



University Advancement
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July 27, 2020

Dear Advancement Colleagues:

George Floyd, Nina Pop, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery. We say their names so we never forget. In 2020, these four individuals have come to symbolize the ongoing national epidemic of unarmed Black Americans killed by police. At UC Riverside, where equity and inclusion are cornerstones of who we are, we are horrified, outraged, and alarmed by the growing violence perpetrated by institutions that have lost sight of their duty to protect and to serve.

Black lives matter. They matter because systemic racism has subjugated, exploited, and brutalized them over 400 years since their ancestors were forcibly enslaved and brought to this country. They matter because they are subjected to conscious and unconscious bias, prejudice, discrimination, and other indignities across society. They matter because they have been disproportionately punished and incarcerated by the criminal justice system; harassed, injured, and killed by some sectors of law enforcement; and deprived of the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness guaranteed to every American.

We stand with fellow Americans who believe we can and must be better. We at UC Riverside celebrate the accomplishments of our diverse communities and repudiate the injustice we have seen moving from darkness into the light over the past few decades. We commit ourselves not to be casual bystanders, but to do our part in the struggle for justice.

It is reasonable to ask what all this has to do with Advancement. Here is how I see these issues aligning.

1. Our diverse student body produces a diverse alumni body. As a result, the systemic assault on the dignity and opportunities of people of color impacts our alumni population disproportionately. We must advocate for them and strive to reflect the richness of their varied life experiences if we hope to have any credibility or effectiveness in engaging them with UCR.
2. We could be at any university or college, but we choose to be at UC Riverside, where we believe in the potential of society's most vulnerable and underserved to achieve greatness. We cannot simultaneously champion this narrative and not care passionately about social justice.
3. All human lives have value, but our institutions often behave as if Black lives have less value. We reject that philosophy because we believe it is immoral, unfair, and fundamentally un-American.

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What does this mean for us operationally?

First, language or actions that violate our Principles of Community or commitment to non-discrimination are unacceptable. Bigotry has no place in our organization. The concept of unconscious bias means that people will do and say things that are not intended to cause offense and the goal is not a culture of internal retribution or punishment. We pledge to each other that: impact matters more than intent, we invite others to challenge us with compassion and patience when we make mistakes, and we welcome teachable moments that help us all be better humans.

Second, we acknowledge that we have much to learn about what it means to be better humans, and pledge to regularly – and as often as necessary – invite each other and outside experts to teach us how best to support our colleagues and constituents who may not enjoy the same level of privilege that we do, and in whose success we support and believe. While some might call this diversity training, I characterize it as an open-ended, continuous reckoning with a complicated history that leads us to a simple conclusion: we must identify instances of injustice, develop appropriate responses, and educate others about why this is core to who we are as Highlanders. This means that sometimes we will be called upon to help educate alumni, volunteers, and friends when they say or do things that run contrary to our values.

Finally, we will double down on efforts to invite newcomers to the table, in ways both big and small. From enlarging the net we throw in recruiting staff to amplifying previously marginalized voices through our storytelling channels, there has been no better moment than today to ensure that the public presence of UCR faithfully and authentically represents the promise of a more just, pluralistic, and equitable future.

I invite you to join me as we build and expand efforts to hold us accountable for creating an inclusive, equitable, and supportive climate that allows each individual in our organization – and those we touch on behalf of UCR – to realize their full potential. If you have specific ideas, please share them.

Respectfully,



Peter Hayashida
Vice Chancellor, University Advancement