

Santa Clara University | Department of Religious Studies
Statement on Confronting Racism and White Supremacy

In the wake of the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others, and given the perdurance of racism, white supremacy, police brutality, and race-based oppression in the United States, the Religious Studies Department of Santa Clara University expresses its solidarity with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) and commits itself to 1) working actively against all forms of hate, inequity, and violence; and 2) fostering the common good for all, in keeping with the twofold Ignatian vision of being people *for others* and of valuing *deeds* over words. Further, despite our Department's history of working for justice, we acknowledge our complicity in structures of white supremacy and the pain and brokenness they cause, and we pledge to use our resources to accompany and seek justice for victims of anti-Blackness and race-based oppression.

- **We recognize** that in the history of the United States, Black and Brown lives have not been treated as if they mattered. Therefore, **we commit** to 1) cultivating and employing anti-racist pedagogies; 2) lifting up Black and Brown voices on our syllabi and in our research; and 3) dedicating content in intro-level courses to the relationship between religion/theology and racial justice, as part of a holistic commitment to confronting racism in the academy.
- **We recognize** that 1) anti-racism begins with listening to and trusting in the experiences of Black and Brown people, and 2) white people cannot grasp the hardships BIPOC face each day. Therefore, **we commit** ourselves to remaining teachable: to hearing and responding to the concerns of Black and Brown students and colleagues *as they voice them*, especially as their concerns pertain to the classroom and campus experience.
- **We recognize** that our campus community has often fallen short of the mark when it comes to 1) confronting racism; and 2) fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. Therefore, **we commit** to reviewing the recommendations of the [Blue Ribbon Commission for Diversity and Inclusion](#) and taking action to realize the Commission's recommendations in every aspect of our work.
- **We recognize** that religion has been used, and continues to be used, as an instrument of imperial and colonial oppression and that religious language is often weaponized as a ploy to protect white supremacy. Therefore, **we commit** to exposing and denouncing the use of religion as an instrument of oppression and pledge to confront white supremacy in our hiring, curriculum, and broader work within *and beyond* the SCU community.
- **We also recognize** that religion provides a powerful resource for community organizing and activism—and that the world's religions offer powerful critiques of violence, practices of conversion and forgiveness, and resources for responding to the pain of the oppressed. Therefore, **we commit** to lifting up alternative paradigms of community living from the world's religions—to foster peace, justice, and lasting social transformation.

June 9, 2020 | Feast of St. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373), Person of Color, Doctor of the Church

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