

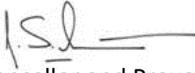


OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED
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June 25, 2021

TO: Dania Matos, Associate Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer
Armando Contreras, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students
Robin DeLugan, Academic Senate Liaison

FR: Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Chancellor 
Gregg Camfield, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost 

SUBJECT: Response to the Valuing Black Lives (VBL) Initiative Administrative Co-Leads Report

The Valuing Black Lives Initiative is rooted in the acknowledgement that anti-Blackness is detrimental to our mission as a public research university. We applaud the work of those who contributed to this important initiative and thank the administrative co-leads for the recommendations outlined in the February 26, 2021 report. This report will serve as a blueprint for institutional actions for years to come.

In recognition of the importance of the contributions of the Valuing Black Lives Initiative to the advancement of the UC Merced mission, please find below an initial set of immediate, short-term, and long-term commitments.

IMMEDIATE (WITHIN 1 YEAR):

1. Centralized oversight through a Council on Anti-Racism:

- I. Establish a Council on Anti-Racism to provide oversight for the initiatives. The Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (OEDI) will reconstitute the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Campus Climate and Inclusion (CCCI) into a Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Campus Climate, Antiracism and Equity (CCCAE) that will include student, staff and faculty representatives from diverse groups (SFCA, AS-D&EC, UCMB, etc.). CCCAE would report up to both Chancellor and EVC/P with a charge of developing and implementing accountability measures for campus-wide initiatives aimed at combating racism.

2. Call to Action on Racial Equity:

- I. Launch a campus-wide call to action and commit to the advancement of racial equity. We will reaffirm our commitment in university-wide messaging. The Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI) will advise on timing and content of these reaffirming messages.

3. Strategic Plan on Valuing Black Lives:

- I. Develop a plan for how we continuously value Black lives on our campus.
- II. Implement quarterly meetings for leadership led by OEDI and division leads for unit leaders to share progress on anti-Black and anti-racist initiatives.
- III. Continue monthly meetings with the student Pan-African Council and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to provide students with updates on campus initiatives and listen to students regarding their experiences.

4. Colloquium on Anti-Black Racism:

- I. Host a Colloquium on Anti-Black Racism under OEDI leadership (approx. 20K one-time commitment).

5. **Create a position for a Director of Black Success that specifically oversees the advancement of Black initiatives on our campus.**
 - I. We will create this new position under the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (VPDUE), with strong ties to CCCAE (approx. 100K annual commitment).
6. **Black student mental health goals:**
 - I. Offer radical healing workshops and wellness workshops coordinated by Counseling and Psychological Services that focus on historical trauma, institutional racism and discrimination, building resilience and wellness needs of African American and Black scholars.
 - II. Launch Black Scholar Wellbeing resource page (Created Fall 2020 at CAPS site)
7. **Research and scholarship:**
 - I. Create and fund the Black Graduate Student Fellows. We currently have four incoming awardees of the new Chancellor's Fellowship for Inclusive Excellence, focused on Black scholarship. (120K ongoing annual commitment)
8. **Policing and anti-Black violence:**

In advance of anticipated systemwide UC Presidential guidance to be provided later this summer, UC Merced has already committed to the following:

 - I. Implement regular forums hosted by the campus Police Department (PD) and Chancellor's designee to the Police Advisory Board aimed at increasing communication, and building trust between the campus community and the PD.
 - II. Change complaint intake and investigation out of the PD to an office where any community member would feel safe to raise concerns and confident that those concerns will be addressed. We will use the office of the Locally Designated Official (independent of Police Department) to handle all complaints.
 - III. Develop presentations/trainings for the campus community that clarify expectations for community-police interactions and how to address breaches of those expectations.

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN 2 YEARS):

9. **Black student mental health goals:**
 - I. Develop and offer support groups for Black scholars (started January 2021 through Counseling and Psychological Services)
 - II. Update staff job description and hire staff psychologists with experience working with Black and African American, and LGBTQ+ communities in academia (completed September 2020)
10. **Black scholar resource and retention center goals:**
 - I. Hire peer Academic Coaches to support the work of the Black Student Resource and Retention Center (approx. 50K annual commitment)
 - II. Create Cultural/Resource Advisory Boards to provide recommendations to the CCCAE that advance social justice, equity and inclusion priorities and affinity centers
11. **Leadership, scholarship, and career goals:**
 - I. Create the Black Research Fellowship program - We piloted this in 20-21 with support of four \$2500 fellowships and a showcase. Chancellor provided one-time funding for 2020-2021 (10K one-time commitment). Jonathan Grady, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students worked to secure 5 years of funding (\$11,000/year for a total of \$55,000) starting Fall 2021.
 - II. Host alumni series on bringing your whole identity to the workplace as part of a career readiness series in partnership with Center for Career and Professional Development and Alumni Affairs
12. **Education goals:**
 - I. Hire an admissions recruitment and outreach specialists to focus on Black student recruitment (approved by the chancellor and currently in recruitment: approx. 50K annual commitment)

- II. Plan for more robust and consistent outreach to partner with high schools and community organizations
- III. Plan for increased relationship building with parents and families in support of student success
- IV. Build awareness of scholarships for Black students supported by National Regional Black Organizations: Divine 9 Fraternal and Sorority Orgs, NAACPS, Links inc., California Black Chamber of Commerce, etc.

13. Research, scholarship, and funding opportunities:

- I. Increase funding support by 50K from EVC/P to support BIPOC faculty research, scholarship, and funding beyond what is currently being made available in School/Dept (50K one-time commitment)

14. Classroom pedagogy and climate actions:

- I. In Fall 2020, OEDI and CETL piloted an anti-racist pedagogy discussion series which culminated in an Equity Advancing Showcase on Education (EASE) in May 2021. Due to its success, this initiative will now be formalized and integrated in annual offerings.
- II. Distribute anti-racist pedagogy reading to graduate students
- III. Create resource page on inclusive excellence and anti-racist pedagogy for instructors
- IV. Add standard language to CatCourses around processes to report hostile environments.

LONG-TERM ACTIONS (WITHIN 5 YEARS):

15. Education goals:

- I. Increase number of applications and admission of Black students to be above the state average for eligible Black students graduating from California High Schools.
- II. Develop UC-HBCU proposals that will establish long-term partnerships with students and faculty from HBCUs. This effort is currently in development. Faculty and administrators at UC Merced are actively seeking partnerships with HBCUs to recruit undergraduates into graduate programs at UC Merced. Faculty members submitted five proposals in AY20-21 to the UC-HBCU program. Each proposal seeks funding from UCOP to recruit and enroll HBCU students into specific graduate programs through faculty collaborations, research opportunities, and professional development programs. Leadership is working to form partnerships with three HBCUs by establishing MOUs as broad frameworks for facilitating faculty collaborations, visits to and from UC Merced, and application fee waivers and other incentives for HBCU students to apply to UC Merced graduate programs.

16. Black student mental health goals:

- I. Increase the counselors of color in CAPS. Human Resources and Student Affairs are working on an EDI recruitment plan for ongoing recruitment efforts.

17. Outreach and community engagement:

- I. Establish processes for integrated data collection on community engagement activities from research to courses, student activities to service/volunteer by staff, etc. to facilitate stronger connections

18. Policing and anti-Black violence.

- I. As resources permit, hire staff including mental health professionals and others who can respond to issues that do not require police expertise. Chancellor supported and funded hiring of the first Community Wellness Director in PD this year as a starting point for this type of structure (100K annual commitment).

19. Research, scholarship, and funding goals:

- I. We are supportive of the creation of this type of center and are working on a proposal.
- II. Develop a Black Postdoctoral research fellows program with the EVC/P and Graduate Division (approx. 60K annual commitment).

20. National conference at UC Merced:

- I. Host a National Conference at UC Merced, focusing on Valuing Black Lives, research, scholarship etc.

(approx. 50K one-time commitment)

- II. Support for student participation in Afrikan Black Coalition – statewide annual student conference

21. Staff recruitment and retention:

- I. Evaluate internal business and hiring practices to develop community-friendly recruitment strategies, with emphasis on our commitment to EDI.
- II. Will work with community partners to better advertise available positions
- III. Meetings with local leaders have already taken place.

22. Campus culture goals:

- I. Install public art that reflects campus value and commitment to equity, inclusion, and social justice. We will incorporate these values into the processes currently being developed for review and recommendation of public art on campus.

23. Black scholar resource and retention center goals:

- I. Expand the current space allocation and create sustained funding to support the operation of the Black Scholar Resource and Retention Center. We have just approved new space for the Black Scholar Resource and Retention Center in the new part of campus (Granite Pass) that provides three times more space than they are currently occupying on the 3rd floor of the library.

The financial commitment to implement the initiatives above amounts to approximately 2.3M over 5 years. We intend for this significant financial commitment to signal the importance of these and other equity-minded efforts to our campus community and beyond. We are investing in a brighter future and will continue to do so. As our campus financial outlook improves over the years, we intend to commit additional institutional resources to support an anti-racist climate, structures and programs that serve to advance the mission of our institution.

CC: Ed Klotzbier, Vice Chancellor and Chief External Relations Officer
Luanna Putney, Associate Chancellor and Chief of Staff