



**May 2020 STATEMENT FROM DIRECTOR SHONTÉ THOMAS
UCSC African American Resource and Cultural Center**

“To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time.” — James Baldwin

The font for this statement is “Oxygen”. Black people want to breathe. The senseless and brutal public lynchings of Black bodies is rooted in white supremacy and necessitates AARCC to promulgate yet another statement. This statement will not remedy the disease that is racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, but maybe this time it will cause our non-Black communities to take stock of how there are contributing factors at play. Each time you share a photo of a lifeless Black person, Black people feel that hurt. Each time you are silent on matters that could greatly benefit Black people, Black people feel that hurt. And each time you disparage an uprising as we see in Minneapolis, but do not seek comparable condemnation for a riot due to a sporting event, Black people feel that hurt. This will not be the last time a Black person is murdered at the hand of another person solely due to the color of their skin.

To my Black community, yes we are tired. Tired from all the ways the barrage of our generational trauma continues to impact and impede our collective growth. Please PROTECT YOUR ENERGY, today and tomorrow. Take social media breaks. Find your outlet for counteracting the harm. Sit in your pain, cry, and allow time to grieve. There is no time limitation to your sadness for the state of our reality, but know and hear this, your beauty and brilliance is evident. You will always matter and the world needs you. You contribute far beyond than the over consumed and commodification of Black culture would leave many to believe. As a resource center at UCSC, we are given the opportunity to support students, staff, and the UCSC community. Regardless of the remote reality, we are here for you. If you are in need of support during this time (and any time), please contact us; Shonté Thomas, sfthomas@ucsc.edu and Dr. Aaron Jones, ajones10@ucsc.edu.

For my non-Black people, if you want to support Black people at this time, take heed of the following suggestions which are in no particular order.

1. STOP sharing photos of lifeless Black bodies. This is beyond traumatic and we have an endless stock of other images stained into our consciousness.
2. Check-in on your Black friends-- something as simple as a text/ call can be beneficial.
3. Collect your people. The murderers responsible for the deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, and countless others all likely have parents, families, children, church family, etc. Call in racist/biased actions you see in your immediate community. If you are raising children, take time to talk to them about the underlying common fabric of this country, racism-- systematically, structurally, and institutional. Talk to them about Anti-Blackness.
4. Actively work to be anti-racist because it is not enough to be non-racist. This week, when the woman in Central Park called the cops on Christian Cooper, she knew exactly what she was doing and it could have cost him his life.

5. Do your own research to be a better human-- and an accomplice.
6. Financially support organizations working hard to remedy the inequities put upon Black people and others with minoritized identities.

The problems of poverty, crime, healthcare, unemployment, education remain significant in cities across this country for many, but the immense disparities for Black people are empirically evident. As we reflect on the recent loss of Black lives, we need more people to take initiative, learn from the ills and lessons of our past, and work each day to uphold Black people's desire to want to breathe.

"As we commit to each other to build this movement of resistance and liberation, no one can be an afterthought. We have a chance to be stronger and better than we ever have before- and that starts with having hard conversations and being held accountable." - **Raquel Wilis, Women's March 2017 speech**

With love and sadness,

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RESOURCES:

Black Lives Matter Chapter: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/chapters/>

To contact your congress representative: www.congress.gov/members

<http://www.resourcesharingproject.org/anti-racism-resource-collection>

<https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/resources-for-talking-about-race-racism-and-racialized-violence-with-kids/>

Books:

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Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS) - <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/>

McHenry, D. (1987). *Dean McHenry: The university of California Santa Cruz, Early Campus History, 1958-1969*. Retrieved from: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6rv1h8fv>

The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (2006). *Black Student College Graduation Rates Remain Low, But Modest Progress Begins to Show*. New York, N.Y: CH II Publishers.

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Ricard, R., & Brown, M.C. (2008). *Ebony towers in higher education: The evolution, mission, and presidency of historically Black colleges and universities*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Strayhorn, T.L. (2012). *College student sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students*. New York, NY: Routledge.

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Wilder, C.S. (2013). *Ebony and ivy: Race, slavery, and the troubled history of America's universities*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Press.

Yosso, T.J., & Lopez, C.B. (2010). *Counterspaces in a hostile place: A critical race theory analysis of campus culture centers*. In Patton, L.D. (Ed.). *Culture centers in higher education: Perspectives on identity, theory, and practice*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

