July 22, 2020

The following statement expresses the opinion of the majority of the Faculty of the Art Department at UC Riverside.

We, the faculty of the Art Department at UC Riverside, want to thank our graduate students deeply for their leadership in presenting us with the Transformative Action Plan they have drafted with such depth and care. We acknowledge that speech made by a member of the department has caused real and significant harm on social media, as well as to many members across our own community: undergraduate students, graduate students, alumni, staff as well as faculty. This speech did not reflect the ethos of the department as a site that we continue to strive to make a space of real inclusivity, diversity, empathy, and communication through exploration and creativity.

We recognize that changes must take place in order to confront institutional racism. As a faculty we are all looking at each of the items raised in the action plan and identifying how we can work on these together. The first step is forming a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee comprised of faculty, students and staff that will be meeting in the next few days. Plans are underway to hold a community discussion addressing the harm that has taken place and allowing those to speak who feel they haven’t had a place to.

We apologize to those who were waiting for a swifter public response. Internal procedures and current circumstances have taken us to this moment of collective action. We look forward to what we recognize will be difficult conversations but ones from which significant and useful changes will develop to make the UCR Art department a better and more whole and welcoming community.