



Office of the President

A Message from
President Adela de la Torre, Ph.D.

Dear SDSU Community,

Our hearts ache with sorrow and outrage as we witness, yet again, the ongoing disregard for human life and human dignity. The overt racism in our society only seems more harrowing because video recordings captured several more cases in which unarmed African-American men and women were killed while engaged in mundane, daily activities, even near and in the privacy of their homes.

As you read this, I urge you to say their names aloud:

George Floyd was killed after a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota on Monday pinned him down by the neck.

Ahmaud Arbery was shot to death in Georgia while jogging after being followed by armed white residents in an Atlanta-area neighborhood, a location only miles from his own home.

Breonna Taylor was killed in Kentucky, in March, when police entered her Louisville home, without knocking and without any other warning, and shot her.

Their lives and their names matter, as do the many others who, over generations, have been killed, often without a video recording to document their anguish. Their deaths remind us of an undeniable truth: Racism is alive and well in our country, and it touches the very people we care about — our family, friends, our classmates, our peers, and our neighbors. I remain deeply troubled by these deaths and by other racist actions that could yield more harm and pain. I will never, ever, stand down in my assertion that we must each condemn the systemic racism that both enables and protects these vile acts of violence and disregard for human life.

We must do better and be better, and we will.

During the week of June 1, our SDSU community will host five healing circles as well as a teach-in. The events are as follows:

Community Circles for Allies. Three community circles for the SDSU community will be held on Monday and Tuesday of this week. These circles will be led by Nola Butler Byrd, Associate Professor of Counseling and School Psychology, in partnership with therapists

from Counseling & Psychological Services. The dates, times, and access links are as below. Participants will need to sign in to their SDSU Zoom account to access.

- Monday, June 1, at 5 p.m.: <https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/97458906520>
- Tuesday, June 2, at 11 a.m.: <https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/94292119245>
- Tuesday, June 2, at 2 p.m.: <https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/91640229883>

Community Wide Teach-In. A teach-in will be held on Thursday, June 4 at 10am. This online event is titled, “Teaching and Supporting Black Students: Advancing Student Needs in Times of Racial Crisis.” This event will be hosted by Feion Villodas, Chair of the Professors of Equity. The event will feature a presentation by Frank Harris III, Professor of Postsecondary Education and closing remarks by Tonika Green, Charles Bell Scholar and Professor of Counseling and School Psychology. Video testimonies from SDSU students will be interwoven throughout. These testimonies are being coordinated by Christian Holt, Associated Students President. This event is open to all SDSU faculty and staff. The link for this event is:
<https://SDSU.zoom.us/j/99520388612>

The following additional events will be held:

- A healing circle will be held by the Black Resource Center on Monday, June 1, at 1 p.m for students (contact brc@sdsu.edu for details).
- A healing circle will be held for SDSU’s Employee Resource Groups serving our Black faculty and staff on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 7pm. These include, but are not limited to, members of the Black Faculty Staff Association, Black Male Network, and Black Women in Academia groups (contact erg-infocommunication@sdsu.edu for details).

I send my deepest gratitude to J. Luke Wood, Vice President for Student Affairs and Campus Diversity, and Christy Samarkos, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs (outgoing), who quickly organized members of our community in response. I also appreciate others who have been deeply involved in the planning. They include (and by no ways are limited to):

- Nola Butler-Byrd, Vice Chair of the University Senate
- Jessica Nare, Associate Chief Diversity Officer for Student Success
- Bonnie Reddick, the Black Resource Center director
- Antionette Marbray, Associate Vice President for the Division of Student Affairs and Campus Diversity
- Raquel Herriott, Public Relations, University Police
- Joshua Mays, Chief, University Police
- Ahliyah Chambers, Assistant Director, Black Resource Center
- Randall Timm, Assistant Vice President for Campus Life and Dean of Students
- Jennifer Rikard, Director, Counseling & Psychological Services

Mere words without action are futile. Know that decisive steps to heal our community and right the wrongs against our Black community members, and our communities of color, will continue and increase. I urge each of you to live through love. It is the first step to counter unacceptable, and equally painful, forms of racial bias and violence within our community.

In closing, I turn to those who have been hurt, violated, or also denied an opportunity because of your name, your identity or skin color, who have endured unnecessary harassment and humiliation while in public spaces, and who have been told to return to a country in which you have never lived. These hate-motivated acts are not normal. They are not your fault. They are not acceptable.

Adela de la Torre, Ph.D
San Diego State University President