

DARTMOUTH

Graduate Program in Ecology, Evolution, Environment & Society

Statement on Anti-Racism

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.
--James Baldwin

Racism is a form of structural violence in the United States that currently manifests in the persecution and murder of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Furthermore, racism perpetuates the systematic oppression of BIPOC through enduring structures and institutions of power that deny these communities fundamental human rights. We hold these hard truths close as we commit to anti-racist work in our intellectual and scholarly community of practice and research.

We recognize that racism consists of principles and practices that cause and justify an inequitable distribution of rights, opportunities, and experiences across racial groups. *Structural racism* reflects the macrosocial system of public policies and institutional practices that work in various, often reinforcing, ways to perpetuate racial injustice. *Interpersonal racism* reflects microsocial forces of culture expressed through discourse, attitudes, and behaviors that work in various, often reinforcing ways, to perpetuate racial injustice. *Systematic racism* is when structural and interpersonal racism operate both separately and together.

We recognize that there are significant differences between BIPOC and white communities in access to housing, education, career and employment opportunities, safe neighborhoods, protection from environmental hazards, socially meaningful environments, government services, and wealth. These differences in access to opportunity have significant effects on health and quality and length of life, and are perpetuated through socio-cultural forces at play over generations. Anti-black bias in academia is just one of these forces that oppress BIPOC communities.

We recognize that our community in EEES has significant work to do to commit to and promote anti-racism in our research and education, and how we function as a program. This work will be uncomfortable, varied, and continued across our graduate students, faculty, and staff. While we may have expert knowledge about issues like *environmental racism*, **we recognize** our knowledge is often second-hand and differs significantly from the lived-experiences of these communities, whose truths we should hold close as we commit to anti-racist work.

We recognize that as a historically and currently majority-white program, racism can manifest within EEES in unintentional and unconscious ways. Nevertheless, naming racist action is essential. Being actively anti-racist is essential.

We resolve to actively listen to our BIPOC colleagues, friends, and communities on these issues; to unlearn behavior and assumptions; to humbly admit when we are wrong, even in situations that make us uncomfortable.

We resolve to proactively seek to recruit, admit, and/or hire diverse students, post-docs, faculty, and staff to our program; create programs, measures, and systems of accountability to make sure that students from diverse backgrounds feel they belong and have the opportunity to succeed; and develop a systematic approach to assessing and monitoring institutional climate, ensuring that implicit bias and its potential consequences are understood and that people of diverse backgrounds are welcome and respected.

We resolve to incorporate anti-racism into our teaching and research. For example, biology and evolution have been misused to justify racist and eugenicist violence; racial thinking can undergird paradigms like environmental determinism; and positionalities as scholars create uneven power dynamics in the classroom, lab, and research communities within and beyond Dartmouth. As scholars, we must acknowledge and teach the racist histories - and present realities - of our fields, and confront and mitigate the harm these histories have caused.

We resolve to continue this work even as it feels hard and in moments when the intensity of the political currents and news cycles ebb and flow on these issues, and to commit to holding ourselves and each other accountable.