

## **To the University of California, Riverside Leadership and Community,**

The Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside condemns in the strongest terms possible the persistent antiblack violence and forms of institutionalized discrimination that bring harm, suffering, and early death by preventable causes to Black communities, and especially to our Black students, staff and faculty. Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery are only a few of the victims brutally taken from the world by the ongoing genocidal forces of antiblackness and police brutality, only one manifestation of hundreds of years of a multifaceted genocidal process that continues to impact singularly Black communities in the US and internationally.

Over the last ten years, the UCR PD total budget expenditures have increased from \$4.4m in 2009/10 to \$9m in 2018, an increase of 104.5% -- one of the highest in the UC system. At the same time as the UCPD budget has doubled, there has been an alarming decrease in the funding of academic units. We demand an immediate shift in funding away from the police and towards new initiatives to found a Black Studies Department, as well as to recruit, support, and retain Black students, staff, and faculty. We also call for the ultimate abolition of the police on campus, as a source of antiblackness, violence, and criminalization towards our Black community members. This begins with the complete evacuation and physical removal of UC Police Station and officers as recourse and symbols of safety. In addition to abolishing police on campus, we also demand the immediate elimination of the cooperative effort between the UCR PD and the Riverside Police Department (RPD) known as the University Neighborhood Enhancement Team, or UNET. Given the RPD's racist and sexist history of police brutality against Black people, including the murder of Tyisha Miller in 1998, this cooperation, which has resulted in the unjust policing and harassing of our Black students, must come to an immediate halt.

Taking these actions even further, we suggest concrete steps toward abolition of the UCPD in its current form. Police are a totalizing, dangerously valorized response to crises; they are not preventative of violence, but a source of violence. Steps in this process include, but are not limited to, the following: We will vocally support student demands to defund the UCR PD. We call for the redirecting of all salaries and policing budgets to other university resources that will benefit our Black students, staff, and faculty, including an increase in scholarships for Black students. The lack of Black programs, or adequate budgets for them, is unacceptable, and should never have been overlooked or normalized. Threads of alternative, campus- and community-based solutions that we expect to be implemented include: multilingual skills-based education on bystander intervention, assessing community needs and implementing changes which prioritize Queer, Trans, Black, immigrant, Native and disabled communities, investing in alternative housing for Trans youth and survivors of gender based sexual and other violence. We also call for the establishment of neighborhood based trauma centers; non-coercive unconditional mental healthcare; expanded research, major disciplines, and community spaces for Queer, Trans, Black, immigrant, Native and disabled communities; gender-inclusive restrooms; larger food banks and more

community gardens throughout UC Riverside's agricultural operations fields; and community land trusts and free tuition for Black and historically displaced peoples. We affirm that Black student leadership, participation, and input are critical to this effort.

We strongly support dismantling antiblack practices and policies that endanger our students and our community, and the construction of new forms of campus safety that truly provide a safe place to learn and be for ALL students, staff, faculty, and others. We take our lead from the BSU in calling for exploration of alternative forms of safety, beyond policing. We also join the UC Academic Council's calls to dismantle our collective reliance on policing and other criminalizing practices. We strongly support the BSU suggestions for constructive next steps, including Black student representation at all levels of the university, expansion of student relations, and immediate and ongoing conversations with Chancellor Wilcox, administration, UCPD, and allies that are followed by concrete steps to move toward substantive change in which UCR is held accountable. And we are prepared to support student demands beyond the negotiating table, if the administration is not sufficiently responsive.

We recognize the call from the BSU that policing, as an inherently antiblack institution that discriminates against Black students, faculty, staff and workers, has no place on our campus in its current form. We also recognize that such antiblack practices not only threaten the safety and well-being of those on our campus, but that they are a corrosive force that also seeps into our spaces of learning and collective being.

Sincerely,

The Department of Anthropology