

June 2, 2020

DePaul University Critical Ethnic Studies Statement of Solidarity and Fight for Black Lives

We write this statement of sound heart and mind towards what each of us are experiencing this week. We write as a collective with the understanding of how you feel and how you are currently being impacted, because we, like so many others, are impacted too. We write this for Breonna, George, Tony, Nina, Sean and countless others whose names have and have not been uttered and in honor and memory of the Black lives lost to the inequality of this country, taken by COVID and abandoned by the state. Remembering that our first recorded death to the virus in Chicago was a Black disabled woman, Patricia Frieson. We will not forget her, and we connect her life all the way to that of George Floyd.

Over the past decade, our nation has witnessed a further intensive form of injustice that impacts the lives of Black folks at an alarming rate. These injustices come in the form of increased police brutality, vigilantism, racism, ableism, transphobia, state sanctioned violence, imprisonment and so on. They are not new, they were just renamed. These injustices perpetually affect every channel of Black people's lives and they are impossible to ignore. It seems as if every day, Black Lives Matter seems more and more crucial to the critical and necessary transformative work needed in our world. And every day we are reminded of the legacy slavery, white supremacy and anti-blackness have perpetuated in our cities and communities.

Today, we remain in the midst of a public health crisis, and more specifically a state of emergency for all Black Lives; specifically Black poor folks, Black Trans and Queer folks, Black women, and Black people with disabilities. And while there are faint whispers of justice, we still grieve the lives lost and the lives having to live day to day in fear and rage. On Saturday May 30, 2020, protests engulfed cities around the world demanding justice for the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and Sean Reed by the hands of police. In days that have followed, we have witnessed a moment in history that will shape the course of where we are going. We cannot trust leadership from this country nor from this presidency. We cannot trust leadership from within the academy or in public offices. We must trust the people on the ground and in the community fighting for their lives and their right to be seen as human. This leaves us to our own devices of our own passions and love for another, for our Black siblings, to claim justice for our fallen and for the living.

We call all of you to action. This comes in the form(s) of protest, petitions, donations, bail funds, volunteering, writing, and quite honestly anything that will center the lives of Black people, while reimagining a more just and equitable world. We ask this kindly, but urgently. It is these times of the highest and most blunt acts of violence that determine the outcomes of our actions. This moment will be defined by us, for us.

The fight for Black Lives must and will continue. The abolishment of prisons and police is happening and it will only grow stronger. DePaul University's Critical Ethnic Studies graduate students are committed to doing the work through a racial and transformative justice framework and equity lens rooted in black/queer/transnational feminism both in the classroom and on the ground with and for our communities. This moment is critical and may very well cost you your comfort and complacency. But to resist is to persist in the fight for liberation. We hope to see you there. We will get there-- together.

In Solidarity and Fight,

Critical Ethnic Studies Graduate Students

Darius Parker, CES Graduate Student Representative and CES MA class of 2020

Michael Rangel, MSW, CES MA class of 2020

Zerrin Bulut, CES MA class of 2020

Jane Baron, CES Certificate MA Student and MA student Social and Cultural Foundations in Education

Katy Komarchuk, CES MA Student

Nicole Murayama Nir, CES MA Student

Critical Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee and Affiliated Faculty

Laura Kina, Vincent de Paul Professor Art, Media, & Design and Director Critical Ethnic Studies

Beth S. Catlett, Associate Professor and Chair Department of Women's and Gender Studies

Kaveh Ehsani, Assistant Professor International Studies

Laila Farah, Associate Professor Women's & Gender Studies

Maria J. Ferrera, Associate Professor Department of Social Work

Dustin Bradley Goltz, Professor College of Communication

Horace Hall, Associate Professor Human Development, Teacher Education, and Doctoral Program

Valerie C. Johnson, Associate Professor and Chair Department of Political Science

Bill Johnson Gonzalez, Associate Professor Department of English

Amor Kohli, Associate Professor and Chair Department of African and Black Diaspora Studies

Jacqueline Lazú, Associate Professor Modern Languages, Associate Dean, LAS

Anne Mitchell, Term Faculty Women's and Gender Studies

Julie E. Moody-Freeman, Director Center for Black Diaspora and Associate Professor African & Black Diaspora Studies

Heather Montes Ireland, Assistant Professor Women's and Gender Studies

Jesse Mumm, Professional Lecturer Latin American and Latino Studies, Community Service Studies

Lori Pierce, Associate Professor African and Black Diaspora Studies

Francesca T. Royster, Professor Department of English

Ann Russo, Vincent de Paul Professor Women's and Gender Studies and Director Women's Center

Shailja Sharma, Professor and Director Refugee & Forced Migration Studies

Carolina Sternberg, Associate Professor and Chair Latin American and Latino Studies

Lourdes Torres, Vincent de Paul Professor Latin American and Latino Studies

Ryan Masaaki Yokota, Instructor Department of History

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