

Call to Action
Social Justice Institute
June 8, 2020

As Case Western Reserve University, we must recognize our silence and complicity in institutional racism, educate ourselves and others, and take action to bring changes that will more closely align our institution with racial justice and equity. We urge the university to unite around a shared commitment to confront and end racism, white supremacy, and systemic oppression.

We must recognize that while we have spoken out for justice, our institution falls short. We have made efforts to increase diversity in our student body, faculty and staff and yet Blacks are still underrepresented at all levels. With that in mind, it is incumbent upon the University to:

- Acknowledge our complicity, reflect on our role and biases, and publicly commit to work for institutional change;
- Conduct an examination of institutional racism in university policies and the policies and practices of all police forces associated with campus;
- Challenge current assumptions we make about finances and funding that reinforce institutional racism and marginalization of people of color; and
- Take steps to challenge white supremacy in our culture and create an anti-racism agenda.

We must remain steadfast in our commitment to educate ourselves through aligning our curriculum and pedagogy in a manner that:

- Creates a university-wide learning agenda with common readings as the basis for open reflection and dialogue;
- Implements a year-long commitment racial equity and inclusion training, available to all students, faculty, staff and administrators;
- Examines the hidden curriculum across disciplines that supports white supremacy; and
- Establishes a culture that acknowledges the dominance of racist worldviews and challenges white fragility while promoting personal growth and accountability.

The Social Justice Institute, under the leadership of its co-directors, recognizes the ongoing struggle for liberation and identifies the following action items for the organization:

- Promote changes in policing that increase accountability and transform police departments, such as abolishing qualified immunity and requiring any death that occurs following a use of force by police to be referred to the State Attorney General Office.
- Shift funding from law enforcement to programs that invest in restorative community building, mental health services and opportunities for those who have been disadvantaged by systemic oppression.
- Speak out, raise our voice against racism and elevate the voices of people of color.
- Change the narrative by using our scholarship and expertise to advocate for and support efforts to dismantle racism and white supremacy.

- Promote the expansion of research funding that addresses racism and incentivize research at our own institution to include a focus on race.
- Reject a pathological and deficit-based approach to research and refocus it on the strengths and resilience of oppressed and marginalized groups.
- Increase the voice and accountability of people of color and other oppressed groups in all phases of the research process, including research design and interpretation of data.
- Expand and diversify methods of research dissemination to more directly benefit and engage communities of color and social change efforts.
- Work to create and foster relationships with local and national organizations led by Black people and committed to the liberation of all Black people..

“Our only hope for our collective liberation is a politics of deep solidarity rooted in love. In recent days, we’ve seen what it looks like when people of all races, ethnicities, genders and backgrounds rise up together, standing in solidarity for justice, protesting, marching and singing together, even as SWAT teams and tanks roll in. We’ve seen our faces in another American mirror — a reflection of the best of who we are and what we can become.”

Michelle Alexander
New York Times, June 8, 2020