

From: [All UF Employee List](#) on behalf of [UF President Kent Fuchs](#)
To: [All-UF-Employee](#)
Subject: Another step toward positive change against racism
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June 18, 2020

Dear UF Community,

Nearly three weeks ago following the horrific murder of Mr. George Floyd, I urged us all to become part of positive change against racism. Last week, I encouraged faculty and staff to pause their normal work for a day to reflect on their personal actions and educate themselves on racism.

Amid global protests and intentional reflection here on campus, many UF colleges, departments and individuals have joined the growing effort to address racism and inequity.

To build on this important work, we announce today actions that align with our strategic goals in [The Decade Ahead](#) plan in the following three areas:

- 1) Our three-part mission of education, research and engagement with the community
- 2) Understanding our history and moving forward with symbolism and behavior consistent with our values
- 3) Representation, inclusion, opportunity and accountability

Education, research and community engagement

- UF will require training of all current and new students, faculty and staff on racism, inclusion and bias.
- UF's Office of Research will make available this academic year competitive grants to faculty on topics of race, equity, justice and reconciliation.
- The 2020-21 academic year will focus on the Black experience, racism and inequity. Each of our colleges will feature speakers, seminars and courses. Led by faculty, we will also reevaluate and revise appropriate elements of our curriculum, including UF Quest.
- Student Government will join in this effort by organizing programs and speakers across campus, as with yesterday's ACCENT speaker announcement.
- The UF Faculty Senate will organize Town Hall meetings and add a standing agenda item as part of their monthly Faculty Senate meetings.
- In UF's spring semester, we will devote a day to community service and learning as guided by local leaders.

History, symbolism and demonstrating behaviors consistent with our values

- A presidential task force will document the history of UF in relationship to race and ethnicity, particularly African Americans and Native Americans.
- A second presidential task force will review and recommend values, principles and reasons for establishing and maintaining honorary namings, both historic and current. The task force will further recommend a process for individuals associated with UF to be identified and considered for future honorary namings in accordance with current values and principles, and may suggest individuals for future consideration. Ultimately there will be a process to review all historical namings to determine if they should be retained or removed.
- I am personally committed to removing any monuments or namings that UF can control that celebrate the Confederacy or its leaders.
- While I know of no evidence of racism associated with our “Gator Bait” cheer at UF sporting events, there is horrific historic racist imagery associated with the phrase. Accordingly University Athletics and the Gator Band will discontinue the use of the cheer.
- There are agriculture operations where UF has relied on prison and jail inmates to provide farm labor. The symbolism of inmate labor is incompatible with our university and its principles and therefore this practice will end.

Representation, inclusion, opportunity and accountability

- The chiefs of the University Police Department and Gainesville Police Department have committed with city and university leadership to review use of force policies, report their findings to the community, institute needed reforms and engage the community by including a diverse range of input and experiences.
- I am charging the university’s leadership, acting within state and federal laws, to intensify our efforts in recruiting, supporting and retaining our students, faculty and employees of color, particularly Black students, faculty and staff. To promote transparency and accountability, we will publish by department and college the race, ethnicity and gender trends for faculty, staff and students and present regular reports to the Board of Trustees.
- UF will redouble efforts to support local small businesses and vendor diversity.
- UF will work with East Gainesville community leaders and residents to develop specific and sustainable programs and activities that will contribute to improving the community’s educational and economic well-being.

It is past time for UF to commit and engage in this challenging, uncomfortable, transformational work. We know that we cannot undo lifetimes of injustice and racism, but we believe we can make progress - in education, in advancing truth, reconciliation and justice, and in anti-racism, equality and working to eradicate inequities. This process will not be easy, and we will need to work together through the imperfections, missteps and complications that always accompany change. But the progress we seek is fundamental to who we are at UF

and to our expectations of ourselves, and I look forward to joining all of you on behalf of our campus, community and country.

Warmly,

Kent

W. Kent Fuchs
President
University of Florida