To the Dean of Architecture and   
Design, Scheri Fultiner, Department   
Head, Amy Kulper, and the faculty of   
the Department of Architecture at the   
Rhode Island School of Design,

***The Limits of Your Recognition: A***   
***Follow-Up Statement in Relation to***   
***the Listening Session of June 17th,***   
***2020 with the Rhode Island School***   
***of Design’s Administration***   
***Regarding the Multitude of Issues***   
***brought up and represented by the***   
***RISD BIPOC & Student Body in***   
***attendance. Sent on Friday,***   
***Juneteenth, 2020.***

[Three weeks have passed since the](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Floyd&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653931000&usg=AOvVaw00q5ws7oDSXApezo7-PHaB)   
[horrific and extralegal killing of George](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Floyd&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653931000&usg=AOvVaw00q5ws7oDSXApezo7-PHaB)   
[Floyd that has ignited the nation in a](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Floyd&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653931000&usg=AOvVaw00q5ws7oDSXApezo7-PHaB)   
[movement against police brutality,](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Floyd&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653931000&usg=AOvVaw00q5ws7oDSXApezo7-PHaB)   
economic injustice, and the   
devaluation of Black lives,   
experiences, and creative knowledge.

While the current efforts to bring   
attention to these issues impregnate   
our collective consciousness, we can   
no longer remain ignorant to the fact   
that the roots of these efforts stem   
from decades of action against the   
institutional and systemic injustices   
endemic to the building of this nation   
as well as to the practices of   
architecture, design, and institutions of   
higher education such as RISD.

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| Consequently, we can no longer ignore  the actions of this institution leading up  to this moment. The historical lack of  accountability for those who have  murdered Black people is one that has  direct and indisputable parallels to the  lack of accountability for the well-being  and support of Black and BIPOC  students by RISD faculty and  administrators. In 2016, Black, BIPOC,  queer and oth[er students](https://docs.google.com/) to[ok on the](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0)  invisible labor [~~of making~~](https://docs.google.com/) exp[~~licit their~~](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) Published by [Google Drive](https://docs.google.com/) – [Report Abuse](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) |  |
| https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQOJCqfs62hajaijnwVVapmUQmsUE98KBfEmXZfsBuC7sWlriBlnIMTuf-vNQiDbmrIbJbH3cBDKlS6/pub | 1/12 |

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| 2/1/2021 | The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the Department of Architecture |  |
| personal traumas and struggles  The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the D…Updated automatically every 5 prote[st and The Ro](https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.eloisesherrid.com/the-room-of-silence&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653932000&usg=AOvVaw1Xu0qmBXRz3sNPWY0KtFR7)om of Silence minutes  film ([Eloise Sherrid](https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.eloisesherrid.com/the-room-of-silence&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653932000&usg=AOvVaw1Xu0qmBXRz3sNPWY0KtFR7)). In addition to the  egre[gious lack of f](https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.eloisesherrid.com/the-room-of-silence&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653932000&usg=AOvVaw1Xu0qmBXRz3sNPWY0KtFR7)orethought your  response to the current situation has  shown the deafening silence of  institutional change beyond further  tokenization with which these previous  protests were met, and demonstrates  a pattern of obstruction and  intransigence towards radical  transformation against anti-Blackness  at RISD. Not only was RISD’s  pedagogic response insufficient—a  couple of wintersession courses on  intersectionality and pedagogy—but  the underlying points made evident in  the Not Your Token Protests and The  [Room of Silence film were co-op](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://our.risd.edu/post/142457528029/not-your-token&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653932000&usg=AOvVaw3iGtBpLsANqgMde0Y59-Np)ted by  [RISD marketing campaigns (Our](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://our.risd.edu/post/142457528029/not-your-token&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653932000&usg=AOvVaw3iGtBpLsANqgMde0Y59-Np)  [RISD), effectively undermining a](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://our.risd.edu/post/142457528029/not-your-token&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653932000&usg=AOvVaw3iGtBpLsANqgMde0Y59-Np)nd  [nullifying the opportunity for](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://our.risd.edu/post/142457528029/not-your-token&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1612219653932000&usg=AOvVaw3iGtBpLsANqgMde0Y59-Np)  institutional reflection and  transformation that these two acts  against systemic injustice offered.  RISD’s repeated inaction and inability  to recognize its own position,  involvement in, and responsibility to  dismantle regimes of racial inequity  only further demonstrates it’s  simultaneous exploitation of Black  students when deemed beneficial and  self-promoting while erasing the  experiences, creativity, and labor of its  Black students. **This is an**  **unconscionable form of**  **performative allyship.**  As this historic moment should make  abundantly clear, these protests are  not about singular events, individual  (bad) actors, or unique institutions, but  rather are aimed at centuries of  systemic oppression against black  people designed to ensure their  dismissal, dehumanization, and  devaluation. RISD is not alone in these  acts, but they are endemic to the  practices of architecture and design as  we know them. This demands that  RISD’s Division of Architecture and  Design and Department of  Architecture acknowledge Architecture  as a politically driven discipline in  which professed “neutrality” is itself a  stance enabling further violence that  can no longer be tolerated as tenable  and sustainable. As Black and BIPOC  students and [alumni from](https://docs.google.com/) th[e](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0)  Department o[~~f Architectu~~](https://docs.google.com/)re, [~~we~~](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) Published by [Google Drive](https://docs.google.com/) – [Report Abuse](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) | |
| https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQOJCqfs62hajaijnwVVapmUQmsUE98KBfEmXZfsBuC7sWlriBlnIMTuf-vNQiDbmrIbJbH3cBDKlS6/pub | | 2/12 |

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| 2/1/2021 | The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the Department of Architecture | |  |
| demand that RISD move beyond  The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the D…Updated automatically every 5 immediate and actionable steps minutes  towards consciously dismantling  institutionalized anti-Blackness. The  following are our recommendations for  **beginning** what will be a continuous  and dynamic process: | | |
| 1. | | **Representation**: make |
| legitimate strides to increase  the Black Faculty & Student  Body from the **current 4%**. We  recommend open design  programs and competitions by  the institution to appeal to the  multitude of prospective artists  and students that already exist  within Providence and beyond.  Your treatment of Black  students in the BEB directly  affects the perspectives and  opinions current and  prospective students hear and  a true commitment to diversity  and inclusion will reflect  positively on the department  and institution at large. | | |
| 2. | | **Accessibility**: RISD must |
| ensure a **support system** for  disadvantaged students. Break  down the barriers to education  by providing more scholarship  opportunities and TA positions  so that student’s work  experiences directly benefit  them professionally and their  studio work does not suffer  from their financial need. Black  students should have more  opportunities to teach and any  rejected proposals should have  a very clear constructive  language that is helpful for the  student to edify their future  work. Faculty should not be  permitted to offer students  unpaid internship opportunities,  and should also be open to  hiring and working with new  TAs over the course of the  academic year. | | |
| 3. | | **Acknowledgmen**t: Directly |
| acknowledge the history of   Market Square as a slave   market and the direct and   indirec[t funding of](https://docs.google.com/) in[stitutions](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0)  Published by [Google Drive](https://docs.google.com/) – [Report Abuse](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) | | |
| https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQOJCqfs62hajaijnwVVapmUQmsUE98KBfEmXZfsBuC7sWlriBlnIMTuf-vNQiDbmrIbJbH3cBDKlS6/pub | | | 3/12 |

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| 2/1/2021 | The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the Department of Architecture | |  |
| ventures that capitalised off of  The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the D…Updated automatically every 5 approaching this history with minutes  the ambivalence and timidness  that the institution currently  poses; leverage it as a site for  a constant reflection of how  **society literally capitalizes**  **on Black bodies**. We suggest  seasonal exhibitions and  installations by Black artists  campus and city-wide with  ample financial and creative  support, and in the context of  the BEB some seasonal or  annual design challenge that  allows Black voices to be  dominant in a place that was  historically dehumanizing. | | |
| 4. | | **Decentralize**: The push to |
| ‘decentralize’ Europe in our  education is a promise that the  majority of us have heard at  some point in our time at RISD.  In the context of the  architecture department, we  believe that promise is more of  a claim as we are still not  presented with enough content  by Black architects. **In every**  **course syllabi, precedents**  **and projects by Black**  **architectsare still secondary**  **or non-existent** and we are no  longer content with alternative  voices to architectural practice  and history being relegated to  seminars and sporadic winter  session courses. We demand  that the architecture  department bolsters its  commitment to placing  alternative voices within our  education. Furthermore, these  examples should not come  from the already archaic and ‘canonized’ meta of the  Maghreb, there are multitudes  of forgotten, unique,  fascinating, and innovative  architectural practices outside  of the Middle East and  Northern Africa and we  challenge the respective faculty  to take strides in doing  research outside their comfort  zones.  The inclusion of Black voices in  course [syllabi sho](https://docs.google.com/)uld [be a](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0)  course [~~requireme~~](https://docs.google.com/)nt a[~~nd when~~](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) Published by [Google Drive](https://docs.google.com/) – [Report Abuse](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) | | |
| https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQOJCqfs62hajaijnwVVapmUQmsUE98KBfEmXZfsBuC7sWlriBlnIMTuf-vNQiDbmrIbJbH3cBDKlS6/pub | | | 4/12 |

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| 2/1/2021 | The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the Department of Architecture | |  |
| the lack of alternative voices is  The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the D…Updated automatically every 5 repercussions to students for minutes  doing so. | | |
| 5. | | **Accountability**: The |
| Accountability and assessment  of non-Black faculty should be  a definite devotion to reviewing  and expanding diversity in the  educational content not just in  the BEB but campus-wide. **The**  **labor of this review and**  **assessment should not**  **simply be given to a body of**  **Black staff and faculty** but  should be pursued and  demanded of **all** faculty in the  BEB. | | |
| 6. | | **Training**: Require Art School |
| Specific Diversity Training for  Instructors: under the context  of art and design learning and  practice, we believe that faculty  should undergo specific  training under these contexts to  **understand the existence**  **and propagation of**  **microaggressions and**  **racism**, consciously or  unconsciously in their teaching  and critique practices. | | |
| 7. | | **Design/Build Equity**: Create a |
| Policy on Design/Build Projects  in which all students have the  opportunity to design and all  students share the labor of  building. There are too many  examples of BIPOC being  given only labour tasks in  group projects and  assignments. | | |
| 8. | | **Sponsorship: Access to** |
| **tools and resources that**  **support academic and**  **professional growth through**  **sponsorship of Black**  **students to attend one**  **conference per annum** (such  as AfroTech, NOMA, and other  Black-led conferences). **The**  **financial support of these**  **initiatives should not be**  **relegated to the CSI**, the  elevation of minority voices in  architecture should be a  collab[orative effor](https://docs.google.com/)t.  Published by [Google Drive](https://docs.google.com/) – [Report Abuse](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) | | |
| https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQOJCqfs62hajaijnwVVapmUQmsUE98KBfEmXZfsBuC7sWlriBlnIMTuf-vNQiDbmrIbJbH3cBDKlS6/pub | | | 5/12 |

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| 2/1/2021 | The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the Department of Architecture | |
| 9. | | **Health**: Over the past couple of |
| The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the D…Updated automatically every 5 **students and the larger**  minutes  **architecture student body**  **have pointed to our**  **workloads and the minimal**  **promotion of communities**  **and initiatives** like NOMAs for  their underutilization. The  effects of the architecture  curriculum and workload on our  personal and social lives is not  a new subject, and as we  mentioned earlier in the letter  RISD’s NOMAs chapter gets all  their funds from CSI and is not  supported directly by the  architecture department, and  this must change immediately.  NOMAs is the **primary**  **community** in the Architecture  Department for BIPOC and our  inability to fully utilise this  community by virtue of the  design of our curriculum and its  anaemic support reflects **larger**  **issues of mental and social**  **health** within the Department  of Architecture. | | |

10. **Labor**: Moving forward, we   
want the department to   
understand several   
things: institutional responses   
that are no longer acceptable:   
being “ready to listen,” being  
“ready to learn,” “opening up   
the space to…”, these   
institutional ‘blanket’ responses   
are not only paternalistic but   
also avoids accountability by   
passing the work that needs to   
be done onto the shoulders of   
BIPOC. **Should the end result**   
**of the discourse of this letter**   
**be the shifting of**   
**responsibility on yet another**   
**task force formed purely of**   
**Black people and people of**   
**color, then the Department of**   
**Architecture and RISD would**   
**have failed once again.**

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| **Finally, change the attitude towards**  **discussions of racism, diversity,**  **and inclusion as ‘tasks’ that ‘must**  **be completed’ - the discourse (and**  **changes) that we hope these**  **demands ge**[**nerate sho**](https://docs.google.com/)**uld** [**center**](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0)  **around the f**[**act that dis**](https://docs.google.com/)**cu**[**ssions on**](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) Published by [Google Drive](https://docs.google.com/) – [Report Abuse](https://docs.google.com/u/0/abuse?id=AKkXjoyau7oAaCFCjfOkqFMDDTEBx0AJdQlPojsnybzFIt7HgjySZU0bsz6grrMASCMULCDf62qrBwvwXp63AA4:0) |  |
| https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQOJCqfs62hajaijnwVVapmUQmsUE98KBfEmXZfsBuC7sWlriBlnIMTuf-vNQiDbmrIbJbH3cBDKlS6/pub | 6/12 |

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| 2/1/2021 | The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the Department of Architecture |
| **race, diversity, and inclusion are**  The Limits of Your Recognition: Race and Diversity at the D…Updated automatically every 5 relegation of these discussions to minutes  diversity training days, diversity talks,  and sporadic events during Black  history month only hinders your  capacity to change. Be it at the  student-teacher level, to larger  conferences with the institution,  **all** interactions concerning race,  diversity, and inclusion should be  approached head-on with a genuine  willingness to have the conversation,  the respect to listen to the  conversation, and the heart to  evaluate what was said against our  personal biases and misconceptions  no matter how uncomfortable, or from  an institutional standpoint, ‘unprofessional’ the conversation may  seem. **Once again, what we want is**  **action that leads to tangible**  **change.** | |

We are open to having more direct   
**conversations** with the department,   
and we emphasize **conversations,** to   
expand or clarify the demands we are   
presenting. We will not, however, be   
called to defend, curtail, or even   
apologize for these demands. We are   
adding our voices to those of our   
respective colleagues and peers who   
embraced their trauma and similarly   
presented their thoughts, feelings and   
experiences with the institution and we   
hope that with this letter we can   
provide the BEB and the RISD some   
help in tackling the issue at hand.

**Below are names of Black students**   
**and alumni in the Department of**   
**Architecture that have contributed**   
**to or read this letter urging for the**   
**dismantling of anti-Blackness. By**   
**signing, they each support this**   
**message.**