

Faculty Statement on George Floyd

The Joint Faculty Senate endorsed the following statement at its meeting on June 16, 2020:

The faculty of CSB/SJU unite in solidarity with the global condemnation of the murder of George Floyd and of so many other Black people, as well as members of marginalized groups. Sadly, these events are not new; White people have perpetrated violence against Black people since the origins of the United States and the slave trade, Reconstruction after the Civil War, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The image of a policeman's knee on the neck of a Black man is a symbol of the systemic racism, White supremacy, and structural violence that marginalized peoples have had to endure in the U.S.A. for far too long. Any society that regularly abuses its members by lynchings of various sorts, by discriminatory practices that condemn marginalized groups to subservient roles and inferior living conditions, and that – decade after decade, in spite of protests – empowers its police forces to maintain this system of oppression, even to the point of murdering a man in public – does not deserve the dignity of being called “the home of the free.”

This statement, however, is not simply another statement of condemnation of police violence. The murder of George Floyd has become a catalyst for massive protests around the world because there is videotape exposing the horror of police brutality, but such violence is endemic within our society at large – police have been able to get away with this brutality for so long because White people and power structures have condoned it by silence and inaction. Rather than simply condemning the murder of George Floyd, therefore, we wish this statement to be seen as a statement of intent and commitment. We – a faculty of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities – pledge ourselves, therefore, in the coming months, years and beyond to the following:

Foundational Principles

- We will play our part in making CSB/SJU anti-racist multicultural institutions, and we call, therefore, for anti-racism training across our institutions as a matter of primary concern. We must hold ourselves accountable across our campuses for racist and discriminatory language and practices. To this end, we will educate ourselves so as to enable our students to see the evil of racism and discrimination, and to fight against it.
- We acknowledge that the very ground on which our institutions are built is the original homeland of the Dakhóta and Anishinaabe peoples. We honor and respect the Indigenous peoples who were forcibly removed from, and who are still connected to this territory, and we pledge, in every way possible, to make the facilities and resources of our campuses available to those peoples for appropriate ceremonies or events they may desire, and to make scholarships available for Native-American students.

Faculty Commitments

- In all of our courses, in ways consistent with the content of our classes, we will highlight the contributions that black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) scholars have made

to the progress of learning in the U.S.A. and throughout the world. There are many obvious resources that make this possible in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and fine arts.

- To the fullest extent possible, in all of our courses, both by the way we interact with students and by the content of our classes, we will explicitly condemn and fight against racism and discrimination of all sorts. Throughout our curriculum, we will highlight and emphasize that the mission and values of CSB/SJU not only stand directly against racism, but also positively foster inclusivity, equity and justice for all persons, regardless of ethnicity, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender or place of origin.
- In hiring within our departments, we will seek every opportunity to diversify our cultural makeup. We fully recognize that at present we are overwhelmingly White and Western in our composition, that we benefit greatly from our colleagues who derive from other cultures of the world, and that we would benefit even further from having more BIPOC faculty and from the perspectives they would bring to our discussions. We commit to exhibiting the Benedictine virtues of welcoming and hospitality in order to make our institutions places that BIPOC faculty want to stay.
- The faculty commit to examining the exhibition of White fragility and to understanding the harmful microaggressions it involves, which serve as barriers to the antiracist institutions we wish to become. We will be open to feedback when we fail in this regard and will continually seek to do better.

In Solidarity with Students

- We call on CSB and SJU presidents to commit to taking the necessary actions to move toward becoming antiracist multicultural institutions.
- We call on CSB and SJU to publish a direct statement of our commitment to become antiracist multicultural institutions on all public-facing materials.
- We call on Student Development to increase the level of orientation of students with regard to the anti-racist commitments of our institutions and their values of inclusivity, equity and justice for all. We pledge, therefore, whenever appropriate, to make our skills available for the education involved in student-orientation programs. We also acknowledge happily the important roles played by staff and students themselves in these efforts.
- As faculty we will support student initiatives for building cultural awareness and we call for collaboration among students, staff and faculty to bring about awareness of the rich cultural diversity of our student-body.