

## College of Education commitment to equity

These turbulent times present a call to action and as we recognize that silence is endorsement, we will no longer be silent. As leaders in the College of Education at The Pennsylvania State University, we endorse this leadership resolution as a living document, making transparent our commitment to combat and actively dismantle persistent, both cloaked and visible, systemic racism. As researchers and educators, we have a moral imperative to act against systems that perpetuate bias, discrimination, and racism. As a community we recognize that these systems impact, disenfranchise, and oppress on the basis of many 'othernesses.' While we abhor and seek to combat all forms of discrimination, this moment requires us to specifically address the centuries of discrimination and racism endured by Black Americans in this country and proclaim here that each and every Black life matters.

We urge you to consider standing with us in endorsing this resolution. We also encourage you to help us revise this living proclamation to best reflect our recognition of racism, its roots, its impacts on Black lives and other marginalized groups as well as the proactive work in which we will engage to overcome it.

While this leadership resolution presents a critically important, transparent, strong, and visible statement regarding our stance on the systemic racism, oppression, and violence that have had a multigenerational impact on Black lives, our words will ring hollow if they are not accompanied by action. Therefore, we also commit to taking concrete steps to change the trajectory created by the original sin of this country.

We provide below both the leadership resolution and a set of initial actions we are currently taking and a process to continue to identify and implement actionable strategies that centers racial justice as a core thread in the work we as a College conduct.

Please direct comments to [CoEDLeadership@psu.edu](mailto:CoEDLeadership@psu.edu).

# College of Education Leadership Resolution<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the ongoing, systemic, and perpetual racial and societal injustices in this country, which have been passed on from generation to generation; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that these injustices have existed since the original sin of slavery and been furthered by Jim Crow laws and the unequal treatment of Black Americans in our social, judicial, and educational systems; and

**WHEREAS**, we especially note and are appalled by the numerous killings that have been committed against Black Americans under the color of law; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the lack of accountability for these injustices; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the senseless brutality being committed by those employed to serve and protect who are operating under a pattern, practice, and culture fostering unequal treatment; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the need to have uncomfortable talks and real, honest, and transparent conversations directed towards addressing these injustices through action; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize and feel the sadness, anger, outrage, frustration, pain, and grieving caused by extrajudicial killings; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the need to understand how so many feel helpless, frustrated, invisible, and disillusioned, resulting in constant fears for their personal safety and leading to bearing psychological and emotional scars; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that racism is an incessant malady and a scourge to an otherwise organized, civilized society; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that systemic discrimination and unjust racial inequities continue to appall and to plague our nation and our schools; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that we should not accept apathy, indifference, or silence to such ongoing violence and inequities, which otherwise allows hatred, prejudice, and intolerance to fester and grow; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the need to engage in peaceful protest, constructive acts, and educational opportunities to make a meaningful difference towards societal change; and

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<sup>1</sup> This resolution was adapted from the original resolution draft by Michael A. Mogill, Chair of the Dickinson Law Faculty, which was adopted by the unanimous vote of the Penn State Dickinson Law faculty on June 2, 2020.

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that we have an obligation to fight ignorance and intolerance, model inclusivity, and embrace our differences and the power that diversity represents; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize that the education system has perpetuated racial and societal injustices, racism, and unequal treatment of Black Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the need to stand with our Black brothers and sisters as effective allies; and

**WHEREAS**, we recognize the need to stand in ongoing support of our students, staff, fellow faculty, and their families who are persons of color.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that we acknowledge that racism is an affliction that we must never enable but as active antiracists, should take responsibility to condemn and to end, that we need to identify and challenge systemic prejudice wherever it exists, that we are all accountable for doing the work necessary for policy changes that dismantle structural systems of oppression that perpetuate racial inequities in our society and institutions, that we will strive to be better listeners and supporters of those who are the victims of racism, that we will never rest until every American feels safe, free, and accepted in our country, and that we will continuously abide by the goal of providing equitable educational opportunities for all people.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, this resolution be preserved in the records and minutes of the College of Education leadership team and prominently displayed on the College of Education website.

Adopted this 8 day of June, 2020, by the unanimous vote of College of Education leadership team:

Roy B. Clariana  
Gregory Kelly  
Kevin Kinser

Kimberly Lawless  
David Lee  
Gwendolyn Lloyd

P. Karen Murphy  
Maria Schmidt  
Rayne Sperling  
Rose Mary Zbiek

## Initial College of Education Action Plan

The initial steps outlined in this plan were identified through work with a core group of faculty of color and are informed by the voices of our students of color. These actions are both inward focused and outward facing. We have already begun this work and will revise it on a continual basis based on input from our community and add to it as our College needs evolve.

We commit to:

- 1) develop an adaptive equity-minded/equity praxis leadership team through engagement in professional development experiences and dialogue to better understand how White privilege, our own and that imbued in our college procedures, structures, and curriculum, acts as a barrier to racial justice and supports systems of oppression.
- 2) support the development of a College-wide council, composed of faculty, staff, and students of color and equity allies and accomplices, that will serve as an advisory body to college leadership to support justice-oriented impact. We will establish a fund to be used by the council for purposes of directing the Dean's Equity Forum and other activities to support our faculty, staff, and students of color. The chair of the council will serve on the Dean's Advisory Council as a member of the College Leadership Team.
- 3) review all policies and standards of the College with the specific goal of identifying processes that impact the success of faculty and students of color. We will begin with policies regarding promotion and tenure, faculty and staff searches, and the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.
- 4) develop a consistent and transparent process to identify and document service done by faculty and staff in support of the University's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. We will ensure that such service is valued and rewarded in faculty and staff annual reviews and merit salary increases.
- 5) conduct a critical review of the College curriculum regarding attention to race and issues of equity in undergraduate and graduate courses. We will make revisions to the curriculum as needed. In addition, we will provide support for instructors' use of, and teaching about, equity-minded and asset-based pedagogies.
- 6) establish a required, credit-bearing course for all incoming undergraduate students focused on social justice and equity with an explicit exploration of race.
- 7) strengthen existing and developing new and innovative partnerships with diverse schools and districts and communities of color where we enact the professional preparation of educators as well as our research and outreach.
- 8) invite the College community to join us in moving this leadership resolution and action plan to one endorsed and enacted by all its members.
- 9) communicate with Commonwealth campuses and other institutions of higher education across the Commonwealth to ensure that we learn from their efforts and can share what we have developed so that the impact occurs across all of Penn State and the state of Pennsylvania.

10) engage and work with Penn State leadership and the leadership of other colleges to focus on these issues and develop collaborative action plans to move the University forward.

Some of these action steps are more quickly addressed than others. As such, each semester, the College leadership will evaluate progress on these steps, revise and add steps where warranted, and provide a written update on the advancement of work outlined.

Once again, we look forward to working together as a College on the refinement of this initial action plan when we are back together this fall.