

May 31, 2020

Dear Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox and UCR Administration,

Over the course of the last three months, students at UC Riverside have had our lives uprooted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and in the midst of this already troubling time, rampant anti-black police violence has caused us further distress. We are centering Black voices and pushing for transformative action to be taken in order to promote academic well-being for ALL and equity that will uplift and empower the campus diversity that UC Riverside shamelessly, incessantly, and falsely promotes.

As an academic institution, it is extremely unreasonable and unacceptable to expect any student to complete coursework or succeed academically during such troubling times, but particularly marginalized and underserved students. The members of UCR's Black student community, who have been faced with systemic injustice and national outrage, are especially affected. This outrage is a result of the deaths of

Ahmaud Arbery, a man from Georgia who was shot while jogging down the street after being pursued by

two heavily armed white men (February 23), *Breonna Taylor* who was shot 8 times in the process of a

"no-knock" warrant by Louisville police in Kentucky (March 13), *Nina Pop*, a transgender woman who

was stabbed to death in her own apartment in Missouri (May 3), *George Floyd* whose neck was forcefully

knelt upon by Minneapolis police for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, which includes the 2 minutes and 53 seconds that he was unresponsive (May 25), and countless others. We will NOT sit silent or remain

complacent in the face of these injustices, especially when we find ourselves fighting the same struggles here at UC Riverside. There has to be constructive, meaningful, and long-lasting action put into place.

UCR's response to COVID-19 and the abrupt implementation of remote instruction was unacceptable and did not do nearly enough to accommodate students' academic capacity, mental health, or personal situations. Now, the expectation is to overlook the social-political climate and maintain good academic standing in unprecedented terrain. We refuse. We demand that you prioritize the needs of the student body and properly address the issues at hand: Unorganized and ill-prepared COVID-19 responses along with systematic racial injustice that we see many reflections of in our very own campus community.

In regards to recent communications sent out by Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox, mourning the death of George Floyd (while omitting mention of Breonna Taylor and Nina Pop) and acknowledging the diversity on our campus, students have overwhelmingly come to the collective conclusion that without commitments or action, this statement has no meaning. Our administrative decision-makers must do more to not only honor Black victims of police brutality and racial discrimination across America, but move urgently to take action on the systemic and institutional oppression that Black students and students of color at UCR face every day.

With the aforementioned concerns, the students and organizations undersigned at the University of California, Riverside, demand the following action to be taken on behalf of Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox and the UC Riverside administration.

WE DEMAND:

1. **The immediate cancellation, postponement, or optional choice for Spring Quarter 2020 final exams.** Due to the EXTREME circumstances that members of our campus community have been faced with, (the impact of COVID-19 and the anti-black police violence imposed on our student

communities) we demand this accommodation for the entirety of the student body who has voiced their struggles in our current academic environment. You have a commitment to all students' best interests as an academic institution. Show it.

2. **The campus-wide support for the Black student community** regarding accountability, educational equity, and increased support services. This includes the physical and monetary support of African Student Programs, The Pan-African Themed Hall, and the various student organizations in the Black community. This also includes a dedicated committee or working group which incorporates student representatives, black staff, and administration, that is consistently present every year and has more responsibility and power than simply suggesting actions to the chancellor.
3. **The immediate implementation of a No Failing policy for the Spring Quarter 2020.** We urge campus administration to host a consultation with the UCR Academic Senate that will provide for the much needed relief to our most vulnerable students. This will be through the assessment of Spring Quarter academic performance and (lack of) sufficient accommodations provided by the UC Riverside faculty during our unprecedented remote quarter, a transition that was made with extremely short notice. Many other institutions have already implemented some version of this protocol, including Yale (which was the fourth ivy league to do so) and UC Berkeley who adopted a form of this much earlier in the quarter. It's now our turn to take the appropriate action.
4. **The assessment of alternative forms of UCR campus safety and ultimate divestment from UCPD**, an inherently anti-black institution. This includes open exploration of new tactics and forms of protection in our community outside of UCPD, while also having consistent dialogue with officers and implementing resources such as body cameras, anti-prejudice escalation modules, and constructive communication strategies. We would also like to have Black student

representatives present on the hiring committee for any new officers or chief of police.

TIMELINE:

We expect an actionable response to this statement and list of demands **NO LATER THAN** Wednesday June 3rd, 2020 at 4:00pm. Failure to do so will result in communal outrage and further intense action.

**The explicitly intended recipients of this message includes: Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox
Acting Associate Chancellor Johnny Cruz Interim Provost and Executive Vice
Chancellor Thomas M. Smith Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Brian Haynes
Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer Mariam Lam Associate Vice
Chancellor for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Christine Mata Vice Provost and
Dean of Undergraduate Education Jennifer Brown Chair of the Riverside Division of the
Academic Senate Dylan Rodriguez Chief of University of California Police Department
Michael Lane Dean of CHASS Milagros Pena Dean of BCOE Christopher Lynch Dean
of CNAS Kathryn Uhrich Interim Dean of GSOE Louie F Rodriguez Dean of SOBA
Yunzeng Wang Vice Chancellor for Health and Sciences and Dean of SOM Deborah
Deas Dean of SPP Anil Deolalikar Vice Chancellor for Planning, Budget and
Administration Gerry Bomotti Assistant Vice Chancellor of Governmental and
Community Relations Elizabeth Romero UCPD Assistant Police Chief John Freese
UCPD New Media Contact Kris Loveskin UC Riverside Academic Senate, Executive
Director Cherysa Cortez**

As an institution that consistently claims an emphasis on its diversity, UC Riverside has a responsibility to support the well-being of its diverse student body. Our current reality is an opportunity to demonstrate this emphasis and provide the much needed support. The circumstances we find ourselves in are troubling

and have serious repercussions in all aspects of life, but for students, academia and mental health is particularly challenging right now. The student body cannot succeed academically if they are not stable and succeeding mentally. We urge that you hear the requests of the student body and prioritize our well-being. We call on Chancellor Kim A. Wilcox and the Administration to prioritize not only the needs of its students, but also the needs of our Black community during this time. We await your response.

With a **Call to Action**,

Kalin Pont-Tate, BSU Co-Chair; Black Student Experience Tri-Chair Evelyn Kennedy, BSU Co-Chair; SASI Communications Director Ariana Turner, SASI Vice President; GCAP Marketing Director Vincent Rasso, 2020-21 ASUCR Vice

President of External Affairs Roman Gomez, Queer Alliance Co-President; ASUCR
Campus Organizing Director

And many others In Solidarity.

UC Riverside Campus-Organization Official Support: Black Student Union (BSU)
African Americans United in Science (AAUS) Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. - Kappa
Theta Chapter Alpha Pi Sigma Association of Latino Professionals For America at UCR
(ALPFA) Association of Public Policy at UCR (APP) BlackOutArts Blacks Rising in
Domestic and Global Entrepreneurship (BRIDGE) Black Student Task Force (BSTF)
Brothers Leading African Americans through Consciousness and Knowledge (BLAACK)
California Alliance for Minority Participation (CAMP) CALPIRG at UCR Caribbean
Student Union (CSU) Central American Student Alliance (CASA) Delta Sigma Theta
Sorority Inc. - Mu Chi Chapter Environmental Science Club Filmmakers of Color Green
Campus Action Plan (GCAP) Helping The Hyphy Hermanos Unidos de UCR (HU)
Highlander Action Committee, ASUCR
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. - Eta Zeta Chapter Labor Commission,
ASUCR Lobby Corps Committee, ASUCR MECHA de UCR Middle
Eastern Student Assembly (MESA) Minority Association of
Pre-Medical Students (MAPS) Mujeres Unidas (MU) Muslim Student
Association (MSA) National Black Law Student Association (NBLSA)
National Residence Hall Honorary National Society of Black
Engineers (NSBE) Nigerian Student Association (NSA) Pacific
Islander Student Association (PISA) Pakistani Student Association
(PSA) Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. Phi Delta Epsilon Planned
Parenthood Generation Action Providing Opportunities, Dreams and
Education in Riverside (PODER) Puente Connection Queer Alliance
Queer and Trans People of Color (QTPOC) Queer and Trans People of
Color Conference Committee Riverside Care Initiative R’Kids
R’Movement (USAS Local 19) Rotaract at UCR Sigma Gamma Rho
Sorority Inc. - Xi Rho Chapter Sigma Kappa Sorority Sisters
Affirming our Socio-Cultural Identities (SASI) Society of
Anthropological Undergraduate Scholars South Asian Federation
(SAF) Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) Students Organize for
Syria (SOS) The Verbal Coliseum Transfer Outreach and Beyond Vice
President of Internal Affairs Office, ASUCR UMOJA Underground
Scholars Initiative (USI) Women’s Rugby Club ...*and counting*