Dear UCSB community,

We are Black Quare and we come to you with a heavy heart. We are students at the intersection of being Black and LGBTQIA+, and the recent murders have not only hurt our Blackness but also our Queerness. As people in the U.S. we are trying to survive Covid-19 (which disproportionately affects Black people), as students we are trying to survive finals, and as Black people we are trying to live in a society that sees our Blackness as a crime. We are tired of constantly having to fight just to live and thrive. As Black students we are navigating systems and spaces that are inherently racist and not made for us on a daily basis. Below are some of the specific concerns and needs we would like to bring to attention:

1. **To UCSB administration and leaders:** If UCSB administration truly wants to help Black students, we should be given the option as Black students to extend or postpone our finals deadlines. We ask this to ensure the impact of this current situation does not unfairly affect our grades and academic performance. But we also need support year round, not just now. We need more faculty of color, especially Black faculty and Black counselors. We also need more programs focused on combating the specific issues that face Black students. We need a committee solely dedicated to the needs of Black students, that is in constant communication and is held accountable by Black students and the Black Resource Committee. An we need UCSB to take the burden off of Black students who are already struggling enough, without the added work of protecting ourselves from those who wish to co-opt our struggles for their own gain. As students, this is not our responsibility, this is the responsibility of professors, of faculty, of staff, and of UCSB leaders.

2. **To our non-Black allies:** We ask that you use your platforms and privilege to amplify the voices of Black students, and center the needs of Black students in this situation. We do not wish to be spoken for, told how we feel, or what we need. We also do not want those outside of our Black community to capitalize on this situation and use our pain for their own personal gain. This situation does not affect us all the same, and that needs to be recognized.

   To our fellow People of Color: We ask that you stand in solidarity with the Black community. We also implore you to be intentional with your language, these issues do not affect all P.O.C. in the same way. Your own oppressions allows you to empathize with us, but it doesn’t allow you to equate or feel the full depth of our struggles. The use of all encompassing language like “communities of color” or “people of color” is contributing to Black erasure as it diminishes the fact this burden rests more heavily on the backs of Black people than any other demographic.

3. **To all:** This issue is far greater than the recent tragedies that our country has seen. These deaths are a result of a system that was built on Black oppression and exploitation. We ask those who are standing in solidarity with us to continue that work 24/7/365. We as Black people shouldn’t have to die for our struggles to matter. This didn’t start with George Floyd, Ahmed Arbery, Breonna Taylor, or Tony McDade.
This issue started when our ancestors were brought here and were told they were only 3/5 of a human, which was built into the foundation of this country and is still relevant 400 years later. It is not enough to prosecute or bring justice to corrupt police, we must prosecute and change the institutions that allow and protect murderers.

If you want to stand with the Black community at this time, you can protest, donate, and support the various Black movements, students, and leaders. You can also work within your own communities, family, and self to address anti-Blackness within your own lives. You can educate yourselves on the history of and present struggles of Black people and other marginalized people in this country. We are not writing this in malice or anger, but rather in hope that we can work together to dismantle a system of injustice and oppression. If you would like to know other ways you can support Black Quare or the Black community as a whole, please reach out to us.

Contact: blackquare.org.ucsb@gmail.com

https://rcsgd.sa.ucsb.edu/
https://blacklivesmatter.com/
https://scholars.org/contribution/how-create-inclusive-environments-black-students-predominantly-white-college-campuses
Petition for Ahmaud Arbery
Petition for Breonna Taylor
Petition for George Floyd
Petition for Tony McDade
GoFundMe for George Floyd Memorial
Take the Pledge: We are the Movement for Black Lives
Justice for David McAtee