

Dear CU System and University Leadership and Campus Communities,

We, the Faculty Council Committee for Racial and Ethnic Equity (CREE), are outraged and grieving over the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Tony McDade. These Black people have all been killed by police in recent weeks. Although these wounds are fresh, particularly for Black people in our community, we recognize that they are but the most recent killings of Black Americans at the hands of police.

As letters go out from various CU groups and leaders, we offer the following suggestions and delineations for consideration in these communiques to inspire healing instead of further wounding:

Please do not follow any condolence statements with a condemnation of, or warning to, protestors who are violent or destructive to property. This rhetorical move erases any sympathy expressed to grieving Black people. It also engages and promotes falsehoods that Black Lives Matter demonstrators are violent. This is particularly troubling given the racist stereotype that Black people are violent (Wilson, 2005).

We consider this association of protestors with violence to be a falsehood in part because there are several investigations, nationally, into white supremacist groups inciting violence at BLM protests, as well as investigations into heavily-militarized police inciting violence. For example, one DPD officer was recently fired because he posted a picture with two other officers in SWAT gear under the headline, [“Let’s start a riot!”](#) Furthermore, expressions over the concern of destruction of property is dismissive in the way that it elevates concern for property over the Black lives that continue to be taken.

We, as CREE, are concerned about systemic racism in the criminal justice system (Alexander, 2012), as well as that within higher education (Ahmed, 2012; Nishi, 2020). We, along with our students and communities of color are grieving. As such, we recommend that leaders make concrete investments in racial justice and equity by disinvesting and breaking ties with city police as well as training faculty and staff (including campus police) on race, racism, and anti-blackness (Dumas, 2016) and how it works in higher education. In this way, we support CU Boulder’s Black Student Alliance in their demands.

As former Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Inclusion for the CU Denver and Anschutz Medical Campuses, Professor Emerita, and renowned community equity leader, Brenda J. Allen, has [recommended](#), now is the time for the CU community and particularly leadership to commit themselves to understanding issues of racial justice by educating themselves. It is also the time to double down our efforts to recruit and retain faculty of color throughout the CU system. We stand ready to support these efforts, and we invite system and campus leaders to commit to working with us immediately to implement proven practices.

In closing, we send out our support to the Black community and say Black Lives Matter!

Sincerely,

The Faculty Council Committee on Racial and Ethnic Equity (CREE)

References:

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Dumas, M.J. (2016). Against the dark: Antiblackness in education policy and discourse. *Theory Into Practice*, 55(1), 11-19, DOI: 10.1080/00405841.2016.1116852

Nishi, N.W. (2020). Imperialistic reclamation of higher education diversity initiatives through semantic co-option and concessions. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13613324.2020.1718079.

Wilson, D. (2005). *Inventing black-on-black violence: Discourse, space, and representation*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.