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UCSA President and Chair Respond to Anti-Blackness, Misogyny, Homophobia at UC Berkeley

BERKELEY, CA — Today, UC Student Association President Varsha Sarveshwar and Board Chair Dashay Richmond released the following statement in response to the anti-Blackness, misogynistic, and homophobic remarks of a UC Berkeley student, recorded on video and published on social media last week:

"We are appalled by the remarks in this video, and we unequivocally condemn the anti-Blackness, misogyny, and homophobia expressed in the student's remarks.

Hate ought to have no place on our campuses. But unfortunately, today, hate is encouraged and welcomed throughout the UC system.

Too many students, staff, and faculty — including members of more privileged, overrepresented minority communities — come to our campuses without acknowledging or confronting their prejudices, especially their anti-Blackness, which makes Black and Brown members of our campus community feel unsafe and marginalized every day. And, especially in this post-Proposition 209 universe, the recruitment and retention of underrepresented students, staff, and faculty of color, continues to be woefully inadequate. It is not a surprise that this incident took place at UC Berkeley, where less than 3 percent of the students are Black.

To add insult to injury, Black students at UC Berkeley — students who confront not just microaggressions, outright racist statements, and hate crimes, but also a disproportionately high rate of housing, food insecurity, and student loan debt — had to watch as the university spent millions of dollars on police to protect white supremacist speakers, time and time again.

We are facing a campus climate crisis, and the university needs to address it, head on. This means meaningful engaging with Black students (especially Black women, femme, and LGBTQIA+-identifying students), fully funding programs and services for underrepresented students of color, instituting mandatory anti-Blackness and anti-bias trainings to combat racist, sexist, and homophobic beliefs, and fighting wholeheartedly for the repeal of Proposition 209. Nothing less will suffice."

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