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How we are Rising to the Challenge

1 message

Chancellor Gene D. Block and Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Emily A. Carte

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To: rspriggs@g.ucla.edu



Office of the Chancellor Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Dear Bruin Community:

This summer has been a time of introspection and rededication as people and institutions across the United States have wrestled with how to address structural and other forms of racism. Last week's decision in the Breonna Taylor case, and the anguish it has caused, reminds us of the need for meaningful change throughout our society.

At UCLA, building on the efforts of many across campus who have spent years working towards racial equity, we have been taking a number of actions to ensure that our institution actively confronts racism, discrimination and bias and that we welcome, support, protect and value every member of our Bruin family.

While some of these recent efforts are campuswide initiatives, we are proud and grateful to see so many UCLA units and schools heed this call to bring about change at a more local level. For instance, the UCLA Health System's leaders are holding [monthly conversations about racial equity](#) to engage the entire organization in open dialogue. The David Geffen School of Medicine has developed [an institutional anti-racism roadmap](#). The Anderson School of Management is reworking its curriculum to reflect greater diversity in course materials and speakers while the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science is joining UCLA College's Division of Life Sciences in utilizing a Mentor Professor Program to recruit faculty who are both outstanding in their fields and have a record of providing support to students from underrepresented groups. The UCLA Alumni Association is creating anti-racism and allyship trainings for UCLA graduates. We are encouraged by the work of so many who have sought to identify and meet these needs within their communities.

In June, [we announced a number of central campus initiatives](#) designed to advance equity across UCLA and to nurture an environment that honors the lives, intellect, experience and aspirations of Black Bruins in particular. These efforts are core to UCLA's mission and we write today to share some of the progress we have made and some of the new initiatives we are undertaking.

Establishing a Black Resource Center for students in the center of campus. Set to launch this fall, the new Black Resource Center will have full-time professional staff and will provide resources to support the high caliber of Black student learning, development and scholarship at UCLA. The center will offer services remotely this term while the physical space is developed. Student Affairs is collaborating closely with students on the center's programmatic design.

Expanding the intellectual community devoted to Black life and racial equity. We have begun the first round of a five-year initiative to hire new faculty whose scholarly work, teaching and/or mentoring relates to Black experience. The Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies, which is administering this effort, has appointed a faculty hiring committee with representation from both north and south campus. We expect to conduct two tenure-track searches at the assistant professor rank this academic year. A call for letters of interest was sent to department and program chairs and is due October 2, 2020.

The Bunche Center will also support five UCLA Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellows across a broad set of academic disciplines through the [UC President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program](#). The first cohort will begin in 2021-22, with a possibility of renewal for a second year. Fellowship applications are due through the program's web site by November 1, 2020.

Finally, beginning in 2021, the Bunche Center will facilitate awarding 10 summer graduate fellowships for research, teaching and service tied to Black life. Prospective and current graduate students from across the disciplines will be encouraged to apply. The program commitment is for five years, with potential renewal of the program upon review. The application window will open this winter.

Creating a director of development position to maximize philanthropic support for Black life, teaching and research. The search process is underway for a development professional who will collaborate with departments and programs across campus to develop a cohesive fundraising strategy and leverage partnerships to support Black excellence at UCLA.

Establishing the Civil Rights Office within the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Once in place, the Civil Rights Office will coordinate all civil rights investigations involving faculty and staff and will be a leader in preventing discrimination on campus. A search is currently underway to fill the new position of assistant vice chancellor for civil rights.

Launching the Campus Honorary Naming Advisory Committee. Composed of [a broad set of campus stakeholders](#), this new committee will conduct a review of buildings and other physical spaces with generic names on the UCLA campus, and make recommendations for how we might name certain such spaces after deserving individuals and groups from UCLA's history. Those we honor in this fashion will reflect the diversity of our institution. The committee will also develop a process by which our community can consider whether there currently exist structures or spaces whose names are not in keeping with UCLA's core values.

Dedicating additional resources in the Office of Strategic Communications to further amplify the contributions of students, faculty and staff of color as well as others in our Bruin family who are working to challenge racism and structural inequality. We are enhancing efforts to seek out and create compelling ways to share these stories and shine a light on the experiences of communities of color at UCLA.

While in June we announced an effort to examine and improve campus safety operations, we heard from many in our community a desire for a different structure and charge related to this work. **We are convening conversations with students, faculty, staff and alumni to develop a new process and timeline for how we ensure that our public safety operations are always aligned with our values of equity, diversity and inclusion.** This new process will better account for the range of perspectives that exist on how we can protect our community fairly and without bias or discrimination.

Additionally, as previously announced, [we recently appointed Professor Vickie Mays as special advisor to the chancellor on Black life](#). A distinguished professor and former Academic Senate chair with deep ties to the university, Professor Mays will play a key role in helping our campus understand and address the concerns of Black students, faculty and staff. She will provide advice and recommendations to senior leadership on issues related to Black life, create new opportunities for dialogue and help build infrastructure to aid our work in support of the Black community.

Finally, we are delighted that [Anna Spain Bradley has joined UCLA's leadership team as our new vice chancellor for equity, diversity and inclusion](#). A lawyer, mediator and scholar of racism and

human rights law, Vice Chancellor Spain Bradley's work will include high-level coordination of campuswide diversity initiatives; strategic planning; research and education; training and compliance; and partnering with other senior leaders to ensure that UCLA is a welcoming, supportive and equitable place for all of our students, faculty and staff.

In the months ahead, building on the suggestions from and in partnership with Bruins throughout our community, we will continue to advance these and other racial justice initiatives. For us to truly serve our public mission, UCLA must be a place that respects and empowers all Bruins and that works to overcome anti-Blackness and other manifestations of racism throughout society. We will remain vigilant in pursuing these goals.

Sincerely,

Gene D. Block

Chancellor

Emily A. Carter

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost