



June 3, 2020

Dear SENR community,

Over these past few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has upended much of what we do, and our community will be navigating these changes for months to come.

We have also been experiencing a pandemic of injustices. This past week has painfully brought to light more examples of the atrocities that occur across our society - broadly in the context of all marginalized groups, yet more specifically in the context of racial injustices. For our SENR community, these occurrences seem particularly egregious given our desire to remove barriers and inequities within ENR-related professions, improve the overall health of our communities, and give meaning to the interconnections of our social, natural, and biophysical world.

Thus, as lovers of biodiversity worldwide, we are heartbroken in hearing of Christian Cooper, a black man birding in Central Park, New York, who was threatened by a white woman breaking the rules herself with an off-leash dog by explicitly stating she would call the police and tell them an African American male was threatening her - and then she did it with uncanny precision. We are grateful that Christian was not physically harmed, but are also distraught knowing this scenario is one in a long list of inexcusable implicit and explicit biases that underscore who is privileged and who is harmed by the current system in which we live.

As lovers of physical exercise in the great outdoors, we feel crushed by the story of Ahmaud Arbery, who was running in a neighborhood near his home and was killed after being confronted by two armed white men who tracked him down in a truck while another recorded. This crushing feeling is because we know that Ahmaud represents so many more people who have been unjustly killed due to bigotry, racism, and discrimination that has gone too long unchecked in our society.

As engaged community members who value diversity, we are outraged, saddened, concerned, and more about the recent killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and David McAtee at the hands of police. We struggle with how to talk through our own emotions while consoling our friends, family, students, neighbors, fellow congregants, etc. We want to respond that a system of protection for our residents is warranted, needed even, particularly in times of crisis. But we falter, knowing that the system has not protected us all equally, and we have too long ignored the crisis of racism staring us in the face.

Considering this inflection point, this moment of truth, we reflect on our values and who we are as people. We have sat in silence, we have walked when and where called, and we choose to make a difference in the many ways we can. And we push ourselves to do better.



We are also heartened at the numerous gatherings of solidarity in the wake of these inexplicable atrocities and everyday occurrences that make the racism, bigotry, and discrimination within our society painfully obvious. For many in our community, these injustices have always been obvious. Yet clearly, we have not acted fast enough or effectively enough as individuals, communities with power, and society as a whole.

In saying all of this, we wish most to say that we support you. We know that not all have experienced this culmination of events in the same way or at the same time, but we believe our community has the same collective goal of supporting and creating a just world. We will make mistakes on this journey, but we will never give up improving our efforts until we get it right.

We commit to engaging with our community to better understand where we fall short and to do better within our program, in our professions, and in society more broadly. We welcome your engagement in sharing your perspectives with us at any level desired - when you are ready - because we seek to better understand your experiences and make changes and provide support where needed to improve our shared community. We also invite you via [this form](#) to share thoughts, recommendations, and anything else you believe can help with these efforts if the timing feels right to share now. Our lines of communication are open *and will remain open* as an ongoing process of seeking feedback from every one of you who wish to share in order to develop a robust plan of action for our community going forward.

Please let us know how we can support you and how we can do better as a School in general to support diversity, inclusion, justice and equity.

Jeff Sharp, *Director*

Eric Toman
Graduate Studies Committee Chair

Alia Dietsch and Nicole Sintov
Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, and Equity Task Force Co-Chairs

P.S. We are including these resources knowing that even just picking one of them can jump start the change we wish to see in the world.

Readings, Resources, Actions to take

- [So You Want to Talk About Race](#), a talk by [Ijeoma Oluo](#)
- [Action toolkits from Black Lives Matter](#)
- [Anti-racism resources for white people](#), a collection of resources compiled by Sarah Sophie Flicker and Alyssa Klein
- 500 Women Scientists posted [this list](#) of “Dos, Don’ts, and Resources”
- [75 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice](#)
- [Decolonize your mind](#), reading list
- [“Is my school racist?”](#)



- The Ecological Society of America has also posted a [list of resources](#)
- [Anti-Racist Reading List](#) curated by [Ibrahim X. Kendi](#)
- [Anti-Racism Resources](#) (readings, books, podcasts, etc.)
- [Code Switch](#) Podcast
- [Outsmarting Human Minds](#)
- [Smithsonian's Being antiracist](#)
- [Conservation publications and their provisions to protect research participants](#) (Ibbett and Brittain, 2019)
- Principles of [community-based participatory research](#)
- [Jacqueline Scott's articles on The Conversation](#)

Books

- [Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People](#) (Banaji & Greenwald, 2016)
- [How to Be an Anti-Racist](#) (Ibram X. Kendi, 2019)
- [Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor](#) (Layla F. Saad, 2020)
- [Whistling Vivaldi](#) (Claude M. Steele, 2010)
- [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism](#) (Robin DiAngelo, 2018)
- [Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation](#) (by Derald Wing Sue, 2010)

TWITTER lists to follow

- [Black AF in STEM](#), organizers of [#BlackBirdersWeek](#)
- [Black and STEM's list of lists](#) to find Black researchers by discipline
- BLACKSTEM Global's [list of influencers](#)
- Black Lives Matter's [list of chapters](#)
- [Mary Annaisé Heglar's](#) list of [Green Voices of Color](#)

OSU Wellness Resources

- Students can use the [Counseling and Consultation Service](#) (CCS) and the [Buckeye Peer Access Line](#) (PAL), which operates Monday through Thursday from 8 p.m. to midnight, and Friday from 2 to 6 p.m.
- The Ohio State: Wellness app is designed for students and offers tips and guidance for members of our community. Available for [Android](#) and [iOS](#) devices.

OSU COVID-19 Resources

- [Information about coronavirus and the university's response](#)
- [Guidance for students, faculty and staff](#)
- [Resources for students](#)