



Department of Hispanic Studies
84 Prospect Street
Providence, RI 02912

June 22, 2020

To President Christina Paxson, the Brown Board of Trustees, Provost Richard M. Locke, Vice President for Campus Life Eric Estes and the Brown University Community:

We, the undersigned graduate students of the Department of Hispanic Studies at Brown University, stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and write to express our support of the ongoing protests for racial justice across the world. We grieve and condemn the brutal murders of Rayshard Brooks, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile and of all the countless victims who have been lost to police brutality, senseless violence by vigilantes and systemic racism that structurally permeates the US and each of our countries of origin. We stand against all forms of anti-black violence and, in solidarity with earlier letters penned by the graduate students of the departments of Africana Studies, Sociology, Anthropology, English, German, Literary Arts, Comparative Literature, Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Sciences, American Studies and the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World, we echo and amplify our colleagues' call for Brown University to take concrete steps to dismantle the structures of slavery and white supremacy embedded in its history.

As members of the Department of Hispanic Studies, we feel that we have a responsibility to actively condemn all forms of racism and discriminatory violence, particularly in recognition of how systemic inequality continues to permeate our work and classrooms. Spanish invaders and colonists were the first to bring enslaved African peoples to the Americas, initiating over four centuries of enslavement and brutality against black and indigenous people across the hemisphere. Recent examples of anti-black racism and violence - both systemic and otherwise - prove the extent to which these histories continue to reverberate and underscore the urgency of taking action. As those who study the Latin American World and Spain, we feel a particular responsibility to ourselves, our students and our scholarly community to address the history of slavery and oppression that pervades our discipline, both in the classroom and in our own scholarship. As part of this work, we promise to facilitate honest and productive conversations that will take stock of how the Department of Hispanic Studies may become more actively engaged in dismantling white supremacy and championing equality for all. In this vein, we are recommitting ourselves to diversifying our syllabi, implementing more inclusive pedagogical practices and fortifying greater engagement with both our local and global

communities. As we strive to build greater representation of all identities in our department, we also recommit to elevating black and indigenous voices in particular as much as possible.

Beyond our efforts as a department, we also reiterate *verbatim* the measures outlined by the graduate students of Africana Studies, who demand that:

- 1) All formal contracts and relationships with the Providence Police Department are immediately severed.
- 2) Campus security employees are disarmed and no longer licensed as Rhode Island Special Police officers.
- 3) Brown University redirects funds from the Department of Public Safety to invest in the health and wellbeing of Black students and community members. This includes using the redirected funds to support community organizing, collective healing, and reparations in the form of a fund for Black Providence residents displaced by the university, as well as the termination of programs such as Coffee with a Cop, Cooking with Cops, Cocoa with BroPo, and Pizza with the Chief to aid in the funding of community-led alternatives to policing.
- 4) Brown University severs its relationship with Safariland CEO Warren Kanders '79, whose military equipment has been used by law enforcement officers to inflict violence upon civilians on an international scale.

As we face the urgent demands of the ongoing protests across the country and abroad, we call on Brown University to take immediate and concrete action as outlined above. While we recognize that unlearning racist practices is a process, we emphasize that change is long overdue and we must begin now. Institutions of higher education hold great potential for reevaluating and combating the systemic racism that establishes and perpetuates white supremacy. Together, we are committed to engaging in this urgent work and demand that Brown University take immediate action.

In solidarity,

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