

Stories and Meaningful Statistics:

A mixed-methods, intersectional approach to exploring Black Health and Black Identity among faculty, students and staff at UC Merced

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TRDRP Predoctoral Research Fellow

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Acknowledgments



Valuing Black Lives Commitment Statement

"I am passionate about addressing health disparities, racial justice and anti-Blackness... I have seen progress and hope that the new and existing initiatives are here to stay. As I am on my way out, I would love to be an alumni with a doctoral degree that can say with great joy, that UC Merced is a place folx like myself."



UC Merced Statistics

As of Fall 2020:

- **4%** of all undergraduate students identified as African American or Black (**371/8276** students)
- **2%** of all graduate students identified as African American or Black (**15/742** students)

As of Fall 2018:

- **40/1623** staff members identified as African American or Black
- **2%** of all instructional faculty identified as Black or African American (**9/407** instructional faculty including lecturers)

Source: <https://cie.ucmerced.edu/analytics-hub>



Black Excellence at UC Merced

UCM Black Graduate Scholar Association:

The mission of our UC Merced Black Graduate Scholar Association is to provide a space for Black, African, African-American and Afro-Latinx students to network, write, and present research. We meet each week either as a writing group or scholar group to work on our research and have a shared, collaborative space.

One of our primary objectives is to promote retention of current Black graduate students and potentially recruit others. We welcome all individuals, including graduate students, staff and faculty of color.

ADVISORS: Dr. Teamrat Ghezzehei,
Dr. Asmeret Berhe & Dr. Whitney Pirtle



Black Graduate Student Stories & Experiences

“I feel like my mental health has really declined since moving here and starting graduate school, and COVID has only made it worse... I don't see my family or people that look me. It is isolating here, but I enjoy my research and I am almost done, so that's why I stay.”

- Black Graduate Scholar, School of Natural Sciences

“As a Black first-generation graduate student, I am always feeling out of place and that I am not enough in my program. There are times I would leave, but I am doing this for my mom and dad and siblings... I am stressed a lot and feel a lot of anxiety, but happy to be talking about it now.”

- Black Graduate Scholar, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts



Black Graduate Alumni Stories & Experiences

“Being from the Central Valley, I was excited to attend UC Merced and thought there would be more Black students and faculty.... I would be lying if I said I wasn’t disappointed and felt out of place... I left due to some conflicts with other non-Black students in my program and lack of support, but finishing strong in my new program!”

- Black Graduate Scholar, Alumni

“I wish I was going to UC Merced now. It seems like there is more for us [Black grad students]. My time was long, but thankful to now be called Dr. I didn’t give up, even through some rough patches with faculty and funding. I would tell incoming and current graduate to ask questions and ask for help. We deserve it. We worked hard for this... Your health and wellness should be a priority, no matter what.”

- Black Graduate Scholar, Alumni



Call to Action for Administration

- Continued and increased funding for fellowships and scholarships for Black graduate students.
 - Extending the one-year fellowship and a sustainable commitment to these funding opportunities
 - Funding for travel, academic conferences, and professional development
- Support Black faculty, staff, undergrads, grad students, and post docs including incentives to participate on equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Hiring and retaining more Black staff and faculty.



Call to Action for Audience

- Join one of the many Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives at UC Merced.
- Get involved in local community and community-based efforts focused on racial justice and equity.
- Live your purpose and put your health first!
- And last, but not least.... VOTE!!!!



BLACK FEMINIST SOCIOLOGY *Symposium & Virtual Discussion*

Friday, May 14th, 2021
10am PST/1pm EST

Part 1: Panel Discussion



Dr. Rose Brewer



Dr. LeConté Dill &
Dr. Cynthia Neal Spence



Dr. Carolette
Norwood



Dr. Kenly Brown



Dr. Saida Grundy &
Dr. Freeden Blume Oeur



Part 2: Moderated Discussion



Dr. Brittany
Friedman



Dr. Melissa C.
Brown



Dr. Lori L. Martin



Dr. Jennifer
James



Dr. Maria
Johnson

Hosted By:



Dr. Whitney Pirtle
UC Merced



Dr. Zakiya Luna
UC Santa Barbara



Tashelle Wright, ABD
UC Merced

Registration Required: <https://tinyurl.com/3aw6mczp>



@BlackFemSoc



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Thank you to the Black UCM community, local leaders and advocates, and all those who shared their stories with me!



Please feel free to connect with me:

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