

To all members and affiliates of the NC State community,

For the sake of Black human lives, the Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) writes this statement.

White-serving racism perpetuates and propagates institutional and systemic injustices that run deeper than negative attitudes about skin color. We specify White-serving racism because the United States was organized by White people to serve White people, which has resulted in a legacy of marginalization, enslavement, and genocide of people of color. While our social world is improving, similar cycles of violence and inequality from 3, 30, and 300 years ago are still overwhelmingly active. Racism, along with too many other -isms and social phobias, are deeply embedded in our society because we exercise, benefit from, and witness them knowingly and unknowingly.

Administrators, faculty members, staff, and students from NC State and other universities have broken their silence to acknowledge the ways that White-serving racism permeates our communities. Yet, after these initial reactions of outrage have subsided and the peer pressure to respond settles, what happens next? Will we allow our national legacy of sending thoughts and prayers to remain synonymous with inaction after the murders of Black people, or will we begin to

implement equitable and meaningful changes that profoundly alter how we address bigotry and racially-motivated violence? We offer a few suggestions to transmute our words into action and further the anti-racist movement:

1. To the entire NC State campus community, please use your access to information and increase your awareness of systemic racism in the United States. The same way some of us search through Pinterest for new dinner recipes, consider searching through articles about color-blind racism. The same way some of us scroll through social media sites looking at memes, funny videos, and pictures of friends, consider scrolling through [@NoWhiteSaviors](#) and [@CollectivePAC](#) on Instagram or [@EjinAction](#) and [@BlkMamasMatter](#) on Twitter. Beyond awareness, re-evaluate your own social perspectives about people in your immediate sphere of influence. For example, as many of us support our Black students at NC State basketball and football games, reconsider your perceptions of said students as human beings beyond their physical capabilities. 2. To Black members of the NC State community, there is over [\\$1.2 trillion of Black buying power](#), which must be used to leverage change. Consider supporting [Color Of Change](#), [The Equal Justice Initiative](#), or any of the other organizations linked in this statement.

Also consider buying products from [We Buy Black](#) to invest in Black-owned businesses, services, and organizations.

3. To NC State staff, faculty, and administrators, we encourage you to learn about Black people's experiences in academia by exploring the [#BlackInTheIvory](#) hashtag on Twitter.

It will be uncomfortable; many stories will shock you. You may experience cognitive dissonance, but fight the urge to rationalize, justify, or rid yourself of personal responsibility. Change begins with acknowledging that a problem exists. Learning and existing at a predominantly White institution (PWI) is not easy for many Black students. Confronting social inequities and microaggressions can sometimes feel like we are yelling into a deep void. Many of us often feel dismissed, overlooked, underappreciated, and used by our labs, departments, programs, and the University solely to superficially enhance diversity. Though we may not always communicate said feelings, we carry them with us daily. It is sometimes easier to bottle our concerns and frustrations for the sake of not disrupting class time, or prioritizing the comfort and opinions of our White colleagues, students whom we teach, faculty members, and administrators. Most of the time we are simply protecting our own sanity.

4. To NC State staff, faculty and administrators, we recommend an initial mandatory bias training for all NC State employees. This training would be required during onboarding for new employees henceforth. Diversity and inclusion measures should be incorporated within the hiring process to ensure new hires espouse NC State's core value of "[respect for cultural and intellectual diversity](#)." We suggest that search committees use an anti-racist lens to avoid socially biased hiring decisions. We also seek inclusive thought and practice amongst our faculty. We suggest that faculty members, regardless of their field, be adept in anti-racist literature and social justice initiatives connected to their research. Information and academic research about our social world should not be confined to humanities and social science scholars.

5. To all NC State community members and affiliates, allyship can create immediate change.

Being an effective ally means delving deeper than surface-level performative acts. Allyship should incorporate genuinely acknowledging, respecting, and preserving the dignity and humanity of others. The intentional or unintentional denial of Black people's experiences by saying "I don't see color" or "all lives matter" erases those experiences and perpetuates willful ignorance. Allyship across race and other social identity markers must entail identifying the subconscious standards of our social world to which we subscribe. After identification, each of us must deliberately counteract our thoughts and actions that perpetuate any given issue(s)

Unraveling and counteracting social inequality is a discomforting, but constant process. As Black grad students at a PWI, we have had to involuntarily learn to live with discomfort. With that in mind, we ask all readers to leave your comfort zones and challenge the status quo, just as historically marginalized people always have to do. Ultimately, this statement is not intended to prompt guilt, shame, or sympathy. This statement was crafted to incite a paradigm shift for people who are not already operating with an intersectional and anti-racist worldview. Consider the differential consequences of social inequality to be a wound for Black people. Empathy acknowledges the wound, but healing happens through changed mindsets and behaviors.