

**From:** Official ESU Email

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 23, 2021

**Subject:** Message to ESU Students from Dr. Santiago Solis, Vice President for Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence

### **February Over, Black History NOT Over, the Learning Continues...**

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!

Why are Black lives still viewed as expendable and disposable? While oppression takes many intersecting forms, the systemic devaluation of Black lives calls us to bear witness. We sit 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 during Black History Month, on the other hand, racism persists. Because white supremacy is a cultural pattern impacting every facet of our society, Black Lives Matter is a call to action to end racism and violence. I hope you answer the call!

As you contemplate whether to answer the call, I hope you take time to reflect upon the significance and importance of Black Lives Matter (BLM) both nationally and internationally. One of the largest in U.S. history, BLM is a social movement advocating for basic human rights and racial equality for Black people. This global movement directly questions and challenges racism and police brutality. As you ponder over answering the call, remember that BLM supporters continue to organize, rally, and march for racial and social justice.

As Champions of Social Justice, we need to name and examine, collectively as a campus community, with expediency and urgency, how systemic racism manifests at ESU. Only by identifying and describing racism can we dismantle it.

Dismantling systemic racism will require 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 policies and practices, and willing to challenge racist mindsets. I hope you answer the call!

Dr. Santiago Solis

Pronouns: He/Him/His

**Black Lives Matter!**

Vice President, Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence

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