

The Real Issue With a University President's Comments on Eliminating Whiteness

By Victor Davis Hanson

August 15, 2025

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Editor's note: This is a lightly edited transcript of today's video from Daily Signal Senior Contributor Victor Davis Hanson. [Subscribe to our YouTube channel to see more of his videos.](#)

Hello, this is Victor Davis Hanson for The Daily Signal. Recently, we discussed Dr. Luke Wood, the president of California State University of Sacramento, and a video that has been recently circulating in which he says he plans to “eliminate whiteness.” And there was a discussion whether whiteness is separate from or synonymous with being white.

And I suggested to you that this was a very deleterious and stupid thing to say, and it was divisive in a multiracial democracy. In other words, it's like saying that your image in the mirror, you can destroy. But it has nothing to do with you, the real person who is projecting that image. In other words, that's just a reflection of who you are.

Whiteness, according to his logic, would be a reflection of people who are white. And he couldn't explain that when asked to. But he and his university were upset that there were things that I said to you that he thought were factually incorrect—three or four of them. I'd like to go through them. And because I talk to you without notes and I don't read a script, I want to make sure that everything I say is accurate and factual.

So, let's review what California State University of Sacramento has sent to The Daily Signal and me to ask for a correction. The first thing they said is, “California State University, Sacramento, also known as Sacramento State, is the only public university in the world's fourth-largest economy. It is not in the same city as UC Davis.”

Two problems with that. I never said it was in the same city as UC Davis. I am a fifth-generation Californian. I can assure you, I know that UC Davis is in Davis, and Sacramento State, if I could use that term for CSU Sacramento, is in

Sacramento. What I said was that it is “near” UC Davis. I think the adverb and adjective “near” are pretty accurate for UC Davis’ relationship with California State University of Sacramento. They’re only 20 miles apart.

But this is even more disturbing when he said, “California State University of Sacramento, also known as Sacramento State, is the only public university in the world’s fourth-largest economy.”

There are 23 CSU universities. In other words, there are 22 state colleges other than Sacramento State. And there are nine Universities of California that are public universities. Sacramento State, in other words, is not “the only public university in the world’s fourth-largest economy.”

Maybe he meant it’s the only public university in Sacramento, that is the capital of the fourth-largest economy. But that’s not what he wrote. And that is not a correction of what I said.

He said, “Dr. Luke Wood has been president of Sacramento State since July 2023.”

I said, in fact, “about a year.” I’m not sure that “about a year” is that off from two years. It could be about a year. It could mean over a year. But I don’t think that’s a serious mistake.

The third is, he said, “Dr. Hanson said that Wood was at UC San Diego, when in fact he was at San Diego State.”

I confess that I confused San Diego State University and the University of California at San Diego. And I want to make that correction.

And finally, “Wood coined the term ‘racelighting,’ not ‘blacklighting.’”

I used the term “blacklighting.”

“The interview referenced in your video is several years old as well. Wood has since addressed the heavily edited clip on his X account. You can read his comment here.”

Two things. That's a distinction without a difference. If you label something he is saying, when he's talking about getting rid of whiteness and he says that he has developed or has embraced a theory called "racelighting" and I term that "blacklighting," I'm sorry I didn't use the specific term, but essentially, it's the same.

He's suggesting that people adopt a particular vocabulary, syntax, and messaging tailored only to black people, so that they don't feel harmed or second-guessed. Or, in other words, they deserve a special discourse that's not accorded to other minority groups or white people.

And he's upset that he said that he co-founded racelighting and not founded it, as I said. Again, another distinction without a difference.

He seems to be upset that he gave an interview, he says, in 2017, and then it has been reposted, to which I replied on July 29, 2025. I didn't say that this was dated in 2017. I was replying to a recently appearing video. And that's exactly what it was.

Apparently, Dr. Luke Wood—I think his full name is Jonathan Wood. Jonathan Luke Wood is upset because he gave an interview in which—and it was not sliced and diced. There's a long segment of 30 seconds or so. And you can see it, that segment has not been edited, when he says he wants to "eliminate whiteness."

The problem is that he's on record saying it. It resurfaced. People saw it. And it spread like wildfire over the internet. Hence, my attention to it and my discourse to you about it.

But I can't help it if Dr. Wood has said things in his past that seem to be racist and divisive, and that now he is a president of a major California State University campus that's multiracial, and he has a responsibility to all different groups to be disinterested and treat people as people, in which race is incidental, not essential to whom they are.

And yet, nevertheless, he suggests that he's not responsible, I guess, for saying what he did because he said it in 2017 and it's been reappearing, most recently, in clips. He hasn't challenged that he didn't say it. He's addressed that he thinks he could have added context to it. But nevertheless, he said it.

And nevertheless, I think that it's really dangerous to have a president of a major public university in California—in which, again, we are a multiracial society—to engage in such racially divisive language, whether he said it in 2017 or he said it today, or whether he said it on July 29.

What he needs to say is, “I don't believe that I'm going to eliminate whiteness. I don't have any particular grievance about white people or the projection of their culture, if I think that is what it is.”

In other words, Dr. Wood, I suggest you just calm down and instead of trying to attack people who represent your views fairly—and by the way, the corrections here had mistakes as well. So, it is hard to offer a correction for a correction that's false.

But I think it would be far wiser of you to just say, “I spoke out of turn. I do not want to eliminate whiteness. Whiteness is a vague term that I will not use anymore. It's polarizing and it has no place on a campus in California, much less coming from a president of that campus.”