

From: Official ESU Email
Sent: Tuesday, February 9, 2021
Subject: Black History Month Message from CLIE

Warriors,

As part of ESU's Black History Month celebration, Dr. H. Bernard Hall will give a powerful talk: "We Goin' Ultra Black: Overcoming Internalized Racism and Developing a Positive Cultural Identity." Please join us on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at 6 p.m. via [Zoom](#).

Black History Month is a time to recognize and celebrate the many contributions and achievements of Black Americans. The role of Black Americans is central to the historical narrative of the United States. While there is no denying that tremendous racial progress has occurred over the course of the nation's history, Black Americans continue to be marginalized, incarcerated, oppressed, profiled, and killed. We can and must do better! In fact, Black History Month affords us the opportunity to contemplate and strategize over the eradication of systemic racism.

As we contemplate and strategize, we must also reflect upon the significance and importance of Black Lives Matter (BLM) both nationally and internationally. As we celebrate Black History Month this February, remember that BLM supporters continue to organize, rally, and march for racial justice.

Why are Black lives still viewed as expendable and disposable in 2021? While oppression takes many intersecting forms, the systemic devaluation of Black lives calls us to bear witness. Black History Month sits squarely at the center of a harsh, dualistic truth. On the one hand, we commemorate Black Americans by reciting beautiful speeches and poems about them, on the other hand, we remain staunchly racist: slavery → Jim Crow laws → mass incarceration. Because white supremacy is an institutionalized cultural pattern impacting every facet of our society, I view Black History Month as a call to action to end racism and police brutality. I hope you answer the call! Only by identifying and describing racism can we dismantle it.

Dismantling systemic racism requires restructuring those systems that allow it to perpetuate. Meaningful and transformational restructuring at ESU will necessitate committed reformers. We need administrators, faculty, staff, and students at all levels of the University fully invested in changing inequitable policies and practices, and willing to challenge racist mindsets.

Let me reiterate that as your Vice President for Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence, you have my word and commitment that I will do whatever I can to create the type of living and learning environment conducive to your social and academic success.

Dr. Santiago Solis
Pronouns: He/Him/His
Black Lives Matter!
Vice President, Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence
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