Department of American Studies

Statement on Hate Speech Incidents

21 November 2019

In mid-October, the California State University Fullerton chapter of the Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity posted a flyer on social media with a watermark containing an anti-black racial epithet. In early-November, a second hate incident on campus occurred when anti-black racial epithets were written outside of a dorm room on campus. (For the *Daily Titan* coverage of these events, see stories from [October 16](https://dailytitan.com/2019/10/fraternity-apologizes-after-offensive-watermark/) and [November 12](https://dailytitan.com/2019/11/hate-incident-student-housing), 2019.)

The Department of American Studies condemns these violent and deplorable acts of racial hatred.   We support our Black students, staff, faculty, and community and stand in solidarity with the Department of African American Studies.

The Department of African American Studies is the intellectual and political center for the teaching of African American history, culture, and intellectual traditions.  They are invaluable for helping to stem the tide of anti-black racism on campus, but we want to affirm that this is a responsibility that must be shared across all departments in the College and University, including our own.

We in American Studies offer courses that provide a critical lens for exposing students to the politics, power, and representations of race and ethnicity in American culture, past and present. Much of the work we do complements that of African American Studies.

Now is the time to do more.  To that end, American Studies held a forum on “Race, Power, and American Studies” for our students, faculty, and staff, and we are planning to hold similar forums periodically in the future.

This was an opportunity for our department to come together, share our concerns, and formulate next steps as to how we can meaningfully work toward combatting racism and building a more inclusive campus community. We are currently addressing the action items generated at the forum, and remain committed to doing the work needed to reach these collective goals.