

Support of Black Lives Matter

We stand in solidarity with the many people across the world who are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of the lives of Black people at the hands of police and vigilantes in the US. Recent events have once again laid bare the longstanding and pervasive legacy of anti-Blackness at the heart of US white-supremacist culture.

The killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Daunte Wright, and Tony McDade represent only some of the most recent cases that are part of a broader pattern in our society. As sociologists, we recognize these actions and the corresponding lack of consequence for the perpetrators, not solely as acts of flawed individuals, but as a reflection of the systemic racism that is deeply rooted in the fabric of our society and its institutions. We condemn, in the strongest way possible, these actions and the beliefs and structures that facilitate them. We endorse the recent resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement and support the restructuring of our nation's institutions to value, protect, and elevate the lives of Black people.

We recognize that the devaluation of Black lives extends beyond acts of police violence and is evident in all facets of society, including healthcare, politics, workplaces, and education. To improve our own department, and by extension the university, community, and world around us, we are committed to the work needed to cultivate deliberately anti-racist approaches in our curriculum, classroom management, teaching, outreach, and mentoring. We acknowledge that this work will be hard and that it will require an ongoing commitment for many weeks, months, and possibly years. Nevertheless, we commit to working with our students and each other to facilitate this transformation and vow not to allow the difficult labor to fall on our Black students and faculty who have historically had to do a disproportionate share.

In the short term, we, the non-Black members of the department, are reflecting on our own contributions to the perpetuation of white supremacy and other unequal power structures, and we are talking about these issues with our families, friends, and colleagues. We are reading, attending workshops, listening, and reflecting. We are considering the content of our fall classes and adjusting to center marginalized scholars and develop an inclusive curriculum.

In the longer term, we will create graduate and undergraduate curricula that consistently center marginalized voices, foster an anti-racist climate in our classes and in the department, develop a mechanism to address instances of racial micro-aggressions or macro-aggressions, and work to diversify our faculty through hiring.

For too long these types of tragedies have produced myriad letters of solidarity issued by businesses and organizations, but little actual effort at making serious change. The time has come to put action alongside our words. This effort will be a marathon, not a sprint, but we are in it for the long haul.

In solidarity,

UCF Sociology Faculty and Staff

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