

Faculty Statement on Systemic Racism and Injustice

The faculty of the Department of History condemn all acts of state-sanctioned, institutionalized, and extra-legal violence against African Americans, Indigenous people, and People of Color, and we express our strong support of Black communities in New Mexico and across the United States. We unconditionally oppose the systemic inequality, white supremacy, and racism that have been fully entrenched in our nation since its founding. This founding relied on Indigenous dispossession, genocide, and Black enslavement. These practices and ideas are also embedded in academic structures at large. Despite recent efforts by UNM leadership, the structure of our institution remains slow to change. Indeed, these dynamics impact the recruitment and retention of faculty, students, and staff of color, especially African Americans. We write now to voice our solidarity with our staff, students, and faculty colleagues at UNM, around the nation, and around the world.

As historians, we recognize that the current national moment in the United States illuminates why the discipline of history is important to understanding social hierarchies, racial disparities, and economic conditions that sustain police brutality, embolden white supremacists and ethno-nationalists, as well as normalize inequality and systemic racism. This all leads to the real dangers that Black and Indigenous people and People of Color face daily not only here in the United States, but across the globe. Similar protests in London, Berlin, Paris, and elsewhere attest to the problems that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color endure in colonial and postcolonial settings that have recently seen the mainstreaming of right-wing politics and ideologies. As historians, we seek to understand the origins and evolution of racist thought and racialized violence; how racism is embedded in the structures of politics, economics, society, and culture, both nationally and globally; and how racism can be effectively resisted and opposed. We see the study of the past as essential to understanding—and changing—our present.

We acknowledge the ways that juridical structures devalue, dehumanize, and dispose of Black and Indigenous people and People of Color. In the United States, the criminal justice system and its carceral state emerged through the system of slavery that produced slave patrols in the South and criminalized African Americans. The recent acts of violence that have shaken our nation have taken place during a pandemic that increased discrimination against Asian and Asian Americans and has now disproportionately struck African American, Indigenous, and Latinx communities. We recognize the death and trauma experienced by Diné and Pueblo communities, due to the inadequate federal response to communities of color and a deeper historical legacy of colonialism, racism, and inequality.

We, the faculty of the Department of History, join in the call for a nation-wide review of policing and law enforcement practices and for the immediate implementation of real and substantial mechanisms for change. We urge authorities at the university, local, state and national level to take steps to address this national crisis.

We recommit ourselves to practicing the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion across our department, university, and discipline. As a department, we will also do our part to ensure that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color lives matter not only in rhetoric, but also in practice. We

propose to form a standing departmental committee, which may include staff and student representation, charged to bring proposed actions before the department, including:

- 1) The results of a departmental climate survey that includes faculty, staff, and students;
- 2) A statement describing the department's principles on diversity, equity and inclusion;
- 3) Specific mechanisms for addressing inequities that arise and persist in our department;
- 4) Strategies for advancing the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion through the teaching of history.

UNM students, faculty, and staff have produced work and initiatives to address the history and consequences of racism and discrimination, and they include:

Town Hall: Addressing Anti-Blackness at UNM, by UNM Division for Equity & Inclusion
<https://bit.ly/3diqAyH>

National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity
<https://diverse.unm.edu/resources/ncfdd.html>

UNM Sanctuary Campus
<http://www.unmsanctuarycampus.org>

Faculty for a Sexual-Assault Free Environment at UNM (Faculty SAFE):
<https://facultysafeunm.wordpress.com/>

Lobos Connect: UNM Provost Challenge for Excellence & Equity
<https://provost.unm.edu/initiatives/lobos-connect.html>

UNM Seal Committee
<https://diverse.unm.edu/about-dei/seal-committee.html>

Advance at UNM
<https://advance.unm.edu>

We also recommend these additional resources that attend to racism and discrimination:

Statement from the American Historical Association:
[https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/aha-advocacy/aha-statement-on-the-history-of-racist-violence-in-the-united-states-\(june-2020\)](https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/aha-advocacy/aha-statement-on-the-history-of-racist-violence-in-the-united-states-(june-2020))

Statement from George Sánchez, President, Organization of American Historians:
<https://www.oah.org/insights/posts/2020/statement-on-recent-events-of-racial-injustice/>

“The Anti-Racist Reading List,” compiled by Ibram X. Kendi, in *The Atlantic*:
<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/02/antiracist-syllabus-governor-ralph-northam/582580/>

Committee for the Initiative on Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI), German Studies Association

<https://www.thegsa.org/blog/dei-committee-statement>

Statement from the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA)

<https://www.naisa.org/about/documents-archive/previous-council-statements/#georgefloyd>

RaceB4Race, a collective of premodern BIPOC scholars

<https://acmrs.asu.edu/RaceB4Race>

Cambridge University Press series, “Protests, Policing, and Race”

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/what-we-publish/journals/protests-policing-and-race>.

University of California, Berkeley, Department of History: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

<https://history.berkeley.edu/resources/equity-diversity-inclusion>