

Black Thriving Initiative: A Whole University Approach to Building a University Culture Where Black People Thrive

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Introduction

The UCI Black Thriving Initiative is a far-reaching and ambitious driver for institutional transformation. The initiative calls for each member of our campus community to link their future to the success of Black students, faculty and staff as well as alumni and communities served by UCI.

The Initiative originated in response to the murder of George Floyd on May 25 while he was in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and many before and after. George Floyd's death ignited a wave of protests across the county against lethal violence directed at Black people by the police, or at the hands of vigilantes. The vast demonstrations in support of Black lives denounced the obstinate reality of structural racism in society while defiantly demanded racial justice for Black people. In response, Chancellor Gillman and other university leaders on [May 31](#) called for dismantling systematic anti-Black sentiment while creating a university culture where Black people thrive.

The [UCI Black Thriving Initiative](#) recognizes and responds to anti-Blackness as an existential threat to our mission as public research university. In depriving Black people of their full participation in society and in university life, anti-Blackness compromises UCI's capacity to educate, discover, create and heal. It therefore demands a whole university response. The **UCI Black Thriving Initiative** mobilizes the entire campus community to be accountable for confronting anti-Blackness. This imperative is matched by purposefully leveraging UCI's research, teaching and service mission to advance the understanding of the Black experience and the drivers of well-being for Black communities.

The UCI Black Thriving Initiative consists of four university priorities, including:

- Improve our campus culture by intentionally confronting anti-Blackness.
- Intensify recruitment and improve success of Black undergraduate and graduate students in our academic programs.
- Leverage our research and teaching mission to advance understanding the Black experience and advance the drivers of well-being.
- Engage with Black communities by linking UCI's future to the success of Black communities.

In responding to this national imperative, the **UCI Black Thriving Initiative** builds on the campus [Inclusive Excellence Action Plan](#), extends the UCI Confronting Extremism Program and aligns with the UC Regents principles against intolerance. Recent campus achievements include:

- Appointment of the first Black dean in the history of the Paul Merage School of Business and the only one among the six business schools in the University of California (2021)
- Appointment of first Black woman dean of the School of Law and the only one among the five law schools in the University of California (2018)
- Appointment of first Black woman director of UCI Intercollegiate Athletics and one of only 40 female athletic directors nationally in Division I (2019)
- 13 new Black faculty—largest number of new hires in a single recruitment cycle—in arts, business, biological sciences, education, engineering, humanities, law, nursing, social ecology and social sciences (2020)
- Three UC Historically Black Universities and Colleges (HBCU) Initiative Funded Grants Awarded to UCI Faculty (2019-2020); eight awarded since 2011.
- Enrollment of the largest number of first year Black medical students (12) in the history of the School of Medicine in 2020.
- In 2019, UCI School of Medicine launched Leadership Education to Advance Diversity (LEAD) --African, Black and Caribbean.
- Among the top three UC destination campuses for applications from Black California resident high school for three consecutive years.

This unprecedented whole university response relies on all campus members becoming familiar with the UCI Black Thriving Initiative, including the three action platforms: leverage the mission, change the culture, and link UCI's future to the success of Black communities.

We all must be in this together.

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UCI's Black Thriving Initiative ***A Whole University Approach to Building a University Culture Where Black People Thrive***

Our Priorities

Through this initiative, UCI aims to build and sustain a university culture where Black community members can thrive in their endeavors as undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and alumni. It consists of four university-wide priorities:

- **Improve our campus culture by intentionally confronting anti-Blackness**
- **Intensify recruitment and improve success of Black undergraduate and graduate students in our academic programs**
- **Leverage our research and teaching mission to understand the Black experience and advance the drivers of well-being**
- **Extend relations with Black communities by linking UCI's future to the success of Black people**

As a whole university approach, the Initiative mobilizes all campus members to confront anti-Blackness in order to transform the UCI experience and impact in the world.

Anti-Blackness: An Existential Threat to Advancing Our University Mission

Anti-Blackness refers to actions or behaviors that minimize, marginalize or devalue the full participation of Black people in life. The term Black people refers to African Americans who are descended from the historical African diaspora to the Americas and Caribbean as well as more recent African descended immigrants to the United States from countries in Africa, Americas, Caribbean and Europe. Anti-Black racism affects UCI members and society at the various intersectional dimensions of diversity - class, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, immigrant and immigration status, sexual orientation, veteran status, among others. Such actions may not be maliciously motivated or even rise to the level of a policy violation. This racism has accumulated and negative impacts on our Black campus community and sense of belonging at UCI. As such, it seriously compromises the capacity of the entire university enterprise, including the campus and medical center, to discover, innovate and serve. Anti-Blackness fundamentally contradicts UCI's role as a public research university serving the state of California while reaching across the nation and world.

Our University Response to a National Imperative: We *Must Be* in This Together

As UCI Chancellor Howard Gillman and senior leaders communicated in a campus message on [May 31](#), our society is in crisis. The current unrest that is roiling our country is profoundly distressing. "We are all in this together" is a phrase recently invoked to

bring people together as we face the coronavirus crisis. In sharp contrast, the demonstrations in support of Black lives – sparked by an appalling pattern of the unjustified deaths of Black people in police custody and at the hands of vigilantes – reflect both a profound and justified sense of grievance and frustration with policing and with our justice system. This unrest is a reflection of the persistence of systematic oppression and limited access to educational opportunities, economic self-sufficiency, adequate health care, and other areas of life essential to social justice and human well-being. While the experience of anti-Blackness belies the notion that “we are all in this together,” if we are to survive as a nation and as a society, we *must* be in this together.

UCI Black Thriving Initiative: Aligned with Our Commitment to Inclusive Excellence

The Initiative builds on UCI’s Inclusive Excellence Action Plan, which aims to mobilize the campus community around the three pillars of community, thriving and wellness to promote a culture of inclusive excellence for all. The Initiative also extends our ongoing efforts to confront extremism nationally and globally.

In 2016, the Office of Inclusive Excellence established a Confronting Extremism program in response to widening U.S. polarization, attacks on institutions of civil society, and accelerating extremist violence directed at various communities. Building on the 2016 [UC Regents Principles Against Intolerance](#), the campus harnessed its research, teaching and service mission to understand extremism and to use these insights to inform individual and collective responses. The faculty research, educational opportunities and public affairs programming have deepened the campus’ capacity for culture change, leveraged our mission and engaged communities served by UCI. Now we have the opportunity to build upon what we have learned to confront anti-Blackness and lead as a university community where Black people thrive.

UCI Black Thriving Initiative: Builds on Campus Momentum in Advancing Diversity and Responding to Anti-Blackness

This initiative will accelerate UCI’s enduring commitment to diversity. When the UC Board of Regents appointed Michael V. Drake as UCI’s forth chancellor in 2005, he became the first African American chancellor in the nearly 150-year history of the University of California. His tenure, from 2005-2014, included consequential milestones, including the appointment of the first African American deans of the Henry Samueli School of Engineering and of the Claire Trevor School of the Arts. His successor Chancellor Howard Gillman has continued to recruit African American academic leaders, including deans of the School of Law and the Paul Merage School of Business. Both appointments are first among UC peer campuses.

From 2009 to 2019, the proportion of Black faculty doubled to 3.9% in 2019 from 1.9% in 2009. Among the faculty are three Distinguished Professors and two Chancellor’s Professors of Law. In fall 2020, the campus will welcome 13 Black faculty, the largest

hired in a single year. These new faculty will join departments in many of the 15 schools. Among these include two recipients of the inaugural UCI Chancellor's Inclusive Excellence Award for newly recruited faculty.

Transforming the professoriate and the knowledge workforce of the future is a strategic priority of the campus. The overall proportion of Black graduate students has increased to 4% (102) in fall 2019 from 2% (23) in fall 2009. Campuswide differences in degree completion milestones for Black and non-Black graduates has substantially decreased during the past decade, though rates do vary depending on program. Meanwhile, the campus has made noteworthy headway in growing the enrollments of Black students. Between 2009 and 2019, enrollments have increased by 21.1% from 502 to 608, though the proportion has increase more modestly from 2% to 3%.

In June 2015, the Administrative Taskforce on Ensuring a Positive Climate for the Campus' Black Community issued its final report. Charged by Chancellor Gillman, this taskforce was created in response to the January 2015 Black Students Union (BSU) DEMANDS to address pervasive and structural racism at UCI. The taskforce was led by Henry Samueli School of Engineering Dean Gregory Washington and included staff and faculty stakeholders, the taskforce evaluated the demands and proposed actions. The campus responded by tasking implementation committees to establish a dedicated Black Students Resource Center, launch the Black Scholars Hall Residential Learning Environment, designate the Program of African American Studies a Department, and engage with the Academic Senate to modify the Multicultural General Education requirement, and promote interventions to improve the climate through the Advisory Council on Climate, Culture and Inclusion.

UCI Black Thriving Initiative: Three Action Platforms

This initiative uses three action platforms as levers for change:

- I. **Leverage the Mission:** Harness Research and Teaching to Accelerate the Understanding of the Black Experience and Drivers of Well-Being
- II. **Change the Culture:** Confronting Anti-Blackness Intentionally
- III. **Engage Black Communities:** Linking the Future of UCI to the Success of Black People and Communities

I. Mission

Harness Research and Teaching to Accelerate the Understanding of the Black Experience and Drivers of Well-Being

The pervasiveness of anti-Blackness in society demands the attention of the entire research and creative enterprise of the university. This imperative requires a comprehensive approach to advancing the understanding of the Black experience and the drivers of well-being for this population. It relies on the existing infrastructure while purposefully leveraging institutional resources to fundamentally understand and accelerate change. To this end, the campus will elevate attention, intensify effort, and disseminate knowledge and creative expressions that refute anti-Blackness, promote innovative public policy solutions to structural racism, and yield practical benefits to Black communities locally, regionally and nationally. Below are campus initiatives in support of this imperative.

Mission: UCI Black Thriving Institute: Anti-Blackness, Racial Justice and Slavery

The purpose of the UCI Black Thriving Institute is to harness the research and creative capacity of the campus to advance transformational change. Organized around anti-Blackness, racial justice and slavery, the Institute will support interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary activity to both understand the Black experience and promote the drivers of well-being in Black communities. Through the interrogation of these broad themes, the Institute will consciously encompass a broad cross-section of intersectional identities and comparative experiences. The focus of the Institute will span from class, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, immigrant and immigration status, to sexual orientation, among others. The geographical scope of the Institute's activities will explore how anti-Blackness, racial justice and slavery implicate and shape human histories, contemporary realities and futures of nation-states, cultures and communities, and people within and in relation to the African diaspora.

The UCI Black Thriving Institute will provide three critical functions in carrying out its purpose:

- 1) Convening scholars and researchers as well as thought leaders
- 2) Elevating attention and intensifying focus on the Black experience and drivers of well-being
- 3) Engaging and partnering with communities to advance a thriving society

The structure of the UCI Black Thriving Institute will include existing centers that align with the purpose of the Institute as well as affiliated organizations. The advisory board will include representatives from partner centers, affiliated organizations and at-large members. Among the principle activities of the advisory board is to identify an annual theme or set of themes and mount supporting programmatic activities for the campus

and community through partner centers and affiliated organizations, and/or funded or co-sponsored faculty activities.

Mission: Black Lives Matter Faculty Cluster Hiring Program

Building on the historic hiring outcomes of Black faculty in 2019-20, this multi-year competitive program will allocate positions across the campus for proposals that advance the understanding of the Black experience and the drivers of well-being for the Black community. Beginning in academic year 2020-21, at least three FTE will be allocated on a competitive basis each year for a period of three to five years for a total of 10 FTE. Each new hire will receive a \$50,000 supplement annually for three years to advance the theme of the hiring program. Leveraging school-based priorities, this program is designed to recruit early- and mid-career scholars with research or creative programs that focus on understanding anti-Blackness and its varied manifestations in human activity and expression; or public policy solutions to structural racism in criminal justice, education, environment, health and wellness, urban planning and policy, or broadening participation in science and technology, business, and innovation.

Mission: Inclusive Excellence Term Chairs: Inaugural Theme Black Lives Matter

The Inclusive Excellence Term Chair program will focus on a national imperative and/or global challenge. It provides an opportunity for the campus to recognize distinguished research, teaching and service of incumbent faculty in contributing to the selected theme. The inaugural theme for 2020-21 to 2023-24 will be Black Lives Matter. In fall 2020, the Office of Inclusive Excellence will appoint five chairs. Each incumbent will receive a \$30,000 research allocation each year for the three-year term, serve on the advisory board of the Black Thriving Institute, and deliver one public lecture during their tenure. Selected by a campuswide committee, each school may nominate one or two qualifying faculty for centrally funded chairs.

Mission: Mobilizing the whole university to promote Black student success, degree completion, and advancement in UCI's academic programs

The transformation of the professoriate and knowledge workforce of the future depends on the success of Black undergraduates and graduate students thriving in academic programs across the campus. This means increasing total enrollments, growing participation in undergraduate and graduate degrees programs, expanding involvement in high impact campus programs, and eliminating differences in undergraduate graduation or graduate degree completion rates. The below items explore why achieving these outcomes will require a whole university approach.

Mission: Making UCI a First Choice for Black Students

Increasing the enrollment of Black undergraduates and graduate students is an essential condition to building a thriving culture for Black people at UCI. Over a 10-year period, enrollments for undergraduate and graduate students have grown, but the proportion of Black students has remained steady or only modestly increased. Unless there is a substantial change in our strategy, the proportion will largely remain unchanged. This will contribute to a profound sense of invisibility and hyper-visibility for enrolled Black students while contributing to Black deserts in our academic programs.

In many ways, the campus is well-positioned to increase the participation of Black students. As a nationally ranked research university, UCI remains one of the most affordable in the United States. Our admissions effort is led by a diverse, seasoned and dedicated team of professionals committed to inclusive excellence. Their outreach efforts have been notable. For three consecutive years, UCI has been among the top three destination campuses for applications from Black California resident high school seniors. Applicants are drawn to UCI for the reputation of its academic programs, robust co-curricular programs, availability of housing and the beauty of the campus. Admissions to UCI has become even more competitive as the overall rate of admission selectivity as increased from 49% in 2008 to 25% in 2018. While the campus extends offers of admission to competitive applicants, our success in yielding Black students has been uneven. There is no doubt that students who are offered admissions to UCI have options at other elite public or private universities, or liberal arts colleges. Like other competitive applicants, there are a number of factors that influence the decision of Black applicants to choose to enroll at other institutions. Among these include the local visibility of the campus, scholarship support for total costs of attendance, access to preferred majors or schools, to strength of the alumni eco-system among others.

The proposed whole university approach to creating a Black thriving culture will make UCI a far more compelling choice for competitive Black applicants. Building on our existing strength, the UCI Black Thriving Initiative commits us to create and sustain the conditions for Black students to be successful as an integral--not contingent--commitment. Each of the pillars invests in and is invested in this outcome. The Culture Change pillar confronts anti-Blackness as a pre-condition to creating a thriving culture. Rather than Black students bearing this burden, all campus members are expected to participate in changing the culture where teaching, learning, discovery, healing and creativity takes place throughout the university enterprise. This commitment extends to leveraging our research and teaching to advance the understanding of the Black experience and the drivers of well-being. This pillar ensures that UCI will be at the forefront of generating scholarly insights and interventions, innovation and creative expressions, and public policy solutions while providing students with a wide variety of curricular and co-curricular opportunities to learn, study and contribute to advancing a Black thriving society. The final pillar—linking the success of Black communities to the success of UCI as a public research university—brings the initiative full-circle. The campus must engage with Black communities throughout the state and nation to raise awareness of our commitment to the success of talented Black students, communicate research and creative activity that advances the Black experience and drivers of well-

being, and partner with community and national organizations to promote a thriving society for Black people.

The broad commitment of the UCI Black Thriving Initiative will also contribute to improving the participation of Black students in our many doctoral and professional programs. Like our undergraduate enrollments, those for Black graduate students have increased overtime. Still, the total enrollments remain small and unevenly dispersed across 58 programs. Doctoral and professional programs need to leverage existing programs and pilot others to increase overall enrollments—by expanding outreach to grow applications while continuing holistic review in the admissions process. Among existing programs include: UC-HBCU Initiative; UC HSI-Doctoral Diversity Initiative; California Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics; Summer Institute for Emerging Managers and Leaders (UC Business Schools); UCI Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience (DECADE); Graduate Division and Office of Inclusive Minority Serving Institution Fellowships; the Office of Access and Inclusion (Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Donald Bren School of Computer and Information Sciences); Outreach, Research, Training and Minority Science Programs (Biological Sciences); Primary Care in the Latino Community (PRIME LC, School of Medicine) and Leadership Education to Advance Diversity for African, Black and Caribbean (LEAD-ABC, School of Medicine)

Mission: From Black Deserts to a Thriving Academic Culture for Black Students

Black undergraduates and graduates are severely under-represented in the student population in general and in academic programs in particular. They experience a virtual absence of Black academic leaders and faculty. Of the 15 academic or professional schools, only two deans are Black: Business and Law - both firsts. In addition to Engineering, there have been four Black deans of academic schools in the entire history of UCI. Outside of the Department of African American Studies, there are no Black chairs in the 86 departments. The overall number of Black faculty has doubled in a decade, and their proportion of the total faculty has increased to 3.9% in 2019 currently from 1.9 in 2009. Nonetheless, Black students are less likely to encounter a Black faculty member in their major course of study during the four- or six-year career - outside of a small number of departments. This is true in schools with male majority or female majority faculty. For these reasons, in schools and departments where they are present, Black staff members tend to represent the only Black people in academic units. It is also notable that the senior management group at UCI currently reflects its lowest representation of Blacks in over a decade at 14% and of women at 14%, so students have limited opportunities to see themselves reflected among these key decision makers at UCI as well.

Black students must therefore negotiate an academic landscape where they are simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible. Whether inside lecture halls, classrooms and seminars as well as laboratories, studio spaces and clinical wards, they encounter a variety of micro-aggressions from student peers, faculty and patients. These circumstances span from peer avoidance in seating and exclusion from study groups, to

being overlooked for special opportunities or projects, presumed to represent all Black people, expected to educate anyone about racial justice, scrutinized about the authenticity of their work, and expected to fail or succeed on their own. These conditions often operate in combination with institutional structures that contribute to Black academic deserts. These include rigid course management practices, ranging from pitting students against one another, curving course graded assignments, to inflexibility in the provision of accommodations for absences and deadlines or causally insensitive remarks. The combined impact of these realities and conditions deny Black students a sense of belonging and discourage Black success in our campus academic and professional programs.

The burden of creating a culture where Black students thrive has in practice been shouldered by Black faculty and staff. In spite of their relatively small numbers, Black faculty and staff assume the responsibility to reconcile the tensions between the public commitment to inclusive excellence and the actual experience of Black students. This takes the form of affirming their presence on campus, listening to concerns and providing advice, using their experience and knowledge to advocate for opportunities and, above all, scaffolding their success. This labor is usually unseen, often unacknowledged, and rarely rewarded in the formal review, advancement and promotion processes. Yet, precisely for this reason anyone can take credit for the success of Black students without directly contributing to this outcome.

By contrast, there is a far more concerted effort to improve the climate for Black students beyond the academic programs through the Division of Student Affairs. The Center for Black Cultures, Resources & Research was established in 2017 with a mission to provide a just, safe, vibrant, inclusive, culturally supportive space - a home away from home - where Black students can thrive and reach their highest potential. It serves as a venue for community building, student success resources as well as co-curricular activities. There is an Academic Excellence Black Scholars Hall. Since 2016, the Black Scholars Hall has provided first-year students with a unique learning community. Residents learn to navigate the university environment while embracing scholastic achievement and individual identity. There are 16 residents in the Rosa Parks House. Mental health resources are critical for a campus committed to supporting students holistically. The Department of Wellness, Health & Counseling Services employs and contracts with African American counselors. All department counselors are trained to serve all students in a sensitive and responsive manner.

Anti-Blackness in academic programs can and does co-exists with a commitment to inclusive excellence for a wide range of diverse students, but this commitment is not purposefully extended to Black students. In minimizing, marginalizing and devaluing Black students, the accumulated weight of micro-aggressions pushes Black students out of their preferred majors, graduate programs and the university itself. The effects of anti-Blackness - withdrawal from courses, migration from majors and dropping out - are causally attributed to the presumptive deficits of Black students and their lack of preparation without any attention to the culture of departments or schools. This assertion often goes unchallenged in faculty meetings or in residential halls. It is much more satisfying to tolerate Black failure as a necessary condition of excellence rather

than interrogate a culture that is accustomed to the diminishing presence of Black people.

Creating a culture where Black people thrive requires intention, attention and attitude in confronting anti-Blackness. Being personally committed to diversity is insufficient. Being mindful in confronting anti-Blackness demands that all undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff must understand what anti-Blackness is and be purposeful in interrupting or dismantling it whether in lecture halls, classrooms, seminars as well as laboratories, performance studios, and clinical spaces.

This individual awareness about anti-Blackness must go hand in hand with creating a thriving culture in each academic school or program. This must include setting expectations about the climate. This is particularly important given the paucity of Black deans, faculty and academic advisors as well as the different roles and authority of faculty and staff. Each unit should align expectations to pillars of the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan: community, thriving and wellness. It is not enough to articulate expectations. Deans and other unit leaders must monitor and affirmatively advance expectations. Each unit must establish a climate council. These councils should be tasked with developing and/or overseeing the unit action plan, review climate survey data and identify areas of strengths and address areas that need more attention, host or co-sponsor training - such as by-stander intervention - and communicate expectations and ways to promote an inclusive culture. This should not be the responsibility of Black faculty and staff and graduate students and undergraduates, but an institutional imperative across the entire enterprise.

Setting expectations about the unit culture and monitoring the climate are critical. These efforts must be fully integrated into academic programs themselves and include changing counter-productive institutional structures. All faculty must take professional responsibility for student outcomes rather than limiting themselves to assigning a grade or approving graduate degree completion milestones. This means that all academic units must affirmatively commit to Black student success, proactively take steps to create inclusive pedagogical learning and advising environments and purposefully sustain a climate for inclusive excellence. Practically, this means working directly with the Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning (OVPTL) to utilize evidence-based best practices to improve teaching environments, leverage teaching and learning research to maximize student outcomes, and promote greater cultural dexterity in teaching, advising and mentoring.

Mission: Drawing upon Evidence-Based Practices for Staff Leaders

Staff members represent a mainstay to support the research productivity and student learning and development at UCI. However, Black representation across all staff has stagnated at 3% for over a decade and specifically it has dwindled among senior management group leadership to a current low of 14% at a time when the university is using various programs to diversify faculty and students. Alongside Office of Inclusive Excellence certificate and other programs open to staff, the office will pilot three efforts during the coming year to bring additional scholarship and tools to bear on approaches

that interrogate anti-Black racism and equip staff leaders with cross-cultural proficiencies.

Sponsored by UCI, this pilot initiative involves the Office of Inclusive Excellence and Human Resources in a multi-faceted leadership development program targeting women of color, particularly from historically underrepresented ethnic and racial groups. Key components will include job shadowing, networking, and resource mining through the lens of inclusive excellence scholarship and interventions to equip professionals with understanding about the key levers for broadening structural diversity in staffing, identifying and developing diverse staff talent, and systemically improve promotion pathways to senior management group. This effort is aided by systemwide partnerships with chief diversity officers and human resources to broaden implementation across the University of California. (Launch anticipated winter 2021)

UCI Climate Survey Brown Bag Groups. The Office of Inclusive Excellence currently provides a dashboard of survey findings available for all UCI constituents and the public, and a topical Brown Bag group aims to familiarize and improve use among key constituent groups at UCI to confront anti-Black racism and attain inclusive excellence priorities. For 2020-21, these meetings will be convened virtually, targeting the Staff Assembly, Black Faculty and Staff Association, management groups, as well as other affinity groups to learn about inclusive excellence dashboards, readings, and interventions to address diversity and equity themes emerging from the UCI Climate Survey. (Launch anticipated winter 2021)

Inclusive Excellence Resources and Consultation for Staff Leaders. A current module for all new staff familiarizes incoming members of UCI with the inclusive excellence action plan and its pillars for community, thriving and wellness priorities. A proposed plan for Inclusive Excellence Resources and Consultation would extend activities to support managers by providing consultation and partnership with the Office of Inclusive Excellence to complete evidence-based unit actions for inclusive excellence. General consulting would support the development of SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) assessment approaches for overall inclusive excellence plans. Specific guidance will be provided to fund and enact sustainable activities for bringing knowledge into practice to counter anti-Black racism, and interventions and resource reviews among staff strategies to build inclusive climates and visibly value diverse talent. (Proposed for spring 2021)

II. Culture

Culture Change through Personal, Professional and Institutional Accountability

The most ambitious goal is to dismantle anti-Black sentiment as a precondition to creating a thriving university culture for Black people. Understanding the ways that bias, prejudice and bigotry impact the lives of Black people is a choice that we must make as individuals and as a campus community. This choice requires each of us to see ourselves in relation to our Black co-workers, colleagues, and undergraduate and graduate students. It is for these reasons that our whole university approach is based on the following accountability principles, which call for enacting meaningful efforts for personal, professional and institutional responsibility by:

- Examining and acknowledging how anti-Black racism manifests in society today, drawing lessons from the past and piloting opportunities for future change.
- Committing to learn about and advance skills that curtail implicit biases and anti-Black racism in all forms.
- Analyzing data and evidence where micro- and macro-aggressions have gone largely unnoticed or unchallenged and empowering ourselves and others to eradicate these transgressions.
- Recognizing the invisible and uncredited emotional labor that Black people expend to learn, teach, discover and work.
- Creating an inclusive and safe environment by reporting and acknowledging acts of racist intimidation.

These inter-dependent principles apply to all and must operate where teaching and learning, discovery and healing, and working take place. These spaces include campus administration and Academic Senate, academic schools and programs, lecture halls and seminars, laboratory and performance spaces, student athletics, student housing, police department, and UCI Medical Center.

Critical to these principles of accountability is an Inclusive Excellence Scorecard. The purpose of this bi-annual score card is to assess the climate for Black faculty and staff as well as undergraduates and graduate students. The score is based on a composite of factors: compositional changes faculty and staff and/or undergraduate major and graduate program enrollment; survey responses to climate and/or experience; and number and percentage of units completing the Inclusive Excellence Certificate Program or other OIE programs on anti-Blackness and allyship.

Culture: Culture Change Requires the Whole University to be Mindful in Confronting Anti-Blackness

It is not enough to think you know anti-Blackness when you see it. As a university community, each of us is obligated to educate ourselves about anti-Blackness. To this end, the Office of Inclusive Excellence and campus partners mount a suite of resources and programs to promote mindfulness in confronting anti-Blackness as a precondition of culture change. Mindfulness refers to approaching anti-Blackness with positive intention, attention and attitude.

Building a Culture Where Black People Thrive [Website](#). This dedicated website provides introductory information, tools for deeper understanding, and programing updates. It consists of four broad pages: Calling All Anteaters, Change the Culture, #ActforInclusion and Join Us.

Exploring Anti-Black Racism through Courses. Several new courses are free and open to all UCI students, staff, and faculty, and each for completion in five weeks.

Module 1 - Anti-Blackness in the United States: Black Protest Tradition

Why are people protesting in the streets and demonstrating in support of Black Lives? This short course explores this question as a way to understand anti-Blackness and the Black protest tradition. Offered in the summer and quarterly, this course meets one hour per week. Each meeting will be organized around a theme that will serve as a focal point of a moderated discussion. Themes include what is anti-Blackness, Black resistance (from Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement), racial justice on university campuses, and the Black Lives Matter Movement. (Pilot Projected Start: August 2020)

Module 2 - Anti-Blackness in the United States: Structures and Mechanisms of De-Valuing Black People

This short course examines white supremacy and its manifestations overtime and why it is necessary to demonstrate in support of Black Lives in the 21st century. Offered in the summer and quarterly, this course meets one hour per week. Each meeting will be organized around a theme that will serve as a focal point for a moderated discussion. These themes include what is white supremacy, who benefits from whiteness, forms of racial bias, policing black bodies, and the meanings of historical monuments, and being an ally. (Pilot Projected Start: September 2020)

Module 3 - Black Thriving Culture: Allyship

Building on the anti-Blackness in the United States course(s), this course explores the meaning and practice of being personally committed to diversity and being an ally of the Black community. Each meeting will be organized around a theme that will serve as a focal point for a moderated discussion. Themes include understanding unearned privileges and

advantages derived from a racial economy, committing to education and supporting racial justice based on knowledge, and enhancing the voices rather than speaking for other people. (Pilot Projected Start: August 2020)

Expanding the Inclusive Excellence Certificate Program. The Inclusive Excellence Certificate Program advances UCI's commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and free speech. It equips the campus community – undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff at both the main campus and medical center – to appreciate UCI from the vantage points of different campus constituencies. This 20-hour program consists of two courses: a core course on UCI as a Minority Thriving University, and choice of one elective on either Community or Wellness. Each course aligns with a pillar of the Inclusive Excellence Action Plan. (Fall enrollment begins September 15, 2020)

Culture: Culture Change Aligns the UCI Police Department with the Campus Commitment to Inclusive Excellence

As the current national reckoning has underscored, policing is definitely a major focal point for change. The campus takes this seriously as part of a comprehensive commitment to inclusive excellence. A whole university approach toward safety and community conceives of the police department as serving the campus according to equity diversity, inclusion and free speech principles.

The Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) plays a critical role in the continuous improvement in campus policing. Reporting to Vice Chancellor of the Division of Finance and Administration Ron Cortez, PSAC consists of representatives from campus stakeholder groups, including undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and staff. (<https://www.fa.uci.edu/psac/>) Beginning in AY 2020-21, PSAC will conduct an evaluation of the UCI Police Department every three years. On August 6, PSAC chair Katie Tinto outlined critical steps toward community-focused policing, including the engagement of a national expert who will consider policies and procedures, review the department leadership, and administer a community survey. PSAC will also develop a framework review of police encounters and civilian complaints and conduct a review of processes for monitoring protests on campus, including the role of UCI's Constructive Engagement Team.

In commending PSAC in reimagining safety and security, on [August 6](#) Chancellor Gillman underscored his commitment to aligning the Police Department with the campus commitment to inclusive excellence. This commitment builds on the work of the Academic Senate's 2017 report on UCIPD-UCI Community Relations and the 2019 Presidential Taskforce on University Policing. Indeed, in June Vice Chancellor Ron Cortez, Vice Chancellor Douglas Haynes, and Chief Liz Griffin announced initial steps. Among these include:

- Communicating campus expectations that all sworn officers promote equity, diversity and inclusion in serving the community.

- Ensuring annual completion of the Inclusive Excellence Certificate Program by a representative of the department's command.
- Increasing compositional diversity among the department's leadership.
- Elevating departmental accountability including posting police initiated stop data and compliant resolution.
- Securing campus feedback through scheduled policing survey administered by the Office of Inclusive Excellence in consultation with the Public Safety Advisory Council (PSAC).
- Augmenting performance review of the chief.

III. Engage

Black Communities: Linking the Future of UCI to the Success of Black People and Communities

At its best, our service mission reinforces the university's research and teaching mission to grow the capacity for a thriving culture for Black people. Outreach and engagement with schools and community colleges, collaboration and cooperation with non-for-profit organizations, and consultation and partnership with leaders in business, industry and professionals together enable universities to be a more responsive and impactful partner in serving communities across the county, state and country. These efforts promote a college-going culture and increase the number of college graduates; focus attention on society's grand challenges and develop local public policy solutions; and contributes to economic vitality of the region and the well-being of individuals, neighborhoods, and communities.

Community: Establish an External Advisory Board for the UCI Black Thriving Initiative and Office of Inclusive Excellence Speakers Bureau

The Initiative requires a coherent strategy and purposeful execution to succeed. This is particularly the case in Orange County where Black people comprise a little less than 2% of the general population of 3 million or 60,000 people. The size of the Black community requires a strategy that is simultaneously focused and broad; engaging with Orange County while reaching Black population centers, including Los Angeles, Bay Area, and Sacramento, across the state and the nation.

To facilitate this engagement, an external board will advise Vice Chancellor Haynes. Meeting up to three times a year, the goals of this council include:

- To share information and identify areas for campus and community coordination to increase college going and success among Black students;
- To elevate attention and awareness about UCI in promoting thriving communities
- To serve as a platform to advocate for inclusive excellence.

There are several existing organizations that are committed to creating a Black Thriving culture at UCI. Many include UCI alumni as well as current and past faculty and staff employees. Among these include the UCI Black Faculty and Staff Association, UCI Black Alumni Chapter, the African American Alumni Council, Orange County Black Chamber of Commerce, OC 100 Black Men, UC Council of African American Families, and Christ Our Redeemer Church and Second Baptist Church, local chapters of national Black fraternities and sororities.

Led by the Office of Inclusive Excellence, these countywide efforts must be conjoined to a state and national strategy. The appointment of former UCI Chancellor Michael V. Drake as President of the University of California, presents an unparalleled opportunity

to execute a focused communication and engagement effort. Critical to elevating the visibility of the campus commitment to Black Thriving Culture is to communicate the Initiative and update Black organizations that serve Black communities throughout the state. The communication modalities range from email, social media, web-based meetings and webinars, to appropriate physical distanced in-person events. This has to be reinforced with the visible engagement of UCI representatives, spanning from campus and academic leaders to faculty and alumni. The purpose in communicating the Initiative is to introduce audiences to the impressive achievements of the campus and tying our future to the success of Black people.

This strategy and its execution must work in coordination with the year-around activities of campus and academic units. The former includes admissions, advancement, athletics, government relations, and strategic communications among others. Academic units will play a crucial role in two ways. First, academic schools must develop communication plans and online materials around the Initiative for their own platforms. It is important that the Initiative is present on the public-facing websites beyond a link to the dedicated Initiative website. Second, the planned Office of Inclusive Excellence Speakers Bureau will provide deans with a vehicle to connect faculty to dedicated outreach activities in the wider community in the state and nation. This bureau will recruit faculty who are committed to the Initiative, prepared to discuss why it matters to them, and discuss how their research and teaching advances the Black experience and the drivers of well-being of Black communities. Participation in the bureau should be recognized in the faculty review process as contributing to inclusive activities for merit and promotion reviews. If travel is required, the Office of Inclusive Excellence will provide reimbursement for travel and overnight lodging as well as a nominal honorarium in the form of an allocation to their research account.

Community: Investing in Students Achievement and Honoring Black Faculty through Fundraising and Philanthropic Gifts

The final component of the community Initiative revolves around investing in student achievement and honoring Black faculty. Currently, there are several opportunities for continued and accelerated philanthropic support.

Dr. Joseph L. White Lecture (Cross Cultural Center, Division of Student Affairs)

The Dr. Joseph L. White Lecture was established as a tribute to the emeritus professor and this event has become a major national forum for thought leaders. In 1969, Dr. White was recruited to UCI by founding Chancellor Daniel G. Aldrich Jr. as a professor in the Program in Comparative Culture and as director of the Black Studies Program. He also held appointments in the School of Social Sciences and in the Department of Psychiatry & Human Behavior. His 1970 article "Toward a Black Psychology," questioning traditional psychological theories that were inadequate to understanding African American culture, is one of the seminal documents in the field of Black psychology. His books include *The Psychology of Blacks: An African-American Perspective* (1984), *The Troubled Adolescent* (1989) and *Black Man Emerging* (1999).

Dr. White founded the Cross-Cultural Center at UCI, the first of its kind in the University of California system, and the UCI Counseling Center. In recognition of his founding role, the Cross Cultural Center named its main conference after Dr. White.

Donald McKayle Endowment for Modern Dance (Claire Trevor School of Arts)

The endowment provides an opportunity for UCI and community members to honor the contributions made by the late Donald McKayle as Professor Emeritus and Director of UCI's Etude Ensemble at the Claire Trevor School of the Arts Department of Dance (1989-2018). This fund will perpetuate his dedication to the next generation of dancers by providing scholarships, securing dance luminaries to conduct master classes, and commissioning new works in modern dance.

Donald McKayle joined UCI's Department of Dance in 1989. His choreographic masterworks are considered modern dance classics. *Games*, *Rainbow Round My Shoulder*, *District Storyville*, and *Songs of the Disinherited* are still performed around the world. His contributions to the world of dance earned him a citation as "one of America's irreplaceable dance treasures" by the Dance Heritage Coalition and the Library of Congress, along with a medal from the Kennedy Center as a Master of African-American Choreography. His choreography earned him two Emmy Award nominations, an NAACP Image Award, and five Tony Award nominations for his work in Broadway musicals.

Professor McKayle was awarded virtually every honor given in the dance profession. For his work in education, he earned the UCI Medal, the university's highest honor, and was named Claire Trevor Professor in Dance, an endowed chair. He mentored and counseled the next generation of dancers in our community until his death, thus ensuring that his contributions to the world of dance would continue for decades to come.

Professor Lindon Barrett Memorial Award (Department of African American Studies, School of Humanities)

The Lindon Barrett Memorial Award was created in his honor as a scholarship for outstanding undergraduates majoring in African American Studies. A leading literary critic and cultural theorist, Professor Barrett enriched the School of Humanities as a member of the Critical Theory Institute, the Director of the Program in African American Studies, and a faculty member in the Departments of Comparative Literature and English. He spent his academic career serving the UCI campus. Recruited in 1990 as an assistant professor of English and Comparative Literature, Barrett rose to become a full professor and distinguished himself as a founding member of the Program in African American Studies, which he served as Director from 2004 to 2007. He later joined the University of California, Riverside in 2007. Barrett also authored *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double* (Cambridge University Press, 1999) and numerous scholarly essays and book chapters, including in the flagship journal *Callaloo*, which he served as Associate Editor from 1997 to 2000.

Black Leadership and Advancement Coalition (BLAC): Night of the Stars Annual Gala

The **BLAC** started at UCI in 2002 to enhance the experience of Black students, staff, faculty, and alumni at UCI. The BLAC is comprised of individuals from the UCI Black Alumni Chapter, the African American Alumni Council, various campus units and students from diverse disciplines, all dedicated to supporting and advancing the UCI Black community. The goals of the BLAC are to support academic achievement, promote cultural awareness, to unite various African American centered organizations, to serve as an informational sharing opportunity for members of the respective organizations and to link resources that are available to maximize our efforts on campus and in the surrounding community. The BLAC has etched a place on the UCI campus - and will continue supporting the success of African American faculty, staff, students and alumni. The BLAC gala has raised more than \$70,000 over 17 years in scholarships, recognizing numerous faculty and staff, and hosting hundreds of students at the annual Night of the Stars Gala.

Diverse Educational Experience and Doctoral Experience (DECADE) PLUS

The Graduate Division in partnership with the Division of Undergraduate Education's (DUE) Student Success Initiatives (SSI) has implemented the Diverse Educational Community and Doctoral Experience: Partnering in Leadership for Undergraduate Students (DECADE PLUS) Program. The goals of the DECADE PLUS program are to increase retention of incoming Chancellor's Excellence Scholars through mentoring with a focus on academics from graduate leadership coaches and undergraduate peer mentors, and to provide a robust professional development experience that actively enhances the mentoring skill set of our graduate population. The DECADE PLUS program aims to ensure scholars' success in their continued eligibility for scholarship renewal and pursuit of an undergraduate degree while enhancing the professional skill set of our graduate students.

UCI Minority Serving Institution Enhancement Award (Graduate Division and Office of Inclusive Excellence)

UCI Minority Serving Institution (MSI) Enhancement Award. Launched in 2019, the purpose of this award is to advance inclusive excellence in graduate education at UCI. The award provides a \$10,000 top-off for newly admitted domestic doctoral and MFA students who have graduated from Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or other federally designated Minority Serving Institution two-year college or four-year institution of higher education. The top-off is disbursed over a two-year period, in \$5,000 increments. The purpose of this program is to yield high achieving college graduates to join and further diversify our graduate programs. Nationally, UCI is distinctive for being a member of the prestigious American Association of Universities and a Minority Serving Institution. The campus is both a Hispanic Serving Institution and an Asian American Native American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution. The UCI MSI fellowship program will help our graduate programs grow and prepare future leaders that are both broadly diverse and committed to inclusive excellence.

Leadership Education to Advance Diversity – African, Black and Caribbean (LEAD-ABC)

Established in 2019 Leadership Education to Advance Diversity–African, Black and Caribbean (LEAD-ABC) is a UCI School of Medicine mission-based program aimed at producing future physicians who are committed to addressing the health needs of African, Black and Caribbean communities in California, the United States, and beyond.

LEAD-ABC is the first medical school program in the nation designed to specifically develop physician-leaders who will serve the unique health needs of ABC communities. The program was founded by Dr. Carol Major, Assistant Dean for Student Inclusive Excellence; Dr. Khanh-Van Le-Bucklin, Vice Dean for Medical Education; and Kaosoluchi Enendu, UC Irvine School of Medicine medical student (Class of 2021), and its core objectives are driven by the following:

Vision: To develop the next generation of physician-leaders who are committed to public service, social justice and advocacy within ABC communities.

Mission: To train and support students in medicine as they become medical professionals who will work to reduce healthcare disparities in ABC and other underserved communities.

Conclusion: We Must All Be In This Together

Unprecedented times demands an unprecedented response. We are living amidst these times.

The current national reckoning about anti-Blackness underscores the urgency to purposefully build a culture where Black people thrive. We know that anti-Blackness denies, deprives and de-values Black people from full participation in university life as it does in society. As a totalizing culture, anti-Blackness poses an existential threat to our mission as a public research university. It is for this reason that the UCI Black Thriving Initiative mobilizes the whole university to confront anti-Blackness while building a culture where Black people thrive.

At the core of the initiative's three platforms for action are campus members like you. They platforms for action depend on all of us.

- Leverage the mission to advance understanding about the Black experience and the drivers of well-being.
- Change the culture through understanding and confronting anti-Blackness.
- Engage Black communities by linking UCI's future to the success of Black people.

Individually and collectively, these actions rely on intention, attention and attitude to effect the institutional transformation that we seek as a campus community. To be truly in this together, we must link our futures to the success of Black undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff and alumni.

The UCI Black Thriving Initiative provides a vehicle to harness the fierce urgency of now into concrete and lasting actions. This initiative will enable the university to fulfill its mission, provide a national model for institutional change across the higher education landscape, and ultimately be an engine to maximize the potential of all people.