

June 17, 2020

Board of Regents – University of California

Re: Juneteenth Commemoration

Dear John Pérez, Cecilia Estolano, Maria Anguiano, Richard Blum, Laphonza Butler, Michael Cohen, Gareth Elliott, Howard “Peter” Guber, George Kieffer, Sherry Lansing, Richard Leib, Hadi Makarechian, Eloy Oakley, Lark Park, Janet Reilly, Richard Sherman, Jonathan “Jay” Sures, Hayley Weddle, Charlene Zettel, and the Board of Regents team,

Thank you for your commitment so far in supporting #BlackLivesMatter. We highly value the dedication demonstrated across UC campuses in an effort to support the Black community and bring about sustained change.

We, the UC community, propose that June 19th be recognized as a UC holiday beginning this year.

Juneteenth marks a day of liberation. Most people are familiar with the celebration and history of the Fourth of July. However, there is more to our history than this single day.

Juneteenth is historically significant: it is the oldest annual commemoration of the end of slavery, beginning when the last Black slaves were freed on June 19th, 1865. Juneteenth is nationally recognized: it is honored as a state holiday or special day of observance in 47 of the 50 states, including California. Juneteenth is a day of festivity: to celebrate the achievement, history, journey and freedom of Black Americans.

The UC system prides itself as a globally recognized institution for excellence, equality, diversity and public service. In the wake of the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless others who have died or suffered abuse at the hands of police brutality and systemic racism, we, the UC community, ask that the UC system uphold its reputation by supporting the Black community in recognizing June 19th as an institutional holiday. Several prominent organizations like Nike, VSCO, Adobe, Twitter, Square, BuzzFeed and more have made such announcements in recent days and we ask that the UC system follow suit. This year marks the 155th year since the final enslaved people were freed and it is time for historical steps forward.

We, the UC community, recognize that Juneteenth has not been celebrated before at an institutional level. Thus, we request that we honor the day this year and moving forward and suggest the following recommendations on how to formally celebrate June 19th:

- i. Providing a UC-wide day off as a day to celebrate and reflect
- ii. Additional donations to support a Black-owned business
- iii. Institution-sponsored meals for the day from a Black-owned business
- iv. Institution-sponsored celebration
- v. Institution-sponsored event with an external Black guest speaker

We, the UC community, strongly propose that June 19th be incorporated into the university calendar and have it acknowledged as an institutionally recognized holiday starting 2020.

We welcome your thoughts and suggestions for ways we can move forward on this issue.

Thank you,

From the faculty, students and staff of
The Dismantling Racism study and action group for justice, liberation, and belonging at Cal

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