

AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES



UW American Indian Studies Stands in Solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives

#GeorgeFloyd #CharleenaLyles #ShaunFuhr #JackSunKeewatinawin #JTWilliams #JackieSalyers

American Indian Studies (AIS) at the University of Washington condemns the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery. We recognize their murders are part of a historical pattern of police and racial violence against Black and Indigenous lives. We feel the gravity of this national crisis in Seattle due to the most recent police murders of Charleena Lyles and Shaun Fuhr. This egregious loss of human lives speaks to the failures of recent reforms and the need for continual action. In 2011, The US [Department of Justice](#) investigated Seattle Police Department (SPD) and found a pattern of excessive and unconstitutional force, which forced the City to sign a consent decree that it has failed to uphold. The national [Movement For Black Lives](#) has given the UW community an invitation to defend our values and immediately divest from the SPD to protect our Black community members.

AIS knows this story because Native Americans and Indigenous Peoples worldwide know this story. For centuries, we have experienced and survived racism, oppression, and police brutality alongside our Black relatives, and our communities suffer from socio-economic and health disparities that are exacerbated by institutionalized and systemic racial and state violence. Today, we continue to mourn the death of our Indigenous relatives John T. Williams and Jack Sun Keewatinawin at the hands of the SPD. As we move toward healing we honor the successful campaign of the Puyallup Tribe to [de-escalate police violence in Washington State](#), even as we grapple with anger and loss at the state violence that ripped Jacqueline Salyers from her community.

To stand with the Movement For Black Lives, and in the interests of wellbeing and justice, we call on the UW to divest from and cease any contracts with the SPD as follows:

1. Immediately stop handing over people detained by UW Police Department to SPD custody.
2. Stop using SPD for additional security for any events, including football games, concerts, and ceremonies.
3. In public commit to not hiring former police officers or anyone with disciplinary records as UW Police Officers.

AIS stands with our UW campus community and our Coast Salish and Indigenous relatives in calling for the University to protect the lives of Black and Indigenous Peoples, and other people of color. As Native American, First Nations, Indigenous and allied scholars, we are committed to creating safe spaces at the UW where we can come together to openly discuss and educate our students about the historical and ongoing impacts of colonialism, racial and social injustice, and other structures of power - we will not be silent! We express our deepest love, compassion, and kinship with all oppressed people. Our struggles are connected and we stand united in the call for immediate systemic change with unity, justice, and dignity.

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