



Foothill College Academic Senate
Resolution on Supporting the Mental Health of Black Students
May 2021

Whereas, the murder of George Floyd and continued police-involved killings of Black lives has reopened a psychological wound for Black students and revealed unique challenges within mental health services;

Whereas, the experience of racism – both direct and indirect in the form of microaggressions¹ or exposure to racism through course content – can have a devastating effect on the mental health of Black students²;

Whereas, predetermined consequences such as expulsions, suspensions, and referrals to law enforcement for specific offenses disproportionately affect Black students and often can lead to depression, anxiety or addiction as a result of zero-tolerance discipline policies;

Whereas, the [October 2020 Open Letter to Foothill College Governance](#) drafted by Foothill students and subsequently approved by the Associated Students of Foothill College (ASFC), provides a full scope of what students would like to see going forward to address the ongoing violence and systemic racism against the Black community, including a commitment to providing faculty with the professional development needed to lead with compassion and implement inclusive teaching practices³;

Whereas [Foothill College's Strategic Vision for Equity 2021-2025](#) has identified goals to address the mental health needs of students of color, including investigating and employing creative solutions on how to expand racial trauma-informed psychological services for students, and ensuring students of color have broad access to diverse mental health professionals, especially around trauma related to police interactions;
therefore be it

Resolved, the Foothill College Academic Senate commits itself to the psychological well-being of Black students by recognizing that a trauma-informed practice recognizing signs, symptoms, and risks will better support the mental health needs of our Black students, and, be it further

¹ For a more detailed explanation of microaggressions and their impact please see Issue #8 on page 33 of [Foothill College's Strategic Vision for Equity 2021-2025](#).

² For more information see ["The Emotional Toll of Racism" in Inside Higher Ed, October 2020](#)

³ The authors of the letter refer us to the [University of Michigan's Inclusive Teaching website](#) for more guidance on how to implement inclusive teaching practices.

Resolved, the Foothill College Academic Senate creates conditions that strengthen anti-racism awareness by promoting on-going professional development for faculty in unconscious bias, racial trauma, and racial diversity, and, be it further

Resolved, that the Foothill Academic Senate work with administration and student groups to develop a responsible student conduct and disciplinary framework centered on restorative justice principles based on Inclusive Decision-making, Active Accountability, Repairing Harm, and Rebuilding Trust.⁴

⁴ Karp, D. R., & Armour, M. (2019). *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for Colleges and Universities*.