

June 8, 2020

Dear ESPM Faculty and CNR Administration,

*One could not be a calm, cool, and detached scientist
while negroes were lynched, murdered, and starved.*
– W.E.B. Du Bois

As we continue to grieve the lives lost to police brutality and racism (Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and more), we are asking for more from our academic leadership to address ways in which systemic anti-Black racism has permeated academia. **In support of our Black colleagues**, we are reaching out today as the **Environmental Science, Policy, and Management Graduate Diversity Council (ESPM GDC)** and a collective of the ESPM community to ask that ESPM faculty and staff take action. While we appreciate the [statements made by Dr. D'Odorico with the ESPM Council](#) and Dr. Ackerly, we believe that **words are not enough**. You have declared that it is time for ESPM to move from non-racism to anti-racism, and **we are declaring our need and want for actions** to carry out this stated commitment. As it stands, our work environment in ESPM is complacent with racism.

In solidarity with and inspired by numerous graduate student bodies across campus who have already requested actions from their respective departments to follow statements of anti-racist ideals (e.g. [Integrative Biology](#), [Plant Microbial Biology](#), [Chemistry](#), and others), we are writing to you today to lay out our expectations on how the ESPM community must proceed so that we can work together to end ESPM's historical complacency with systematic racism.

ESPM is a leader in the global environmental community composed of scholars engaged in both environmental science and environmental justice research. As such we are uniquely positioned to engage in many societal issues. However, the department as a whole has done very little to undo systemic anti-Black racism and to foster an inclusive work environment for students. **Now is the time for anti-racist actions.**

In order to embrace anti-racist values and move ESPM toward a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for Black students, **at this time we are asking for the following actionable steps to improve the social climate in ESPM for Black students** (each demand is linked to the Addendum for supporting recommendations and considerations for all demands):

Improve teaching, mentorship, and research ethics to foster inclusivity for Black students in ESPM

1. Require annual mandatory professionally paid anti-racist and bystander intervention trainings for faculty and staff beginning in academic year 2020-2021.
2. Restructure ESPM 201A to include professionally paid anti-racist training beginning with the incoming 2020 cohort.
3. Revise all course syllabi to include 50% or more Black scholars and scholars of color by Fall 2020.

4. Establish a protocol for investigating faculty who lose multiple graduate students, or whose students disengage due to alienation from the department, beginning in the academic year 2020-2021.
5. As faculty members, reflect on your personal student mentorship practice, and research ethics and evaluation.

Enhance recruitment and retention efforts for Black students, staff, faculty, and speakers to increase diversity and equity in ESPM

6. Encourage the restructuring of the Sponsored Projects for Undergraduate Research (SPUR) programs to support Black students and students of color.
7. Commit to hiring two Black tenure-track faculty in the next five years to address the lack of Black faculty in the department.
8. Hire staff to support the Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion for the 2020-2021 academic year.
9. Add graduate student representation to tenure decisions, especially to evaluate contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion, beginning in the academic year 2020-2021.
10. Provide adequate funding support that is cognizant of complex financial situations of Black students and students of color.
11. Ensure that 50% or more of speakers across various ESPM-sponsored seminar series are Black or Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) beginning in the academic year 2020-2021.

Communicate our shared values and commitments to anti-racism in support of current and future Black students in ESPM

12. Publicize a list of concrete actions you will take to meet our demands on the ESPM website by June 30, 2020.
13. Sign onto [the letter](#) by the Law Students of African Descent (LSAD) to reject campus policing and cut ties with the Berkeley Police Department, AND publish a public statement as a department to Chancellor Christ to meet the demands as outlined by LSAD by June 30, 2020.

In addition, to move towards anti-racism you must focus on self-reflexivity and self-examination. As such, we would request that you, personally, engage with [these resources on anti-racism](#).

To this end, **our demands are only a beginning**. Not only do we hope to support Black voices, but all communities in ESPM because **discrimination affects many** on the basis of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, documentation status, (dis)ability, and much more. To conclude, we recognize that many of these interventions will take time and resources. The steps we have laid out reflect the need for continual effort—backed with support, energy, and funding in perpetua—to respond to racism within our community. We look forward to future conversations on this but **we ask for your immediate response to enact anti-racism in the department and beyond starting with our demands to communicate our shared values and a list of actions ESPM will take on the ESPM website by the end of this month**. Additionally, we hope that next steps include follow-up meetings planned between the ESPM GDC and faculty to further these actions.

Lastly, we appreciate that the department strives to listen to students and address students' concerns; ESPM is often ahead of other departments when working towards improving the lives of students. To those few faculty and staff that have positively interacted with, consoled, or checked in on our Black colleagues: thank you. You are seen. Finally, thanks all for the steps you will take to meet our demands.

In Solidarity,

The ESPM Graduate Diversity Council and the Undersigned Collective of ESPM Community Members



Let us not forget, as Fannie Lou Hamer stated:

Nobody's free until everybody's free.

– Fannie Lou Hamer