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FSU Geography Faculty Statement Against anti-Black Violence

As we continue to live in the wake of the police killings of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Tony McDade here in Tallahassee, as well as the ongoing violent police actions against peaceful protesters nationwide, FSU Geography wants to reaffirm our May 31 statement of solidarity with the global Black Lives Matter movement, and our Black students and colleagues here at FSU and in the Tallahassee community. We stand in solidarity with FSU Black Faculty in their list of recommended actions the University needs to take to combat institutional racism on our campus, and in solidarity with the statement and list of recommended actions by the Black Geographies Speciality Group.

Solidarity requires an ongoing commitment to actionable, demonstrable behavioral and institutional change, carried out at all times, not just revisited in moments of crisis and civil uprising. Solidarity begins with internal reflection and commitment to actionable change from place- and institution-specific settings. With this in mind FSU Geography commits to the following actions, and provides the following academic and community resources, to be updated and reviewed by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee annually:

Immediate Commitments (within 1 year):

- Create and post a diversity, equity and inclusion values statement for the department
- Develop mentorship program and peer group for early career faculty
- Develop mentorship program and peer group for Black and POC graduate students
- Organize implicit bias training for the entire department, including faculty, graduate students and staff.

- Organize mandatory NCBI 8-hr training for faculty (as recommended by our Black faculty colleagues)
- Create a bi-monthly “brown bag lunch series”. Activities will include:
 - *Geography scholars of color informal reading group composed of faculty and graduate students to read work from across the discipline written by Black geographers.
 - *Invited speakers on topics geared toward navigating professional development from the experience of minority scholars.
- Provide classroom climate training in anticipation of the November presidential election
- Continue annual department graduate student climate survey on DEI
- Start annual department faculty & staff climate survey on DEI
- Identify social services and community organizations to help respond to mental health crises or other types of non-lethal scenarios as an alternative to relying on the police

Longer-term Goals (within 2-5 years):

- Create a pre- or postdoctoral fellowship program for increasing faculty diversity (as recommended by the BGSF)
- Create fellowship for increasing graduate student diversity
- Commit our next faculty line to a Black Geographies hire
- Develop and implement protocol to improve retention of Black and POC faculty
- Provide pedagogical training to assist faculty and graduate students with incorporating new content/readings and teaching strategies into classes to address systemic racism

Academic training on anti-Racism in the Academy:

We are excited for members of the DEI committee to participate in the June 19th-25th initiative, Academics for Black Survival and Wellness Week. We encourage all faculty to do so as well.

From the facilitators of the workshop: [we are] “a group of Black counseling psychologists and their colleagues who practice Black allyship. Guided by a Black feminist frame, we hope to foster accountability and growth for non-Black people and enhance healing and wellness for

Black people. Academics cannot stay silent about anti-Black racism. Academics cannot remain silent in the face of racial injustice. Everyone needs to do their part.”

Non-Black academics are encouraged to register for the anti-racist work and reflection exercises, while Black academics are encouraged to register for the health and wellness workshops, both signups available here: <https://www.academics4blacklives.com/>

Signed,

FSU Geography Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, on behalf of the Department