

To: The University of San Diego

From: Black Faculty at USD

We would like to begin this letter by saying that working at USD is an honor. We love it. We appreciate the faith that this university places in us to teach, engage and support our students, the wider community, and advance knowledge in our respective disciplines. USD is also hard. It is difficult because the culture of the university is not only unpleasant to Black faculty, staff and students—which is displayed through retention data—it often derails our ability to flourish and breathe freely.

The recent events surrounding the brutal lynchings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and Ahmaud Arbery have once again highlighted the indisputable unjust and yet never-ending occurrences of state-sanctioned violence enacted against Black people in this country. Undoubtedly, these cruelties happen with much repetition. It does not take much to search the archives, the news outlets, or even social media timelines to find visual evidence of these crimes. We are unfortunately not short on documentation of police murders or moments of police brutality. But every once in a while, in this country, one of these recorded murders sustains the attention of the world and pricks its conscience. And now here we are, once again faced with the irrefutable. Once again confronting the legacy of slavery and its afterlife in a country so dedicated to its innocent self-analysis. To be sure, the current social unrest is an opportunity for the University of San Diego to examine itself and to move out from behind our veil of innocence. As Black faculty, we recognize the power of our collective voice and believe it is time that we step out of our shells of protection, discard our fears of retaliation, and do our part in standing up to injustice, and in particular the injustice that this university cultivates in plain sight.

For that reason, we the undersigned faculty of the University of San Diego, recognize our duty to address the university directly in the spirit of love and in the spirit of justice as espoused in Catholic social teaching. We want to build from the written statements that several departments and professional schools have made publicly denouncing racism and white supremacy, to address how the culture of our institution contributes to the racism and white supremacy that is not only wreaking havoc in this country but also our own university community. To honor those statements and accept that those statements were made in good faith and with the spirit of genuineness, we, as educators, want to outline necessary action for institutional accountability. These action-items function as both reparative measures for harms we have quietly endured and preventive measures for a better experience here and for future Black faculty, staff and students who might one day walk in our halls.

It is time for an institutional and cultural shift that enables us to adhere to our commitment to Catholic social justice. It is time for resources. It is time for the institution to be held accountable to its commitments. It is time to de-link from cultural norms that prevent institutional restructuring because “this is how we do things at USD.” It is time to live up to the part of our Mission Statement that says, “we are creating a diverse and inclusive community and preparing leaders who are dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service.” Declarations, the Black Lives Matter course, showcasing our research, and book clubs are helpful but not sufficient enough to change the climate particularly in this time.

It does not go unnoticed that recently the College of Arts and Sciences has made incremental steps forward in terms of hiring Black faculty. For that we are grateful. However, there is still only one Black professor each in the English department, Philosophy department, Languages, Cultures, and Literatures department, Chemistry & Biochemistry department, Latin American studies program and Sociology department. Unfortunately, *there are no tenure-track Black faculty members at all* in the Psychology department, Theatre department, Mathematics department, Music department, Architecture + Art department, or Anthropology department. More needs to be done in the College as well as all of the professional schools and including the campus libraries. This is troubling data overall for a university located in southern California in the year 2020. And what this reflects is how USD is comfortable with its identity as a wealthy, white, Catholic institution despite the data that shows the Catholic church itself consists of mostly non-white peoples. Is this not something we desire to change? How beautiful and meaningful would it be for our university to reflect the diversity of the Church itself? How beautiful and meaningful would it be for our university to represent the best of what this globe has to offer instead of reflecting its historical shortcomings?

Tied to the above, our classes are not only crowded with students who are antagonistic to our curriculum, they are filled with students who do not see us as scholars who are astute enough to teach them because of our race. These viewpoints do not emerge solely from outside our institution but are also nurtured and reinforced by internal structures that are at worst hostile and at best indifferent. In other words, we experience racism from our fellow colleagues in our departments and professional schools. We need unequivocal support from the university across the board to address this common experience. Simultaneously, we as a university need more resources for Black students who wish to attend our school and resources to not only keep the Black students we have, but make their time here meaningful and rich as opposed to threatening.

From our perspective, we see no other proper response but one that includes a full force transformation of business-as-usual at USD. We need to live up to the mission statement and core values. We need to ask ourselves how we can create “a welcoming, inclusive and collaborative community accentuated by a spirit of freedom and charity, and marked by protection of the rights and dignity of the individual.”

Therefore, as an effort to practice what is required of us in the fulfilling USD’s mission--the fourth and final criteria in our Appointment, Reappointment, Rank, and Tenure (ARRT) evaluations--we believe the following are required to enable the institution to live up to our mission of diversity and inclusion.

1. Mandatory anti-black racism course or module required for all students, staff and faculty. (an important model is the Title IX and sexual harassment course). This is particularly important for faculty who evaluate teaching, scholarship, service, and serve on AART committees.
2. Formal recognition of faculty efforts to challenge anti-black racism on campus by the University in the form of university awards and fellowships
3. A documented commitment going forward from the University to ensure that more Black faculty are hired. This might include, for example, the expansion of the Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowship to School of Engineering and SOLES. Further, the facilitation of the retention of Diversity Postdoctoral Fellows at USD as tenure-track faculty.

4. Yearly budget earmarked to compensate Black faculty and faculty at large for the labor of preventing and combating anti-black racism, as well as promoting racial consciousness on campus.
5. Yearly funding for bringing Black scholars to the campus for events, seminars, and lectures. This includes a guarantee that half of the Knapp chair scholars going forward will be Black and at a minimum of 1 invited seminar/talk by Black scholars per academic semester.
6. More scholarship funding for Black students, based both on need and merit.
7. Summer institute for Black students. We view this as a recruiting tool if geared toward high-school students and/or a means of fostering Black student-retention. To support the program, we suggest course releases or stipend for faculty dedicating their time to the curriculum development and execution of the program.
8. Greater transparency in all aspects of the recruitment and hiring of senior administrators at the university, including but not limited to positions of diversity and equity. It is not sufficient to change the immediate structural deficiencies of the university without also challenging the wider structure of USD's chief administrators.
9. A policy in place for students, staff, or faculty at USD that mitigates social media posts and online communication that are racially motivated, and intend to harass, surveil, or police others. Additionally, a procedure put in place that instructs how a member of our USD community should report another student, faculty, staff, or administrator for making racist comments online.
10. Similarly, a policy that provides mechanisms for handling student racism/disparagement in a classroom setting, especially for junior or contingent Black faculty.
11. Increased administrative support of Provost Gail Baker in fulfilling the above needs of our USD community.
12. A commitment to diversifying the Board of Trustees.

Sincerely,

Jamall A. Calloway, PhD., Assistant Professor, Theology & Religious Studies Department

Roy L. Brooks, Warren Distinguished Professor of Law

Pauline B. Powell, CAS Assistant Dean

Angela Nurse, PhD

Jillian A. Tullis, PhD

T.J. Tallie, PhD, History Department

Channon S. Miller, PhD, History Department

Kristopher G. Hall, PhD, Associate Professor

Rev. Christopher Carter, PhD., Assistant Professor & Assistant Chair of Theology & Religious Studies

Dr. Sylvie Ngilla McGraw

Anthony J. Bell Jr., PhD

Orlando O. Espín, Th.D., professor emeritus of Theology and Religious Studies

Leonora Simonovis, Professor, Department of Languages, Cultures and Literatures

Mary Jo Wiggins, Professor of Law

Cory Charles Gooding, PhD

Michele E. Watkins, PhD

Corey L. Barnes, PhD--Assistant Professor (Philosophy)

Odesma Dalrymple

Erika Cameron, Ph.D.

Vanjury "V" Dozier, Copley Library

Carlton D Floyd, PhD

Tezeru Teshome, PhD

David A. Shirk (Political Science / International Relations / Latin American Studies)

John Loggins

Joseph Lathan, PhD

Dr. Jesse Mills, Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies

Eric Pierson