

Background for FSU Black History Month #BlackLivesMatter teach-in Faculty / February 2016

A few #BLM facts:

- Black Lives Matter was founded by Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi, and Alicia Garza in the aftermath of the Trayvon Martin decision, as a corrective to the sense, made sharper and sharper with multiple cases of shootings, that black lives don't matter.
- In the words of the movement founders, "[#BlackLivesMatter](#) is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted, as some of the data below illustrates."
- Black Lives Matter has a range of intentions and is "guided by the fact that all Black lives matter, regardless of actual or perceived sexual identity, gender identity, gender expression, economic status, ability, disability, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, immigration status or location."

#HISTORY AND POLITICS

- With the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. took pride in progress to reduce racial inequalities, such as African Americans' barriers to voting. Yet, inequalities in representation persist.
- There have been only [four black governors](#) in U.S. history, including Massachusetts' Deval Patrick.
- Currently non-whites make up 17% of the Congress. Minorities account for 15% of new members of Congress.
- Almost one in five members of Congress are a racial or ethnic minority, which makes the 114th Congress the most diverse yet. Yet, it is *not* nearly representative of our national diversity ([according to Pew Research Center](#)).
- Per a [new report](#) "Despite being 7.4% of the U.S. population, Black women are 3.4% of Congress, less than 1% of statewide elected executive officials, 3.5% of state legislatures, and 1.9% of mayors in cities with populations over 30,000." Only "four Black women serve as mayor of one of the 100 largest cities in the United States."

#IMPACT OF BLM

- BLM as a movement, according to a [CNN interview](#) with Patrisse Cullors, involves chapters in 31 cities as well as rallies, boycotts and other actions across the United States, however there is no way to know exactly how large the movement has become due to being heavily widespread on social media.
- According to [a study by Pew Research Center](#) in the past few years since #BLM has been active, awareness of racism has grown. While in January of 2009 only 26% of people surveyed said that racism is a big problem in 2015 that number was 50%. The rate of change among white Americans went from 39% to 53%.
- The same Pew study reported that in 2015, "Roughly six-in-ten Americans (59%) say that the country needs to continue making changes to achieve racial equality."

FACTS ON A FEW ISSUES: our teach-in gives us a chance to learn much more!

#WEALTH INEQUALITY

- Wealth inequality—the focus of Occupy Wall Street—recognizes that different groups have different opportunities to earn and accumulate the wealth that makes social mobility a reality. Racial disparities in wealth accumulation are enormous.
- "The wealth of white households was 13 times the median wealth of black households in 2013, according to a [Pew Research Center analysis](#) of the most recently available data from the Federal Reserve's [Survey of Consumer Finances](#)."

#EDUCATION

- [According to Urban Institute](#): "Only 4 percent of blacks age 25 or older in 1962 had a college degree, while 10 percent of whites did. In 2012, 21 percent of blacks had a college degree and 31 percent of whites did, meaning the gap grew from 6 percentage points to 10 percentage points".
- [According to Janelle Jones and John Schmitt](#) "12.4 percent of black college graduates between the ages of 22 and 27 were unemployed. For all college graduates in the same age range, the unemployment rate was 5.6 percent." They observe, "A college degree is no guarantee."

#RACIAL PROFILING / COMMUNITIES OF COLOR UNDER ASSAULT

- Blacks and other people of color are targeted by law enforcement that is meant to be keeping our citizens safe.
- "Police killed at least 102 *unarmed* black people in 2015, more than any other race".
- According to [mappingpoliceviolence.org](#): "37% of unarmed people killed by police were black in 2015 despite black people being on 13% of the U.S. population".
- The U.S. incarcerates more people than any other country. "More than 60% of the people in prison are now racial and ethnic minorities. For [Black males in their thirties, 1 in every 10](#) is in prison or jail on any given day."