

UCLA BLM –Faculty Reflections, 6/5/2020
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Let's start with a definition.

Structural and Systemic Racism are rooted in the institutionalization of white supremacy at all structures in our society and characterized by anti-blackness.

Systemic Racism and me
Personal reflections

Systemic Racism is being three generations from slavery but a second-generation physician
Systemic Racism is my mother being the first female faculty at Jules Stein but getting assigned an office in basement

Systemic Racism is even though my mom obtained 8 patents and her invention laid the foundation for laser cataract surgery, she never profited financially from her invention and battled to be appropriately cited in the literature

Systemic Racism is Hidden Figures

Systemic Racism are health inequities

Systemic Racism is sick and tired of being sick and tired

Systemic Racism is the story of Charles Drew who developed blood banking but was refused a lifesaving transfusion and died

Systemic Racism is the Tuskegee Experiment and the story of Henrietta Lacks

Systemic Racism is having black maternal mortality rates that are consistently worse for black women with PhDs than for uneducated white women in rural Appalachia

Systemic Racism is overdiagnosis and underdiagnosis and undertreatment

Systemic Racism is the sad reality that black people have just about the worst health outcomes, both in terms of morbidity and mortality for almost every disease on the planet, even after controlling for class and educational attainment

Systemic Racism is having disparate health outcomes and the not so soft bigotry of low expectations that occurs while being hospitalized while black

Systemic Racism is a Public Health issue

Systemic Racism is black youth age 5-12 with highest suicide rates and no mention in JAACAP

Systemic Racism is 80% of incarcerated youth who identify as LGBTQ are youth of color

Systemic Racism is that there are twice as many black kids in the child welfare population than there are in the general population

Systemic Racism is NIH findings showing that black scientists receive R01 funding only half as often as their white peers

Systemic Racism is that topics like health disparities, disease prevention, socioeconomic factors, were less likely to receive NIH funding than topics like neuron, and cell

Systemic Racism is the Flexner report, physician bias, eugenics and the field of scientific racism fueling myths around black people feeling less pain because they have “thicker skin” or “heavier bones so not able to swim”

Systemic Racism is how the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately killing black and brown people and causing economic ruination.

Systemic Racism is treating the pandemic as a public health emergency until we found out who was dying and then the government’s rush to open everything. Systemic Racism is the lives of essential workers and being considered essential but expendable

Systemic Racism is saying that you are color blind, race neutral, and against affirmative action, or arguing the concepts of reverse racism

Systemic Racism is the school to prison pipeline, the new jim crow, disproportionate minority contact and mass incarceration, the Central Park 5, super-predators, birtherism, othering, health disparities, blighted neighborhoods, concentrated poverty, ghettos, barrios, Chinatowns, reservations, red-lining and redistricting, the Dakota pipeline, contaminated water in Flint, Michigan, environmental toxicity, food deserts, size-shaming, welfare queens, zip codes determining health outcomes, complex trauma, gun violence and lack of gun reform legislation, low performing schools, push out, zero tolerance policies

Systemic Racism is the threat to repeal DACA, ICE detention centers, criminalizing asylum seekers and separating migrating families

Systemic Racism is thinking that woke is a one-time event and using that concept as a free pass.

Systemic Racism is taking Egypt out of Africa and Africans out of Egypt and removing Africans and our many contributions from history

Systemic Racism is white fragility, #oscars so white, saying all lives matter, and blue lives matter.

Systemic Racism is Amy Cooper and her weaponization of white privilege, a situation could have been the 2020 version of Emmitt Till.

Systemic Racism is arresting Omar Jimenez, a black CNN reporter on live TV and pepper spraying and arresting black Brooklyn state senator Zellnor Myrie by mistake at peaceful protests

Systemic Racism is brandishing confederate flags and lionizing the statues of civil war white supremacists

Systemic Racism is voter suppression, dogwhistling, MAGA hats, and very fine people on both sides.

Systemic Racism is the 53% of white women who voted for Donald Trump and those who may do so again.

Systemic Racism is my mom being the only black female MD surgeon at UCLA back in the day in the 1970’s and me being the only black psychiatrist 50 years later in 2020

Systemic Racism is the minority tax of having to write solidarity statements for leadership here, there, and everywhere from corporate America to top tier health systems plagued by lack of representation

Systemic Racism is administrators still being afraid of using Black Lives Matter and me being afraid to push them to do so for fear of retribution, marginalization and job security

Systemic Racism is the minority tax, stereotyped threat, code-switching, the angry black woman, being too sensitive, not willing to take feedback, having an attitude or being hostile, being not like the rest, weathering, allostatic load, hypercortisol, impostor syndrome, invisibilized scholarship, but still being considered articulate and approachable
Systemic Racism is being over-qualified but not getting the job

Systemic Racism is birdwatching while black, selling newspapers and lemonade while black, traveling while black, jogging while black and the danger in doing anything while black as there is no safe space for black bodies whether you are sick in the hospital, or playing in parks (Tamir), schools (11 year old girl attacked by Resource Officer Zach Christensen in Farmington New Mexico), driving your car (Philando, Sandra Bland), jogging (Ahmad), candy shopping (Trayvon) or resting peacefully in your home (Breonna, Kayla).
There is no safe place for black bodies.

Systemic Racism is hating on the Colin Kapernick knee but not the knee of Derek Chauvin despite the videos from several angles.

Systemic Racism is Colin Kapernick still not getting a job in the NFL

Systemic Racism is Get Your Knee off Our Necks

Systemic Racism includes but is not limited to all of the above...

Systemic Racism is the 3/5 compromise and the persistent criminalization and dehumanization of black life

Systemic Racism is an endless list of fill in the blank names that represent lives snatched by white vigilantism, police brutality and state sponsored lynching.

Systemic Racism is the NRA and fraternal brotherhood of police

Systemic Racism is stop and frisk and no knock warrants

Systemic Racism is the need to have two autopsies

Systemic Racism is intersectionality

Systemic Racism is Nina Pop, a 28-year old trans woman who was stabbed to death in Missouri in May and why we have the #SAYHERNAME movement.

Systemic Racism is having so many videos and still not believing

Systemic Racism is George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Aubrey, Michael Lorenzo Dena, Eric Reason, Christopher MCCORVEY, Christopher Whitefield, Atatiana Jefferson, Dominique Clayton, Pamela Taylor, Botham Jean, Antwon rose 2, Stephon Clark, Ronnell Foster, Aaron Bailer, Jordan Edwards, Alteria Woods, Paul O'Neal, Terence Crutcher, Philando Castille, Alton Sterling, Syville Smith, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Terrill Thomas, Willie Tillman, Demarcus

Semer, Trayvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Amadou Diallo, Rodney King, and Emmett Till, and the list goes on and on.

Systemic Racism is 400 years and still counting

Systemic Racism is silence and inaction in the face of injustice

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Now we would like to take time to spend 8 minutes and 46 seconds in silence. 8 minutes and 46 seconds that George Floyd was pinned to ground, pleading for his life. Feel how long this time is. Feel the air within your lungs with each breath. Feel.