forward?