

UCOP statement on protests, violence following George Floyd's death

Sunday, May 31, 2020

University of California Board of Regents Chair John A. Pérez and President Janet Napolitano

The tragic deaths of George Floyd, countless other African Americans and people of color, as well as the justified anger and fury in ensuing protests, speak to the institutionalized racism that has plagued this country in the same way it has perpetually defined the everyday realities of individuals who face intolerance, discrimination, marginalization and bigotry.

As leaders of the largest public research university in the United States, we feel that silence is complicity: We must put an end to these incidents now. No matter how difficult, we must individually and collectively reflect on the lives lost unnecessarily, and address head on the systemic problems and challenges we all face as a society. And we must do so – unified – with a sense of urgency and unwavering commitment to end these unnecessary race-based killings and violence.

As part of our commitment to find solutions to address these issues, the University of California will take immediate action to re-examine our own practices and ensure we continue to implement the recommendations of the Presidential Task Force on Universitywide Policing that we established two years ago. We will improve the training, accountability and community relations of our university police departments.

We must all move forward with a real and practical plan to shift our country's trajectory: better training for police in de-escalation practices, more transparency and accountability in the discipline of officers who break rules, greater involvement by the Department of Justice with thorough investigations of law enforcement entities, and robust efforts not only to diversify police forces, but also to provide more nuanced, racially sensitive training.

We must also look to methodical, tangible and inclusive ways to restore and further foster a healthy relationship between law enforcement and the communities of color who depend on officers of the law to model both justice and compassion.

In our role as educators, researchers, and civic leaders, we must prepare our youth to participate vigorously in civic discourse and democracy. A robust civic discourse requires the truth: The killings must stop. The system must change.