

## **Environmental Studies and Environmental Affairs Statement in Support of Black Lives Matter**

The faculty and staff of the Environmental Studies Program and the staff of Environmental Affairs at the Franklin Environmental Center at Hillcrest stand with Black Lives Matter and all our fellow citizens suffering from outright violence and other injustices of structural racism. The consequences of white supremacy have become all the more apparent as our national leaders consistently gaslight racism and greenlight violence. Even as the COVID-19 pandemic destroys black and brown lives in communities of color across the nation, Black persons continue to endure state-sanctioned, structural, and cultural violence at all levels of society. We stand with those demanding national, structural change, which must include our own Middlebury community. Our commitment to racial justice goes hand in hand with our commitment to environmental justice.

The struggle for environmental and social justice begins with acknowledging that whiteness in the United States is characterized by the hoarding of natural resources just as surely as by the hoarding of capital and the unjust manipulation of the financial system to the disadvantage of marginalized groups. We acknowledge the historical complicity of our movement in perpetuating the devastating consequences of white supremacy. From collusion between eugenicists and conservationists to the cancer alleys and food deserts of today, Black persons have been historically dispossessed of land, capital, and full participation in our democracy, including its educational system, and continue to be prevented from full access to social goods and services even while suffering from elaborate strategies of political disenfranchisement.

We stand in support of the call to action from our students in their letter to President Patton, and of her response and commitments to them. By the end of this month (June 2020) we will share more specific actions we will take in our programs and how we plan to implement and hold ourselves accountable to them.

Going forward we pledge to listen and discuss, learn, and take action to promote racial understanding and diversity in our own programs and practices and in the communities in which we work. We will examine existing methods, modes, and philosophies in our work and how we allocate our resources in order to re-imagine and, where necessary, replace them with anti-racist policies and practices.

### **Co-signed, alphabetically**

Mez Baker-Medard

Nadine Canter Barnicle

Megan O. Brakeley

Dan Brayton

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*June 15, 2020*