

Dear members of the CEOAS Community,

We write to you today in solidarity with Black communities across the nation and to condemn the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the countless other acts of violence which occur due to pervasive systemic and institutionalized racism in this country. We support Black Lives Matter and ask that you join us in committing support to the Black community and in creating a more equitable and just academic community.

It is important for us to acknowledge that, as educators, scientific experts, and individuals working at an institution of higher education, we are in a unique position of power. Our actions and our words resonate; they have the power to not only shape the climate of CEOAS, but also to influence our students, community members, and political leadership. We have opportunities to express support for justice as we share our science and innovations, as individuals and together in groups.

In a [recent college-wide email](#) on June 3, CEOAS leadership stated, “We write to express our support for all members of our community, and most especially, our underrepresented members that have faced discrimination by those who have had greater advantages and privileges.” We need to recognize that STEM spaces are often hostile to students, faculty, and staff of non-dominant identities. Notably, the geosciences are among the least diverse STEM disciplines and have one of the lowest representations of Black Americans (see [Livingston 2018](#), [Bernard and Cooperdock 2018](#), [King et al. 2018](#), [Dutt 2020](#)). Truly, if we intend to act “in solidarity with all individuals that seek equity, justice, and peaceful co-existence”, then we need to address the climate of institutionalized racism that we all participate in. Stating that one stands in solidarity with minoritized communities is not enough -- we must reflect on our individual roles in intentionally creating an inclusive climate in our college, our university, and STEM fields in general.

Moving forward, we, the organizers of the Unpacking Diversity: CEOAS PLC recommit to the following in our activities:

- We commit to using our voices and our work to support non-dominant communities and to amplify the voices, struggles, and narratives of Black and Brown communities. We must actively listen to Black and Brown voices and understand their lived experiences, and remain vigilant in ensuring their realities are not dismissed in conversation.
- We commit to keeping our sessions and events a brave space for students, faculty, and staff from all non-dominant identities. We will follow from example from invited facilitators who prioritize safety for all non-dominant identities, and further learn how we may better support our college members in STEM environments.
- We will listen to students as we fulfill our capacity as educators and mentors when creating welcoming learning environments. However, in our efforts to foster equitable classrooms, we may fail to respond to marginalized students' needs. We will anticipate this shortcoming and address such needs, whether those needs are explicitly asked for by individual students or not.

For those of us with the privilege that enables these events to move out of focus, we have to understand this work is ongoing. Our attention cannot end even after recent events and demonstrations fade from the foreground. This is the lived experience of Black and Brown communities every day. While often uncomfortable, it is incumbent upon us, particularly those of us from dominant identities, to strive for a more socially just society. We must show that we are willing to put in the effort, work, and care to actuate change.

We hope that you, as part of the CEOAS community, will join us in these commitments to create an inclusive, diverse, and equitable college by signing your name below.

In solidarity,

Unpacking Diversity: CEOAS Professional Learning Community Organizers

1. We request that graduate students and postdocs are included in faculty hiring at every stage of the process, from reading applicant materials to final decisions.

- Graduate students and postdocs should be able to apply for spots on faculty hiring committees and/or serve on panels to evaluate potential faculty hires.
- This ensures student/early career opinions are not ignored in the discipline groups' hiring decisions, especially when involved students/postdocs have shown a commitment to anti-racist hiring practices
- Care should be taken such that these hiring committees acknowledge and address the issues with power dynamics on such committees when graduate students are involved, and they should incorporate guidance from the wealth of literature available.

2. We request that data about resources and funding allocated towards past, present, and planned CEOAS diversity initiatives be compiled and released. These include:

- A breakdown of how and where current resources are allocated.
- A written statement of perceived and measurable impacts of these resource allocations on historically marginalized groups in academia.
- Which faculty have worked on and participated in with respect to the aforementioned diversity initiatives.

3. We request the removal of financial barriers for undergraduate and graduate students to enter and succeed at CEOAS.

- Remove the GRE requirement from graduate application considerations to CEOAS programs, because test-optional scores can still introduce potential bias when reviewing applications.
- Waive application fees for applicants of low socioeconomic status or waive the application fees altogether.
- Invest in or create fellowships and/or scholarships set aside specifically for Students of Color. While the Diversity Pipeline Fellowship exists, it does not specifically apply to Students of Color.

4. We request that CEOAS build collaborative relationships with diversity-driven student organizations.

- These organizations (E.g. OSU Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science, Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (oSTEM), and the seven cultural centers) support marginalized students such as BIPOC, LGBTQIA+.
- Local chapters and/or groups could be welcomed into the College by an invitation to present during a recruitment drive or other event.

5. To diversify the applicant pool of the College, we request a permanent fund be established to send BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ undergraduate, graduate students, and a professor to diversity-oriented conferences such as SACNAS, oSTEM, SciAccess, National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, and National Association for Black Geoscientists.

- This grants students from traditionally underrepresented communities in STEM opportunities to form interdisciplinary networks, better familiarize themselves with career options, and present their research to a national audience of peers.
- These conferences provide students with a sense of community and belonging that contributes to retention, especially in STEM disciplines which are notoriously lacking in diversity.

6. We request that CEOAS diversify seminars by requiring disciplines to invite and cover honoraria of at least one speaker per year from historically marginalized communities, and/or speakers whose work impacts those communities.

- For example, discussions of how climate change impacts disproportionately poor communities and Communities of Color, as well as eco-racism, are lacking from the core curriculum in CEOAS.
- Examples from prior CEOAS seminars include:
 - A. Dr. Laura Pulido (University of Oregon; Unpacking Diversity invited keynote speaker)
 - B. Dr. Kenneth Ridgway (Purdue University; George Moore and Thomas Condon lectures)
 - C. Kassandra Rippee (Coquille Nation; for G&G seminars).

7. We request the creation of an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory code of conduct with actionable repercussions for violations that all members of the College are required to sign and include and discuss as part of standard operations. In doing so, college leadership should be responsible for:

- Communicating and coordinating discussions outlining what is expected of members of the department in the code of conduct at faculty and College meetings.
- Taking all necessary measures to support victims of and protect members of the college from racist and discriminatory incidents including, but not limited to, preparing emergency protocol for situations in which members of Communities of Color may be in danger due to racist environments in the field or elsewhere, clear and transparent responses to racially motivated incidents, protection from retaliation for individual(s) reporting a bias incident or whistleblowing.
- A preprint of an article "Ten simple rules for building an anti-racist lab" was published by geoscientists Bala Chaudhary and Asmeret Berhe, accessed here: <https://ecoevorxiv.org/4a9p8/>. This provides a starting point for discussions for PIs about anti-racist codes of conduct.