Campus Community,

The California Faculty Association, Dominguez Hills chapter stands in solidarity with the family and friends of George Floyd. We also express solidarity with the nationwide protests demanding justice and an end to police brutality and killings that have taken the lives of far too many Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC). As a faculty union committed to anti-racism and social justice, we firmly believe that #BlackLivesMatter.

We are thoroughly outraged at the wanton murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin on May 25, 2020. If not for the Facebook Live video that captured Chauvin kneeling on Floyd’s neck for nearly 9 minutes, few outside of Minneapolis would have heard of his case. We would only have the erroneous statements of the four arresting officers, who claimed Floyd had been suffering from medical distress prior to being detained. While all four police officers have been fired, it took several days of protest for Chauvin to be taken into custody and charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter. The other three officers were only recently arrested.

Though we remain hopeful that Floyd’s family will get justice in this case, we realize that in too many instances -- even where video exists of police killing unarmed Black people -- justice is rarely achieved. Floyd’s murder at the hands of Minneapolis Police came only weeks after the release of a video showing Ahmaud Arbery being stalked and lynched by a white retired police officer and his son in Brunswick, Georgia. Law enforcement is also responsible for the recent murders of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky on March 13, 2020 and Tony McDade in Tallahassee, Florida on May 27, 2020. However, since there are no video recordings of these killings and likely because of Taylor being a Black woman and McDade being a Black transman, those cases have received far less national attention. Nevertheless, we will continue to #SayTheirNames and demand justice in each of these cases.

We also want to acknowledge how the last several months have been especially traumatic for our Black faculty, students, staff, and community members. The global COVID-19 pandemic that has disrupted all of our lives, has disproportionately impacted Black people who are experiencing higher mortality rates from the novel coronavirus. Moreover, the ensuing economic recession has led to the closing of businesses, layoffs, and record unemployment, which is affecting Black workers who had not fully recovered from the Great Recession of 2008, and who lost the most wealth of any group due to the racist and predatory lending practices that caused the crisis. These public health and economic crises are only exacerbated by the continued disregard for Black life exhibited by law enforcement officers across the United States.

Since our CFA chapter is located in Carson, we must also bring attention to the history of anti-Blackness and police brutality perpetrated by the Carson Police Department and Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department (LASD). Many people might be familiar with the videotaped beating of Rodney King by LAPD officers and the subsequent urban rebellion that followed when they were initially acquitted in 1992 as well. However, Black Lives Matter ([www.blmla.org](http://www.blmla.org/)) has recently shown that for the last several years, the LAPD remains the most murderous police department in the nation, with the LASD not far behind. Despite these facts, few officers have been indicted and only one law enforcement officer for any of the over 600 “officer-involved shootings” in the Los Angeles County area. This is a travesty of justice in itself. Meanwhile, local Mayors attempt to augment some police department budgets – most of which already consume over half of their city’s general fund -- rather than funding services citizens desperately need amidst the economic, public health, and policing crises we are facing.

Messages extending “thoughts and prayers” make a mockery of the seriousness of the crisis of white supremacy we face right here in Carson and on our campus. We agree with CSU Fullerton President Fram Virjee, who has written this to his campus community: “To those allies I say we need to not just be moved to tears, but to action. To not just wring our hands, but ring the alarm. To not just stand by, but stand up. To not just talk about the issue, but know when to shut up and listen to those whose lives are upended by it. To not just whisper in shaded corners, but shout out from whatever platform we have been given. Indeed, there comes a time when inaction reveals more than betrayal of principle. It portends complicity and acquiescence, if not quiet permission. That time is long past due.”

CFA is already engaged in the work of antiracist transformation everyday -- within ourselves, our classrooms, and communities -- not only when racist state violence makes national headlines. We have learned a great deal about antiracist organizing from the leadership of Dr. Melina Abdullah, current chair of CFA-LA’s Council for Racial and Social Justice, former CFA-LA chapter president, and former department chair of the Department of Pan-African Studies at Cal State LA. In many ways, PAS at CSULA is one of the birthplaces of Black Lives Matter. As faculty, we must all redouble our efforts to support antiracist, community-engaged scholar activism, best exemplified by Melina and our own Ethnic Studies departments. Finally, as we teach, research, study, and grieve, we must also act -- and demand that our administrators lead with a level of moral courage that challenges their own comfort with the status quo, as we also challenge ours.

A university and higher learning institution should not participate with organizations that have demonstrated a history of disrespect for Black lives in Carson, Los Angeles, and surrounding communities. In fact, we have routinely witnessed and heard about biased police behavior toward Black students, staff, and faculty on our own campus. Therefore, we call upon CSUDH President Parham to muster the moral courage to undertake the following actions:

* End any university partnerships with local city police.
* Defund and disarm campus police, with the redistribution of resources used to hire tenure-track mental health counselors in line with the modest recommended professional standard of 1 per 1500 students, improve the health center’s capacity, and student support services. We need counselors, not weapons, on our campus.
* Increase funding for Black student recruitment and retention programs on campus until Black students make up at least 30% of the student population, near the number of Black students in 2005.
* Fully fund and provide a budget for the Rose Black Resource Center and hire sufficient staff (at least 2) to carry out this very important work.
* Take an affirmative supportive public position in support of AB 1460, Assemblymember (and Emeritus Professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State University) Shirley Webber’s bill requiring a minuscule 3 units of Ethnic Studies as a CSU graduation requirement.
* Urge Chancellor White to declare a systemwide emergency and to put plans together to deepen the antiracist character of system policies, practices, and leadership teams in the CSU, with participation by BIPOC faculty on all such teams.

As many of us worry about suffering from shortness of breath or other breathing issues due to COVID-19, we will not ignore that George Floyd’s final words were “I can’t breathe!” His words eerily remind us of those of Eric Garner, who uttered them in 2014 as he was being choked to death by NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo. Unfortunately, Pantaleo was never indicted for this murder.

Floyd’s tragic murder is just another sobering reminder that Black people’s right to breathe will continue to be imperiled as long as systemic racism dictates the way working class Black communities are policed. This is a pandemic we have the ability to end. It begins with us, and with our leadership here at CSUDH.

In Solidarity,

California Faculty Association, CSUDH Chapter