



June 9, 2020

QSB Statement on Systemic Racism

On May 25th, 2020 we witnessed the horrific killing of George Floyd by four Minneapolis Police Officers. George Floyd's death and those of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others that are unknown to us are sadly representative of the long history of systemic racism, blatant violence, and unconscionable brutality against Black and African American people in our country.

We strongly echo the sentiments expressed by campus leadership in its ["In Solidarity"](#) message and unequivocally support the efforts to *end* conditions that led to these incidents.

In QSB, where our strength lies in the diversity of our faculty members, staff and students, we stand united in our outrage against racism, racist culture, racial injustice and police brutality. We hereby assert our core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. These tenets are fundamental pillars of the University of California system and also of a just and equitable community. However, we acknowledge that bias, anti-Blackness and racism exist within the academy, and that the QSB program at UC Merced is no exception. Our goal in this statement is two-fold. First, we wish to acknowledge the pain felt by the Black members of our community. Second, we want to acknowledge that as faculty and graduate students in QSB we can and must do better to address the systemic racism that the academy perpetuates. At this point in time, it is not sufficient to be passively non-racist. Abolishment of racism will only occur through action; we need to be actively anti-racist.

In order to weave this effort into the fabric of the QSB community, we must model fairness and inclusivity across the full spectrum of our operations, from student recruitment and mentorship to diversity, inclusivity and representation in our community functions and seminars. We can do better in all of these areas and will be transparent in efforts to accomplish these goals.

Although the process of addressing issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in the QSB program at UC Merced will take time, we propose four initiatives to set this process in motion. First, at our upcoming QSB retreat in the fall we plan to have a session on “How to be an Anti-Racist” (suggestions for facilitators welcome). Second, we will reserve one QSB seminar speaker slot in each AY for a biologist who can speak to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion issues in STEM. Third, we will assemble a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee within QSB that will consist of faculty, graduate students and postdocs. This committee will be charged with soliciting feedback from the QSB community and to make suggestions on seminar speakers, possible course offerings and will be asked to deliver reports and recommendations to the QSB EC and at the QSB retreat. One member of this committee will serve as the DEI representative to the QSB EC. Finally, the QSB EC will commit towards recruiting and retaining Black graduate students by submitting at least one proposal to the UC-HCBU Initiative. We know these efforts are only a beginning, but we hope they will be positive steps towards moving to a more just and equitable QSB.

The process of building a more equitable and inclusive world lies with each of us. For resources and information on anti-racism and how to be an ally, [learn more here](#).

“Black lives always matter. They matter at UC Merced. They matter across our nation. They matter around the world.”

In solidarity,

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