

The San Mateo County Community College District Antiracism Council statement regarding Tyre Nichols...

When we talk about racism and anti-Blackness towards Black people, the two most evident examples in recent times are the deaths of George Floyd (racism) and Tyre Nichols (anti-Blackness). These two terms are often confused and/or conflated.

Many Black people are careful to not express their almost 500-years of continued subjugation as the most extreme representation of racist behavior towards any racial group. We refer to this concern as the *oppression Olympics*, a way to characterize what may sound or appear like one racial group suggesting they are experiencing greater racist oppression than another.

However, the recent unjust murder of Tyre Nichols reignites the traumatic reality of many Black people, non-Black family members of Black people, and those who choose to be co-conspirators of Black people.

The realities of Black people's exposure to police brutality and other expressions of social injustice produce two aspects of awareness: (1) the constant reorientation of Black people to historic and present trauma and (2) Black people (but not Black culture) as the least desirable and most hated racial group in the American racial caste system. Met with the greatest amount of non-indigenous unjust violence and the least amount of restorative justice, Black defamation and demise are normalized dysfunctions in American society. The normalized social dysfunction of engaging in violently inhumane behavior, particularly toward Black people, occurs in part due to presently held beliefs sustained by historic racial tropes and a range of psychological justifications popularly framed as cognitive dissonance.

Tyre Nichols was a human being that was placed into a socially constructed reality of an identity group racially referred to as Black because of the melanin in his skin. Because he is Black—he died an untimely death. This moment sparks a distinct opportunity to highlight that this injustice was perpetrated by Black police officers against a Black person; this IS also an expression of anti-Blackness. The expression of anti-Blackness can include Black people among other colorized-racial groups. Tyre Nichols was a good and seemingly harmless person who was engaging in things that we do every day. We can all realize what a grave error was made in the occurrence of his demise. This can happen to any one of us, our employees, our students, or our loved ones.

There's nothing that can be written or said beyond the incomprehensible number of words, sentences, paragraphs, pages, and sound bites that have called for justice reform from the nation and that have called for the acknowledgment and behavioral modifications from the District, which are inspired by these gruesome realities.

The District Antiracism Council is planning to draft a zero-tolerance board resolution soliciting support for the disruption and eradication of the occurrences of anti-Blackness within SMCCCD. Some may ask, what difference does a Board of Trustee approved resolution supporting the

prohibition of anti-Blackness make. The answer is that it acknowledges the existence of anti-Blackness in our district and empowers the District Antiracism Council, the Equity Institute at Skyline College, and other equity and antiracism bodies to create and enforce interventions that disrupt the occurrence of anti-Blackness and antiracism. The rebuttal to such a proposal is unto itself an anti-Black disposition revealing how little people understand antiracism and anti-Blackness and the importance of it being disrupted and eradicated throughout the district.

The Antiracism Council was born out of the trauma related to the unjust murder of George Floyd. The proposed draft of a zero-tolerance, anti-Blackness resolution is born out of the unjust murder of Tyre Nichols. As a council, we recognize how much information and training is necessary to navigate the complexities related to social injustices happening in our world and to support knowledge building and skill development for trauma-informed healing is needed for Black (and BIPOC) people throughout the District--- the San Mateo County Community College District can NOW dynamically “get it right” by leading this effort through the brilliance of an abundance of committed and passionate equity and antiracist practitioners and supporters.

The SMCCCD Antiracism Council is calling on everyone for your continued vigilance and to make a choice to be an active participant in the eradication of “isms” that toxify our district, colleges and our community. Join us!