



Teaching and Supporting Black Students: Advancing Student Needs in Times of Racial Crisis

Presented by

Drs. Feion Villodas, Frank Harris III, Tonika Green, and J. Luke Wood



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Land Acknowledgement



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Chair of Tribal Relations, Tribal Liaison,
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President's Welcome

Dr. Adela de la Torre
9th President, San Diego State University



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Panelists



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Opening Remarks



Dr. Feion Villodas
Chair, Professors of Equity
San Diego State University

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Disclaimers

- While most of what we have to share will have implications for all minoritized students, we are intentionally prioritizing Black students in this presentation.
- It's not just about applying the practices we suggest, you must first start with a deep and intentional personal reflection asking yourself:
 - How do I really think and feel about Black people?
 - Am I comfortable with them?
 - Do I like them?
 - Do I believe in them?
 - Do I fear them?"

Equity-Mindedness

- **RACE CONSCIOUSNESS:** recognizing the ways in which systemic inequities disadvantage minoritized people in a range of social institutions and contexts (education, employment, healthcare, the criminal justice system, etc.)
- **INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** (re)framing outcome disparities as an indication of institutional underperformance rather than students' underperformance
- **RACIAL AFFIRMATION:** intentionally affirming students' racial/ethnic identities and seeing them as assets (rather than deficits) that can be leveraged to facilitate their success.
- **CRITICAL REFLECTION:** critically reflecting upon one's role and responsibilities (as a faculty member, student affairs staff, administrator, counselor, institutional researchers etc.) and the ways in which one enables inequity to persist
- **AUTHENTIC CARE:** having a vested interest in students' lives; being genuinely concerned about their well-being; and being personally invested in their success

E. M. Bensimon

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It Didn't Start with the Murder of George Floyd!!!

- The Middle Passage
- Slavery
- The Three-Fifths Compromise
- Jim Crow
- The Tuskegee Experiment
- “Separate But Equal”
- The Murder of Emmett Till
- The Fight Against School Desegregation
- The Assassinations of MLK and Malcom X
- The War on Drugs
- The Central Park 5
- Mass Incarceration
- The School-to-Prison Pipeline
- The Watts Uprisings
- The Rodney King Uprisings
- Proposition 209
- Hurricane Katrina
- The Birther Movement
- The Murders of Trayvon Martin, Mike Brown, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland (to name some)
- Voter Suppression
- The Election of 45
- The Charleston, S.C. Church Shooting
- Charlottesville
- The Colin Kaepernick Protest
- COVID-19 and the Disproportionate Impact on Black Communities
- The Murders of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor (to name some)
- The Deployment of Military and Militia Against Protesters Demanding Justice, Accountability, and Systemic Change for Blacks

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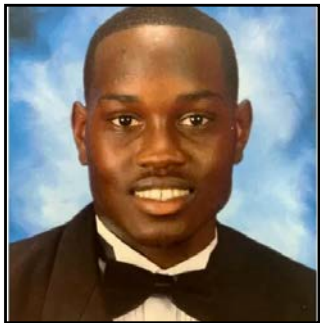
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Why Should I Care?

“The growing racial tensions in our society and the impact it has had, and will have, on our individual psyche and who we are as a nation, cannot be ignored and dismissed as isolated incidents because they keep adding up” (McNair, Bensimon, & Malcolm-Piqueux, 2020, p. xvii).



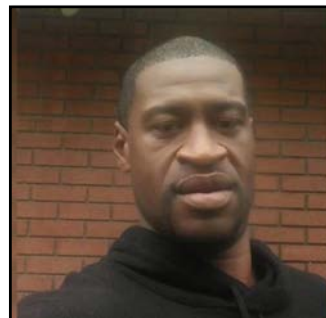
Ahmaud Arbery



Breonna Taylor



Sean Reed



George Floyd



Tony McDade

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Racial Battle Fatigue

Racial Battle Fatigue is akin to combat stress syndrome for military personnel, which describes the “mental, emotional, and physiological injuries” that manifest from being in environments with persistent stress or risk (p. 555).

- Racial discrimination is a “universal stressor” for Blacks.
- The effects of racial discrimination are chronic and enduring.
 - seldom fades
 - becomes a part of one’s life history

Smith, W. A., Allen, W. R., & Danley, L. L. (2007, December). “Assume the position...You fit the description”: Psychosocial experiences and racial battle fatigue among African American male college students. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 51(4), 551-578.

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Tenure/Tenure-Track Faculty by College—Spring 2020

COLLEGE	WHITE	BLACK
Arts and Letters	111	10
Education	40	10
Engineering	33	≤5
Fowler College of Business	35	≤5
Health & Human Services	56	≤5
Imperial Valley	9	0
Library & Information Access	15	≤5
Professional Studies & Fine Arts	77	≤5
Sciences	135	≤5
TOTAL	511	30

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Symptoms of Racial Battle Fatigue

Psychological

- constant anxiety and worrying
- increased swearing and complaining
- inability to sleep
- sleep broken by haunting, conflict-specific dreams
- intrusive thoughts and images
- loss of self-confidence
- difficulty thinking coherently or being able to articulate
- hypervigilance
- frustration
- denial
- emotional and social withdrawal
- anger, anger suppression, resentment

Physiological

- tension headaches
- backaches
- elevated heartbeat
- rapid breathing in anticipation of conflict
- upset stomach
- extreme fatigue
- loss of appetite
- ulcers
- elevated blood pressure

Smith et al., 2007

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" LES NEGRES "



1923

WIGS

PROPERTIES

New
York
Costume
Co.

Costumers

835 SIXTH ST.
SAN DIEGO
UP STAIRS



*Historical
and
Shakesperian
Costumes*

*Theatrical
and
Fancy
Costumes*

*Fancy
Ball or
Masquerade
Costumes*

Main 745

1954

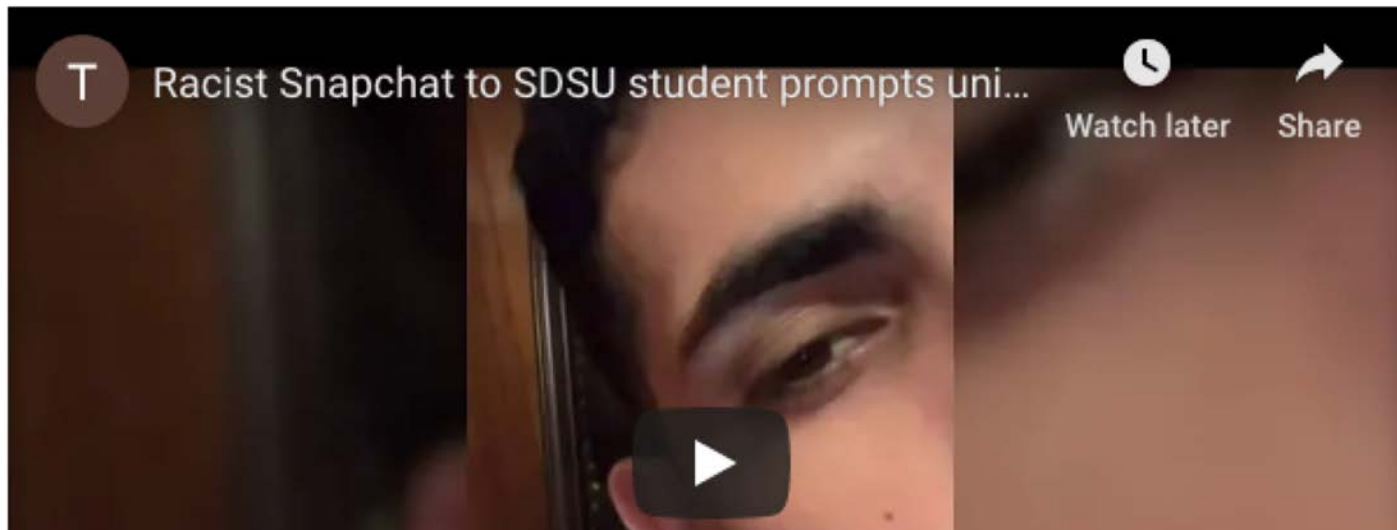


We pledged them for talent's sake, you understand.

Alpha Xi Delta

Racist Snapchat video sent to a student prompts response from SDSU

This marks the third incident of racial intolerance on campus in two months that has resulted in a university response



2019

"...the man can be heard calling Simmons a "monkey" and threatening to hang him like an "ornament" off a tree"

2020



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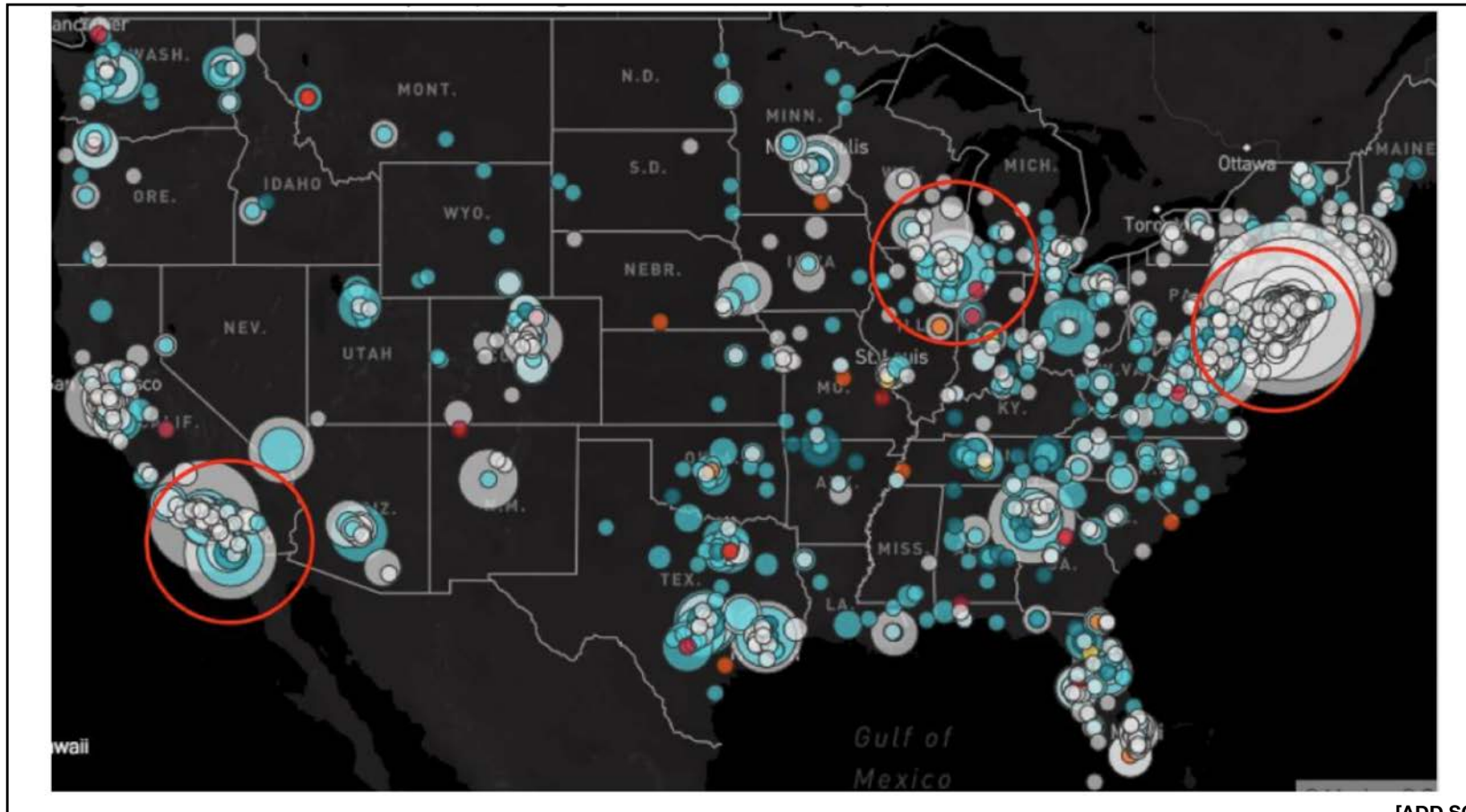
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Anti-Defamation League's Map of Hate



[ADD SOURCE]

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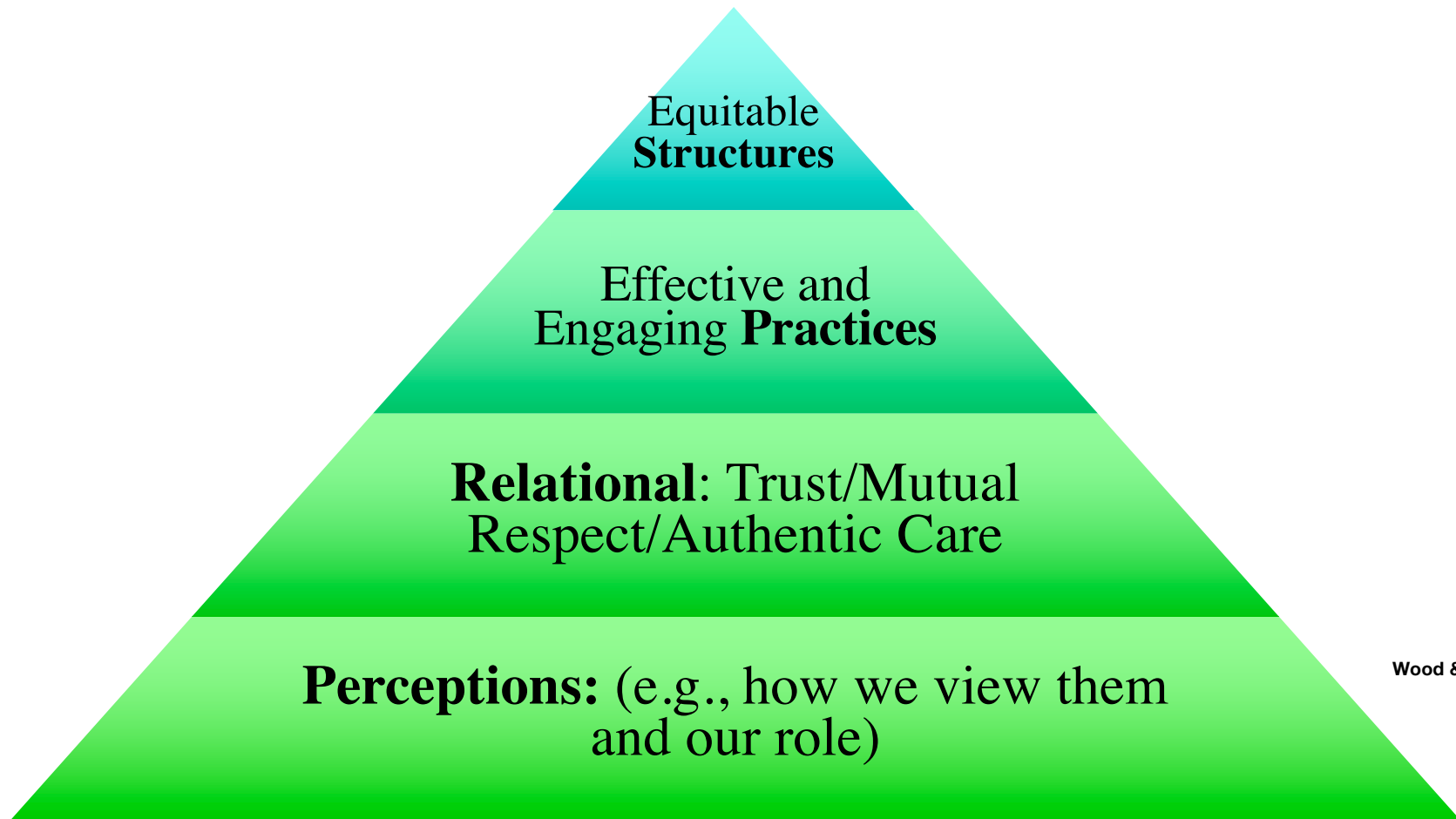
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Pyramid of Student Success



Wood & Harris III, 2016

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Experiences with Microaggressions

MICROASSAULT



A car full of men drove by the Black Resource Center and yelled the “n-word” out of the car at the center. The incident was captured live on social media and the video went viral.

*A student was standing on the corner of Campanile and Montezuma waiting for the light to turn. A non-Black man yelled out of window “Move N****” and turned the corner in his car. (3rd year, Black woman)*

*The Black Resource Center received an email titled “You are n*****.” The email was from an anonymous sender. The body of the email stated: “Fuck you; you are all n*****.”*

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Ascription of Intelligence

- “Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on race” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276).

I was asked by a White student in my class if I understood the material being taught out loud while the professor was teaching. I took great offense. Although I do ask a lot of questions, it is not her place to check my understanding. I felt extremely frustrated. (3rd year, Black man)

One instance was when I was in one of my science classes and I was told that I was smart for a Black girl. (3rd year, Black woman)

I was part of a NPHC sorority on campus and was part of a committee within the sorority. The woman was the only African American woman on the exec board. She was micro-managed within her position and the majority of her ideas were shut down. The E-board of the sorority ended up voting her out of her position. (4th year, Black woman)

In all of my higher level science classes, I am always questioned and second guessed about my answers. If I am 100% sure in my answer, no one will believe me unless a White person validates me. (2nd year, Black woman)

Assumption of Criminality

- “Assuming a person of color is dangerous, criminal, or deviant based on race” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276).

Being in an elevator or near a person who isn't of color and they move away as if I was going to do something to them. (3rd year, Black woman)

One time I was sitting with the few other Black people in a lecture of 300 people and it was full and we were told not to sit next to each other during a test when we walked in. (1st year, Black man)

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Second-Class Citizen

- “Occurs when a White person is given preferential treatment over a person of color” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276).

Being a Muslim women who wears the hijab, I get a lot of stares and just simply feel out of place. Being the only Muslim in my class, everyone just seems rude towards me, never wants to make study groups with me, help out, etc. (3rd year, Black woman)

Pathologizing Culture

- “The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant/White culture are ideal” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276).
- **Examples:**
 - “Those students don’t care” and “They are lazy” and “They aren’t really here to learn”

When a student or professor says “you people” talking about Black people. Makes me feel like an other an outsider, [like I’m] not human (4th year, Black woman)

I have a way that I talk, I can be sarcastic or a bit exaggerated, and I certainly use slang a lot. It’s just the way I am. On multiple occasions, there was a White student who would mock me. She thought it was funny, but she would try to talk the way I talk but in a super exaggerated way. I get it, she’s goofy and trying to be funny. But, it really bothers me. Does she think it is cool? The way she does it makes me think that I’m the focus of an underlying joke that everyone knows about. And, that’s why she does it and why her friends are always laughing. (Master’s student, Black woman)

Different Norming

- “Assuming/having the authority to negatively categorize or uncategorize people of color” (Harris III & Wood, 2016).
- **Examples:**
 - “When I talk about those Blacks, I really wasn’t talking about you.”
 - “I don’t think of you as Black.”
 - “You aren’t like the rest of them.”
 - “You’re different. You work hard.”

I was in shake smart and I was confirming my order and the girl said “omg you’re not like other Black people” after saying hi to her and asking about her day. It felt so rude because she was insinuating that “angry black girl” rhetoric. (1st year, Black woman)

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Athletic Boundedness

- “The assumption that people of color (particularly men of color) are athletes” (Harris III & Wood, 2016).
- **Examples:**
 - “You look like a ballplayer.”
 - “What sport do you play?”
 - “When is the next game?”
 - “How is the season going?”

A group of Black male students were in the Faculty Staff Club attending the Brother-to-Brother luncheon. A faculty member remarked, “this is the most Black folks I’ve seen since high school basketball.”

Alien in Own Land

- “When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276).

*After submitting my personal essay detailing how long I've been here in America (including the fact that I came here in 2006), my English professor was shocked at the fact that my English was 'so good' as he described it. He somehow expected me to not speak English because I was an immigrant. He had another thing coming when he learnt I was a poet.
(3rd year, Black woman)*

A member of the ROTC made a joke about me not being able to join because I supported the ideologies they were fighting. I am Muslim, so those ideologies he was referring to was terrorism. (3rd year, Black woman)

In my... class, my professor asked me what country I'm from and when I came to America. I was born in San Diego. (2nd year, Black woman)

Denial of Individual Racism

- “A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases” (Sue & Colleagues, 2007, p. 276).

*My floor mates saying n**** during a song and not caring that I found it offensive. It made me feel pissed off. (4th year, Black woman)*

I was at an SDSU party and people were singing the N word in a song. A group of my friends and I went up to them and explained why they shouldn't say it. They ignored us and said it wasn't that big of a deal. (4th year, Black woman)

Teaching and Supporting Black Students

- **Be Race Conscious**
- **Be Critically Reflexive**
- **Be Relational**
- **Create a Culturally-Affirming Learning Experience**
- **Be Compassionate**

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Be Race Conscious

- Educate yourself on systemic racism, racial oppression, racial battle fatigue, white fragility, and white supremacy.
- Create safe, welcoming, and inclusive class and campus environments for Black students.
- Call out racism and racial microaggressions when you see them happen.
- Disrupt departmental cultures that marginalize Black students, faculty, and staff, and render them invisible.
- Disrupt practices that challenge the inclusion of Black and anti-racist perspectives in the curriculum.
- Hire more Black tenure-track faculty and staff and create departmental cultures that are conducive to their retention and success.
- Disaggregate student success data at the college, department, and course levels to reveal hidden patterns of disparity.

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Be Critically Reflexive

- Own your privilege!
1. **STOP** telling Black people how they should think, feel, and respond to systemic racism.
 2. **STOP** trying to trivialize systemic racism by individualizing it.
 - “It’s only one bad cop.”
 - “Well Frank, not all Black people are oppressed. Look at you. You’re a professor.”
 3. **STOP** crying to attract attention to yourself and to deflect attention from Black students and colleagues who are experiencing racial oppression.
 4. **STOP** saying “I don’t see race, I look at all my students the same way.”
 5. **STOP** getting in the way of policies and initiatives that can make a difference in the success of Black students.

Be Critically Reflexive

6. **STOP** accusing Black men of “attacking” you and Black women of being “angry” when they passionately challenge racist behavior (e.g., Amy Cooper).
7. **STOP** expecting Black people to take the lead on every problem or issue that emerges with a Black in the department.
8. **STOP** grandstanding.
9. **STOP** pretending to be an ally while being invested in white supremacy.
10. **STOP** the public declarations of incompetence.
“I just don’t know how to connect with Black students. I’m not Black and I haven’t been around very many of them. There was only one Black kid in the community where I grew up.”

Be Relational

- Enact intentional efforts to learn at least one thing about your Black students that has nothing to do with them being a student.
- Convey unconditional positive regard for Black students and intentionally reject deficit perspectives about their “intellectual fit” or “preparation” for college.
- Learning about the lived experiences of Blacks students at SDSU.

Create A Culturally Affirming Learning Experience

- A culturally-affirming learning experience entails centering diverse students in every aspect of the course (Ladson-Billing, 1995).
- Acknowledge the intellectual contributions of Black people to the field of study.
- Infuse positive images and examples of Black people into the course.
- Connect course content to issues that are salient in Black communities.
- Invite students to connect course content to their lived experiences.
- Create experiential learning opportunities for all students to engage Black communities.

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Be Compassionate

- Check in with Black students who reach out to you for support.
- Acknowledge significant events and issues that may be impacting Black students' healthy well-being.
- Give students permission to take care of themselves and remind them of resources they can access for self-care.
- Proactively reach out to students who appear to be struggling.
- Believe students when they tell you they are struggling.

Call To Action

Dr. Tonika Duren Green

Professor, Counseling and School Psychology
Director, Henrietta Goodwin Scholars Program
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HGS Affirmation

I am a Goodwin Scholar
Class of 2023

I will persist; I will persevere; I will not give up!
Quitting is not an option.

I will lean into my professors, mentors and peers,
I will assist, nurture and support my cohorts,
I will ask questions,
I will give my best,
I am a servant-leader.

I am because we are; we are because I am.
SDSU strong! HGS Yes!

Written by Dr. Bonnie Reddick

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Call to Action Affirmation

I am an SDSU Faculty/Staff

I will persist; I will persevere; I will not give up in supporting our Black students!

Quitting is not an option.

I will lean into my colleagues, mentors, accountability partners and peers,

I will assist, nurture and support my Black students,

I will ask questions and consider the needs of Black students,

I will give my best,

I am a servant-leader.

I am because we are; we are because I am.

SDSU strong! SDSU Yes!

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Call to Action Affirmation

- I am an SDSU Faculty/Staff: **Is this important to me?**
- I will persist; I will persevere; I will not give up in supporting our Black students! Quitting is not an option: **Am I willing to ask tough questions of myself and my colleagues? Am I willing to be uncomfortable and stretched to grow? Am I okay with challenging and addressing curriculum, policies, practices and systems that are anti-racist and privileged?**
- I will lean into my colleagues, mentors, accountability partners and peers: **Who is my accountability partner(s)? Accountability is the heart of our work with Black students and it is designed to help individuals and systems to be held in check for their decisions and actions (Racial Equity Tools).**

Call to Action Affirmation

- I will assist, nurture and support my Black students: **We can't have an attitude of "business as usual" when racial incidents and crises happen. We can't assume that all Black students will react in the same way to a racial crisis and trauma.**
- I will ask questions and consider the needs of Black students: **Do I give Black students the space to breathe and be heard in my classrooms and/or on campus?**
- I will give my best, I am a servant-leader: **Am I willing to read about anti-racism and the history of Black people to understand the struggles and trauma our Black students face? Am I willing to be a servant-leader to support the growth and well-being of Black students, acknowledging their needs and helping them be successful?**
- I am because we are; we are because I am. SDSU strong! SDSU Yes! **Do I acknowledge Black students existence on this campus?**

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Systemic Change

- Equitable admission practices and intentional recruitment: “reforming program philosophy, curriculum, and instructional processes.” (Cook-Morales & Robinson-Zañartu, 1995)
- Continue to revisit the question, do Black students feel safe in our classrooms/on campus and take action to ensure their safety
- Consider developing university-wide anti-racism training modules
- Continue to highlight Black excellence and success in our newsfeeds, social media, partnerships, research and grants projects, programs, and community efforts.
- When you see a Black student speak!

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Let Black Students Breathe

To graduate and become **LEADERS AND INNOVATORS**

To continue the work to **CREATE CHANGE**

To help to **SHAPE THIS COUNTRY**

To **TELL THEIR STORIES**

To **CHALLENGE** systems that **OPPRESS**

To **BECOME!**

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Student Voices

Christian Holt | Alanie Abron | Joy Moore | Aaliyah Chambers | Christion Covington | Shawki Moore | Chase Spears



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Q&A



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