

## **May 2021 Updated Statement to the University of California, Riverside Leadership and Community**

The UC Riverside Department of Anthropology reaffirms its commitment to fighting antiblackness in all its forms, within our department, our institution, and our discipline. This statement serves to increase transparency and accountability by reminding us of this commitment, and publicly stating what work has been accomplished this past year and what remains for us to do.

Our responsibility in fighting antiblackness is especially urgent in light of the continuing initiatives within the UC system that endanger students and other campus community members, such as further militarizing the UCPD with “Systemwide Response Teams” and increase of funding by supplying body cameras (<https://policy.ucsc.edu/policies/policiesinreview/gold-book-drafts-spring-21.pdf>). We support the system-wide movement to abolish the UCPD, since as we know, police do not increase safety for Black members of the campus and community. To this end, we endorse the May 3 Day of Refusal (<https://copsoffcampuscoalition.com/abolition-may/>) and affirm all students’ and student workers’ right to participate without retaliation or penalty. These collective efforts create a better environment for the success of all students and members of the community.

This work is also urgent given the ongoing violence done by anthropology as a discipline to vulnerable and marginalized people, for instance, the failure of the Penn Museum to properly steward and return to their families the remains of child victims of state violence against Black people (<https://billypenn.com/2021/04/21/move-bombing-penn-museum-bones-remains-princeton-africa/>).

The Department further supports initiatives across campus. We have formally endorsed the formation of a Department of Black Study and a Department of Environment, Sustainability, Health Inequality. Anthropologists in our department have been among the leaders of both these initiatives for new departments. We also support CIS’s efforts to support Black students’ securing grants and employment after graduation.

Since our previous statement of July 2020 ([https://anthropology.ucr.edu/sites/g/files/rcwecm3806/files/2020-10/Anthro-statement\\_on\\_policing-July2020.pdf](https://anthropology.ucr.edu/sites/g/files/rcwecm3806/files/2020-10/Anthro-statement_on_policing-July2020.pdf)), we have taken the following steps. This work is presented under the heading of each department standing committee, but we also acknowledge that all these are collective efforts undertaken by department students, staff, and faculty:

### **Curriculum Committee:**

The Curriculum Committee formalized and gained approval for a new undergraduate concentration in Black and Black Diaspora Studies. We held a town hall to discuss reimaging the graduate core curriculum. The town hall led to a list of recommended next steps to redesign the core theory series and possibly develop a graduate specialization in Black and Black

Diaspora Studies. In Spring 2021, the committee is hosting a series of “reading groups” to collectively think through our goals as a department as well as an open discussion with Dean Charles Hale of UC Santa Barbara. In Fall 2021, we will continue our speaker series with scholars from other institutions who helped transform their departments. The goal is to engage in sustained conversations about the transformation, while offering the core instructors immediate suggestions to revise the core courses as they are taught in the upcoming academic year. In addition, based on an idea proposed by the committee, Dr. Fay will teach ANTH 256 in Fall 2021 with graduate students who have already gone through the core theory series using a living syllabus to help design the revival of Core C.

### **Graduate Committee:**

Our department decided in June 2020 to admit three students whose research focuses on the global Black diaspora, each year for the next five years (at least). We have succeeded in doing so for the Fall 2021 cohort, with the confirmed enrollment of at least three students with this focus, although COVID may delay some international students from attending in the Fall. We also temporarily eliminated the GRE from our admissions criteria, and are working with Graduate Division to make these changes permanent, as standardized testing reinforces inequities in graduate admissions.

We affirm our continued commitment to improving our retention of Black students and our students’ success in obtaining external research funding and placement in reputable institutions of research and teaching. We have continued to work to ensure our students’ success and compliance with normative time to completion, through bi-yearly check-ins and surveys and support for external grant applications. AY 20-21 has been particularly challenging as many students have been unable to commence fieldwork due to COVID, which has led to delays and increased demands for departmental support. The department took temporary emergency measures to invest in these students in Winter 2021, relying on reserve funds to create GSR and TA positions where possible.

### **Undergraduate Committee:**

Our Undergraduate Committee worked with two faculty members (Profs. Moses and Flewellen) to submit a grant application to the UC-HBCU initiative. The program aims to cultivate students’ understanding of anthropological theory and method, in order to prepare them to design and implement their own research project in St. Croix, USVI (building on Prof. Flewellen’s existing research and student engagement projects in St. Croix). The program will support ten students annually, allowing for individualized attention, and the development of a cohort of future graduate students in Black and Black Diaspora studies within Anthropology. Student mentoring will continue throughout the academic year, involving the primary faculty, other members of the UCR Anthropology Department, and cooperating faculty at other institutions. The proposed project would help us to achieve our departmental transformational and affirmative action goals, while also contributing to the development of Anthropology at our partner institutions (Spelman College, Howard University, and Xavier University), and laying the groundwork for future collaboration and expansion.

The Undergraduate Committee also worked on setting up opportunities for undergraduate students to meet with faculty during the online experience of the pandemic, organizing a series of coffee hours, a workshop about Anthropology, and a welcome event. The committee continues to work on reevaluating the learning outcomes for the undergraduate program in light of curricular changes.

### **PAC Committee:**

The PAC committee conducted outreach for graduate student recruitment to HBCUs and a broader academic network to promote Black Studies within the Department of Anthropology and recruit student applicants to the graduate program whose work focuses on the global Black diaspora. This included an email blast in October focused on Black and Black Diaspora studies departments.

In October 2020, the PAC Committee crafted [recruitment materials](#) aimed at showcasing the department's strengths in Black and Black Diaspora Studies, and a distribution list focusing on HBCUs and other targeted institutions to recruit student applicants to the graduate program whose research focuses on the global Black diaspora. This resulted in the admission of four students with this focus, and three confirmed to enroll in Fall 2021.

### **What we still have to do:**

In the coming 2021-2022 academic year, we commit to continuing our work on the following fronts:

- We will continue rethinking our core seminars and graduate curriculum, with the ongoing input of students, including reinstating the third quarter of the core sequence.
- We commit to making graduate seminars more collaborative and instituting "living syllabi" that will evolve to address antiblack racism inherent in the discipline, and will respond to student interests.
- We will hold more structured conversations with invited speakers in the fall, continuing from the three meetings reading group/discussion series conducted in spring.
- We will continue our recruitment efforts to attract and retain Black students and students studying the global Black diaspora.
- We will continue to explore a graduate track and Designated Emphasis in Black and Black Diaspora Studies, as well as supporting the formation of a Department of Black Study by Fall 2022.

Signed,

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology, UC Riverside