

Moving Beyond Words:

Responding to Racialized Injustice in the United States

A Statement by UC Cuba

As a community, we pause to recognize the tremendous suffering and loss of life that has been caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and to acknowledge that this public health crisis has disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous and other marginalized communities. We also want to recognize that this crisis is overlapping with another crisis—one of national conscience—occasioned by the recent deaths of three black Americans: George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, who died as the latest victims of the systemic racism that is embedded in U.S. society, including the law enforcement structures that are duty bound to protect the lives, property and dignity of all who live within its borders.

We do not need to repeat what we already know: white supremacy and racialized injustice are defining part of our national reality. These injustices are not unique to the United States of America. But this is where WE live. This is OUR house. And we are responsible for what goes on under our roof.

UC Cuba calls upon its faculty, students and collaborators to move beyond words in their responses to this moment of national crisis. We don't want to fall into the same trap as those who offer "thoughts and prayers" to the victims of mass shootings, without taking meaningful action to curb gun violence. We know that words are meaningless in the absence of action.

If you agree, here are some suggestions for where to start:

1. Assess your own positionality. After taking stock of your privileges and the resources available to you, commit to using those things for maximum impact.
2. Make use of your education by writing forceful letters to your federal legislators demanding that they work to eliminate qualified legal immunity for law enforcement officers. Find your federal legislators here:

<http://www.ala.org/everyday-advocacy/virtual-library-legislative-day/contact-your-us-senators-and-representatives>

3. Defend the constitutional rights of others by training to be a legal observer at protests. Find a nearby training by contacting the local branch of the National Lawyers' Guild at: www.nlg.org
4. Educate yourself about criminal justice and policing issues in your community and about research-based policy solutions. A great source of information for this is Campaign Zero, a grassroots organization led by activists of color who do data-driven analysis of the problem of police violence. More at: www.joincampaignzero.com

5. If you have a job that provides for your needs and those of your family, donate money to [Campaign Zero](#), the [Black Lives Matter Global Network](#), the [ACLU](#), or local grassroots organizations working for racial justice, criminal justice and police reform.
6. Exercise your right to freedom of expression, but don't preach to the choir. Take a stand against racialized injustice where it matters—among people in your families and communities who need to hear this message.
7. Exercise your right to assemble peacefully, if you feel safe doing so (or are willing to accept the risk). If you don't feel safe attending a large rally, get creative. Make signs and gather with your "quarantine bubble" in front of your house or on a neighborhood street corner. See and be seen taking a stand—or taking a knee—for justice.
8. VOTE, in every election, local, state and federal.

We make these suggestions humbly, knowing each of these actions represents just a drop in the bucket; but in the belief that all of our drops together will someday fill that bucket and cause it to overflow. And because we also believe, as Jose Marti once said, "It is a sin not to do what one is capable of doing."

In the spirit of Martí, and in honor of our Cuban revolutionary tradition, let's do all that we can. Let's put our house in order together.

Ya era hora, y tiene que ser ahora.