Dear AOS faculty and administration,

The senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and so many others, as well as the disproportionate health and economic impacts of COVID-19, have exposed the underbelly of systemic racism that pervades our society and institutions. In solidarity with many other graduate students at UCLA, we ask that the climate of our own academic department be addressed.

Issues with diversity and inclusion in the AOS department have existed for decades. Our current understanding of AOS diversity statistics are:

> *"The faculty of AOS are 80% male and 90% White or Asian-Pacific Islander (API) (non-Latinx). Of the 45-50 majors, 55% are male and 80% are White/API (non-Latinx). Of the 40 graduate students, 60% are male and 90% are White/API (non-Latinx). Of the 2020 cohort, 1 of the 12 graduate students is an under-represented minority."*

Currently, AOS is overwhelmingly composed of white and male faculty and researchers and white graduate students. For undergraduates, the major and minor also fail to recruit and retain underrepresented minorities. The few under-represented minorities in AOS have experienced tokenism, isolation, violence, power imbalances, and lack of support for their retention through the program which have affected their performance and graduate experience. Additionally, many international students have felt alienation, isolation, and a lack of cultural sensitivity in the department. These shared and regular experiences have created an unhealthy climate within the department. In the recent 8-year departmental review, the department was urged to 'explore ways in which the department can increase diversity [at all levels, from student to faculty, and in all metrics], bolster morale, and be more inclusive of graduate students.' We are disappointed and frustrated that, despite several attempts from different students, little to no actions have been taken to address the lack of diversity and climate of the department. The overwhelming disparity in representation within our department at all levels is an apparent indicator that the department's efforts to increase diversity are not sufficient.

The responsibility of addressing diversity problems in AOS should not fall directly on the shoulders of graduate students, especially students of color, and a select few faculty on the diversity committee. The underrepresented minority graduate students already disproportionately spend their time and energy on unpaid diversity work and mentoring because the AOS department does not have the diverse faculty to do so. We want **all** faculty to actively engage in and come up with solutions to address these problems. It is necessary for the future of the department and the well-being, performance, and outcomes of students of color at all levels.

We collectively want actions and accountability for a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive AOS department. The UC academic council's statement urged, "*we must listen and, crucially, do more to combat systemic oppression, including anti-black racism. Our campuses have to work harder to be inclusive of, and welcoming to, Black students, along with other groups who have historically been and continue to be victims of police assault and harassment.*"

The actions of the AOS department and faculty cannot be limited to performative gestures like a moment of silence, fleeting reflections, or echoes of statements that others have written. We ask that the department move past passive actions to active ones that implement actual changes. We want accountability to implement these changes.

We collectively ask that you take action on the following points to address the lack of diversity in the department:

Immediate actions and accountability

1. Perform a culture survey and climate assessment this summer and use the outcomes to improve inclusiveness and equity. Upon completion:
    a. Perform surveys every two years.
    b. Make all climate assessments available to all members of the department, and create a report responding to all action items and issues outlined in the climate assessments.
2. Mandate that faculty, staff, and students participate in workshops that focus on equity, inclusion, diversity, anti-racism, and cultural sensitivity once a year through the Center for Diverse Leadership in Science (CDLS).
    a. Faculty with leadership roles should participate in additional training commensurate with their degrees of responsibility and influence on admissions and hiring committees.
    b. Require all graduate students to participate in diversity training at the beginning of each year.
    c. Require TA training to include equity, inclusion, diversity, anti-racism and cultural sensitivity related practices.
3. Publish a department statement on the website regarding the murder of George Floyd and police brutality, and publish a diversity statement.
    a. As a department, sign and adhere to the following: A Call to Action for an Anti-Racist Science Community from Geoscientists of Color: Listen, Act, Lead b. Make similar statements for future incidents of discimination.
4. Publish an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory code of conduct for the department that outlines an explicit commitment to recognizing, respecting, and protecting all diverse members of the department.
    a. Outline the procedures for responses to all complaints.
    b. Implement processes of reporting that keep complainants safe from retaliation 5. Restructure the Diversity Committee
    a. Open the committee to members dedicated to work this summer on planning timetables and commitments on the diversity strategic plan that will be implemented in the Fall of 2020.
    b. Include American faculty who may be more aware of domestic diversity issues.
    c. Create an equitable structure between the faculty and students serving on the committee. Update the committee structure to three faculty, two graduate students, and two undergraduate students.

6. **Host a town hall with all faculty, and all students to address each of the points outlined in the letter and release a statement of commitment to all members of the department with a timetable and targets.**
   a. **We ask that the department include a request for diversity dedicated funds from the administration (Dean of Division of Physical Sciences, Vice Chancellor of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, or other UCLA administration) in the statement of commitment.**

Transparency and Data

7. Be transparent and public about diversity data on the AOS website
   a. Make public faculty and student diversity broken down by race, ethnicity, and gender.
   b. Make public acceptance rates, graduation rates, and time to degree for all students broken down by student race, ethnicity, and gender.
8. Track progress against traceable metrics that holds the department accountable.
   Communicate and coordinate discussions outlining what is expected of members a. of the department in the code of conduct at faculty and departmental meetings. b. Notify all members of the department regarding their duties related to upholding the code of conduct.
   c. Implement processes for reporting violations that keep reportees safe from retaliation.
   d. Take all necessary measures to support victims of racist and discriminatory incidents.
   e. Follow through on all outlined consequences to all racist and discriminatory incidents as outlined by the code.
   f. Send an annual report to the faculty, students, and staff outlining all incidents reported to the department, along with how the department managed all incidents to increase transparency in the process.

Institutional Support and Retention

9. Create a point of contact for all members of the department who is responsible for recording, communicating, and executing responses to all complaints.
   a. This person would be responsible for sending yearly communications to all members of the department outlining any reporting that occurred and how the department conducted themselves in response.
10. Challenge and eliminate racist policies, such as admissions policies and practices that systematically exclude Black students and other students of color. Implement practices that promote equity across the board.
    a. Draw from, partner, and credit the best practices of successful programs at HBCUs, MSIs, Tribal Colleges and Community Colleges.
    b. Eliminate normative grading.
    c. Remove the GRE as a graduate program entrance requirement.

     d. Require inclusive and equitable classroom practices.

     e. Adopt the EQUIP teaching app which helps educators understand and combat implicit bias in the classroom.

     f. Provide equitable access to mentoring and inclusive administrative practices.

     g. Require training for implicit bias for the graduate and undergraduate committees.

     h. Adopt a high school to increase recruitment from diverse backgrounds and actively engage in recruiting graduate students .

11. Make it a personal matter to champion and advocate for the complete inclusion of students of color as important and necessary participants in all decision-making matters that affect them rather than making decisions on their behalf.

     a. Include students in admissions and faculty hiring decisions.

     b. Include students' opinions in seminar speakers (beyond the student selected seminar).

12. Cultivate an environment and practices that are inclusive and not simply a superficial response to the systemic exclusion of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian/Pacific Islander, and international groups.

     a. Eliminate any tokenism of BIPOC and historically marginalized students and faculty in the department, show accurate representations of the composition of the department in all promotional and website materials.

     b. Engage in events that promote diverse backgrounds and cultures.

     c. Provide more outside resources and partnerships to allow students and faculty to engage in (ex National Technical Association, SACNAS, etc.)

13. Implement meaningful and robust mentoring and retention programs. Implementation requires adequate resources, including funding and diverse staff.

     a. Such support mechanisms must serve the culturally-specific needs of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and Asian/Pacific Islander students.

     b. Support the student-led AOS mentorship program created for step-ahead mentorship for undergraduate by graduate students.

     c. Nominate a faculty advisor for the program, and require all mentors to undergo additional implicit bias and diversity training. Hold graduate mentors accountable.

14. Commit to hiring, promoting, supporting, and retaining graduate students, postdocs, and faculty of color.

     a. Through conversations, we have learned that the department hires based on the distribution of people who apply. This does not address the leaky pipeline in academia which disadvantages historically marginalized communities and people of color.

     b. Targeted recruitment, including through postdoctoral fellowship programs, advertising very broadly, and other strategic approaches have worked in other STEM departments and we ask that we implement similar techniques.

     c. Allocation of diversity dedicated funds used specifically to hire faculty and students from underrepresented minorities.

     d. Send transparent reports of new faculty hires to the entire department including the distribution of applicants.

     e. Read diversity and personal statements as the first step in evaluating candidates.

f. Address barriers in promotions and faculty hires that prevent applicants from applying (ie. disparities in NSF awards that contribute to low publication numbers and research impacts). This trend of NSF awards is well reported at the graduate student level.

Education

15. Integrate graduate classes and invited lectures with topics that focus on historically marginalized communities.
    a. Include at least one seminar per year that directly focuses on topics from historically marginalized communities.
    b. Invite speakers from historically marginalized backgrounds (MINIMUM one per quarter).
    Offer at least one course that directly deals with topics from historically c. marginalized communities as they relate to AOS and integrate these topics into the core classes that the department offers for graduate students.
16. Create a summer bridge program for incoming grad students
    a. Provide an optional additional summer course for students to learn programming and relevant quantitative background for the core courses. The department already gives recommended reading to supplement, we should provide more structure to support students filling in their background knowledge.
    b. Allow, train, and pay postdocs or senior graduate students to teach this course to get experience teaching at the graduate level.
    c. Offer TA-ships for senior graduate students to TA the core courses and provide resources for first year graduate students.
17. Create a TA-ship for graduate students who lead outreach events or participate in programs for URM students.
    a. Allow this TA-ship to fulfill one quarter of the TA requirement.
    b. Offer this TA-ship to graduate students who mentor URM students in summer programs like the McNair, Santa Monica College-UCLA Summer Research Scholars, HBCU pathways, and similar programs.
    c. Work with and financially support already established groups like the K-12 Outreach Group, Environmental Justice Working Group, and CDLS.
18. Create partial TA-ships for students who participate on the diversity committee to focus on increasing diversity within the department.
    a. Many times students from marginalized backgrounds are required or are asked to do more work than their privileged peers.

We see and recognize the issues within our department and we are actively invested in making a change and working with faculty and undergraduate students. We respectfully request that the

department respond within the next **two** weeks to address the issues of communication, transparency, action, accountability, and commitment outlined in this letter.