

Dear Members of the USF History Department Community:

As protest has spread across the country in response not only to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, but also to the recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, David McAtee and those of Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland and so many others over the past decade the History Department wishes to express our collective anger, our mourning over this violence, and our commitment to anti-racism. As so many protesters have pointed out, this is an issue of structural racism woven deeply into the fabric of political, social, economic, and cultural life in the United States. Indeed, the racial disparities evident in the COVID-19 pandemic, in which Black Americans are dying at a significantly higher rate than the rest of the population, suggest the ways in which structural racism is as much a public health issue as it is an issue of police violence. To begin to imagine a more just present and future requires a critical engagement with the past. We must construct a careful genealogy of the ways in which structural racism was articulated as a fundamental condition of democracy and capitalism in the United States and more broadly, if we are ever to dismantle it.

History, as a discipline, provides a way of thinking through the long histories of anti-Black racism that have animated the United States and the world. History is often bandied about. It implies that in the future, history will make a just judgment of the past. However, history does not sit back and passively judge; rather it is made, in part by historians. If history can offer us a way to think through and attempt to understand the structural anti-Blackness of American society, history itself, as a discipline, still has much work to do.

Historians of structural racism have demonstrated its corrosive effects, from the early European engagement with Africa in the fifteenth century to the emergence of the trans-Atlantic slave trade; from the consolidation of chattel slavery and the plantation to the emergence of scientific racism; from Jim Crow laws to redlining; from the slave patrols of the 19th century to contemporary police brutality; from US colonialism and imperialism abroad to the maintenance of those practices domestically. In all of these ways, they have called attention to the vexed, often bloody, relationship between property and life. As the historian Robin D.G. Kelley puts it,

break from the old or

international in scope, these issues all have very local resonance as well. Florida, and Tampa in particular, were at the center of Jim Crow legislation in the early 20th century. The urban planning and redevelopment models that decimated Black neighborhoods and communities created the fractured geography of Tampa, still evident in the corrosive effects of I-275 and I-4 and in the recent discoveries of Black cemeteries buried under the city, to name but two contemporary issues. Historical study makes it possible to trace the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability, which have shaped incidences of police violence across the twentieth and twenty-first century, just as they have structured the wider society.

USF is hardly immune to this sort of structural racism. This is evident within the USF History Department itself, which currently has no Black faculty members. This must change. Our curriculum, rich in some areas and lacking in others, must be mobilized to help students, undergraduate and graduate, to engage with structural racism (specifically anti-Black, but in other forms as well) and to imagine other futures grounded in a critical understanding of the past.

We will be initiating a systematic review of our curriculum, and the makeup and recruitment of our student body at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. This must be more than a surface-level commitment to diversifying; rather, it must entail a fundamental transformation of the department. Moreover, this must be done in tandem with the entire University of South Florida system. At minimum, the administration should do the following: reconsider wider issues of hiring; reaffirm their active commitment not just to diversifying but to remaking curricular knowledge; review and then adequately transform the practices and funding of the USF police force.

The public university is a place where public opinion and public discourse are made and shaped;

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The [Office of Diversity, Inclusion & Equal Opportunity \(DIEO\)](#) at USF coordinates campus services and initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion and prevent harassment. Public disability accommodations and Title IX are housed within this office, as are mechanisms to file discrimination, harassment, or retaliation complaints that fall under Diversity and Equal Opportunity or Disability policies.

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The [USF Title IX office](#) deals with investigations of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment as well as retaliation and discrimination based on sex. Please see relevant university policies below on discrimination and harassment as well as what constitutes sexual misconduct. All

considered Mandatory Reporters for Title IX.

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The [Center for Victim Advocacy](#) provides free, confidential services to USF students, faculty, and staff who are victims of crime, violence, or abuse, whether on or off campus, if it took place recently or in the past.

The University of South Florida (USF) is a diverse community that values and expects respect and fair treatment of all people. USF strives to provide a work and study environment for faculty, staff and students that is free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, or genetic information, as provided by law. USF protects its faculty, staff, and students from discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation, as well as gender identity and expression. USF is also committed to the employment and advancement of qualified veterans with disabilities and veterans protected

Additionally, discriminatory conduct in the form of sexual misconduct/sexual harassment (including sexual violence) is also prohibited and allegations of violations in that regard are handled by the Title IX Office.

Pursuant to Title IX, the University does not discriminate on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities that it operates. Any questions or inquiries concerning the application of Title IX may be referred to the _____ . Up to date information may be found on the [Title IX website](#).

Relevant USF Policies Related to Title IX

Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment (including Battery) Policy - #0-004

STATEMENT OF POLICY

Sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, including sexual violence, by or between any faculty member, staff, vendor, visitor or student, including individuals of the same sex, in all academic, educational, extracurricular, athletic, and other programs of the University, whether those programs take place in University facilities, at a class or training program sponsored by the University at another location, or elsewhere is prohibited.

Examples of prohibited conduct* include, but are not limited to:

1. Requesting or

A. USF encourages an atmosphere of open dialogue and expression, including the promotion of good faith filing of grievances, reporting of complaints or concerns by employees and students regarding violations of law, rule, regulation, policy or other misconduct. Employees who learn of retaliation should report it immediately.

B. In support of an environment of open communication within the USF community, USF will not tolerate retaliation, retribution or reprisals against an employee or student who, in good

Students can also file an anonymous report with EthicsPoint Hotline:

Important: *This is **not** a reporting option for mandatory/responsible employees.*

USF has engaged EthicsPoint a third party hosted hotline to enable the safe, secure, and anonymous reporting of activities which may involve misconduct, fraud, abuse, and other violations of USF policies. You may file an anonymous report with EthicsPoint by [clicking here](#) (once on site for reporting follow EthicsPoint directions) or by calling toll-free 1-866-974-U411.

USF's [Retaliation, Retribution, or Reprisals Prohibited Policy](#) 0-020, prohibits retaliatory action be taken against anyone who reports or inquires in good faith about potential breaches of USF policies or seeks guidance on how to handle suspected breaches. (See above).

Reports made in EthicsPoint and associated investigatory records will be kept confidential to the extent possible under applicable state and federal law. Be advised that revealing your identity in EthicsPoint may result in disclosure of your identity in response to a public records request under Florida's public records law [Chapter 119, Florida Statutes].