

# Universities Are Embracing Segregation Again (Just Don't Call It Segregation)

Earlier this week, it was announced that San Francisco State University would offer segregated housing for African-American students. CBS SFBayArea [reports](#):

*New student housing designed for African-American students and culture is coming to San Francisco State University. African-American students make up just under 6 percent of the campus population and it's unclear how many dorm rooms will be dedicated to African-American culture.*

SFSU is hardly alone. Universities around the country—[Cal State-Los Angeles](#), [Iowa](#), [Princeton](#), [UConn](#), [UC Davis](#), Berkeley, etc.—have established similar housing facilities.

The *New York Times* [will tell you](#) the word segregated is really not precise, as these “racially-themed” dormitories are technically open to all students. This is a clever bit of hair-splitting that allows universities and students to achieve a desired outcome (segregated housing) without having to use that nasty word or deal with potential legal ramifications of segregating on the basis of race. (It will be interesting to see what happens when some too-clever white student lobbies a university to create a “white-themed” dormitory.)

However, it's worth pointing out that the students demanding segregated housing aren't really interested in this bit of verbal nuance.

“WE DEMAND the creation and financial support of a [California State University-Los Angeles] housing space **delegated for**

**Black students** and a full time Resident Director who can cater to the needs of Black students,” Black Student Union members wrote in [an open letter to William A. Covino](#), California State University-Los Angeles president.

NYT writers might not be comfortable with the word segregation, but that’s what student activists are demanding and receiving on college campuses. Berkeley, for example, has at least seven ~~segregated~~ racially-themed housing communities on campus, the *Los Angeles Times* [reports](#), “including [communities for] Native Americans, Asian Pacific Americans and African Americans.”

Students say they need these safe spaces because universities are such hostile places. That may be the case (though college campuses don’t leap to mind as hotbeds of intolerance). But make no mistake: racially-themed housing is intended to create racially-segregated housing. Unlike university spokesmen and media writers, the students driving the policies are [refreshingly candid](#); they do not mince words on why they desire housing apart from white people.

There may be some legitimate reasons as to why students desire segregated housing. Many minority students no doubt grew up in environments where they were one of the few (or only) persons of color in their class or town. It’s not nefarious to desire a living environment in which one does not feel like an outsider for a change.

But media and administrators should at least have the courage to call this what it is. “Racially-themed housing” is a verbal ruse more fit for an Orwell novel than academic institutions.

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