

June 19, 2020

To our psychology students,

The faculty in the Department of Psychology stand with those who call for change. We demand to live in “...[a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise](#)” (BlackLivesMatter.com, 2020). We assert unequivocally that BLACK LIVES MATTER.

We know that racism does not just reside in the criminal justice system and law enforcement. The same systemic forces are present in the halls of academia, including on our campus. The psychological forces that support systemic inequality are pernicious, and far-reaching. But there is a path forward, and we are committed to engage in the efforts required to examine and dismantle such inequalities. We commit to professional development around antiracist teaching and mentoring. We commit to do more in our classrooms and labs to insure no Psychology major graduates Middlebury without understanding the forces of systemic oppression and how every individual, consciously or unconsciously, supports the status quo through implicit bias, justifications that reinforce group disparities and stereotypes, and ultimately, racist behaviors. Concretely, as a beginning, we commit to the following curricular changes:

- Revise *Introduction to Psychology* to include a greater representation of the psychological forces that contribute to the systemic oppression and stigmatization of Black individuals as well as other groups who have historically been excluded and methodically disfranchised.
- Redesign a section of *Statistics* to focus on inclusivity and systematic inequality that will be piloted in Spring 2021.
- Increase the time spent in courses across our curriculum, such as *Research Methods* and *Mindfulness*, discussing the psychological implications of social justice, institutional violence, systemic racism, and white supremacy, and other issues central to the Black Lives Matter movement.
- An increased cultural perspective on neuro-psychological research in *Brain and Behavior* including a focus on black populations.

We recognize that these curricular changes are not enough. We are working to make sure the steps we take focus on students’ needs as we align our behaviors with our values. To this aim, we will create opportunities for informal community dialogues where we will listen to students’ concerns, suggestions, and ideas for undoing the status quo. This is not a request for a select few to advocate for what is just, but a commitment to keep the lines of communication open as we, the faculty, do this important work.

We are committed to a future free of racism and systemic oppression.

We are here for you now and in the future.

If you have any concerns or questions, don’t hesitate to be in touch with the Department Chair, Professor Jason Arndt, at jarndt@middlebury.edu or any of our faculty.

Stay engaged, stay safe.

Sincerely,

The Psychology Department Faculty

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