

COLLEGE OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

**ANTI-RACISM WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**



College of  
**Biological Sciences**  
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

## **INTRODUCTION**

In response to the murder of George Floyd and related racial injustices across the country, it is critical, now more than ever, to assess the College of Biological Science's responsibility and commitment to actively building an anti-racist environment in which every one of our students, faculty, staff and community members can thrive. Dean Valery Forbes established a collegiate working group in June 2020 charged with identifying the current landscape of anti-racist work in CBS and developing a roadmap for moving this work forward at the collegiate level.

## **SELECTION OF WORK GROUP MEMBERS**

Staff and faculty representatives were selected to represent a diversity of roles within the college and for their demonstrated commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in CBS. Undergraduate, graduate students and postdoc representatives were selected by their respective governing committees.

## **WORK GROUP REPRESENTATIVES**

Abdi Saleh | Genetics, Cell Biology and Development | Undergraduate

Aman Imani | Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics | Graduate student

Anna Darrell | CBS Dean's Office | Staff

Forest Isbell | Cedar Creek; Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior | Faculty

Hillary Barron | Biology Teaching and Learning | Postdoc

Jeremy Chacon | Ecology, Evolution and Behavior | Postdoc

Laurie Parker | Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics | Faculty

Marlene Zuk | Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior | Faculty, Associate Dean for Faculty

Meaghan Stein | Biology Teaching and Learning | Staff

Nikki Letawsky Shultz | Student Services | Staff

Rachel Roach | CBS Human Resources | Staff

Salma Muftah | Neuroscience | Undergraduate

Stephanie Xenos | CBS Communications | Staff

Willow Coyote-Maestas | Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biophysics | Graduate student

Valery Forbes | CBS Dean's Office | Dean

## **OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

The working group met eight times over the course of the fall 2020 semester and developed the following set of recommendations for the college. Each meeting focused on a specific constituent group within the college (undergraduates, postdocs, graduate students, staff, and faculty). The recommendations were compiled, reviewed and focused into four primary areas:

- Structures & Processes
- Community & Climate
- Education & Training
- Support and Scholarship

It is important to note that this is a working document. Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) in the college, and specifically anti-racist efforts, is our collective work and responsibility. The recommendations outlined here are available to CBS students, faculty and staff for feedback. An overview of the recommendations and additional information regarding next steps will be presented at a college-wide town hall this spring.

Final recommendations will be reviewed by outside experts (i.e., OED, OHR) for feedback prior to implementation. Once approved, smaller "action teams" within the college will be identified to take the lead on implementing the high-level actions in this report and ensuring accountability. The goals and actions outlined here are a starting point for our work, rather than an exhaustive list of all we want to accomplish, and are intended to be reviewed and modified regularly.

## STRUCTURES & PROCESSES

**GOAL: Develop a framework of equitable, anti-racist, accountable structures and processes within the college that prioritize sustainability and continuous improvement and can be applied throughout the organization.**

**Action 1** – Develop a strategic plan for diversity, equity and inclusion efforts within the college to align efforts, minimize redundancy, identify metrics, track progress, and assign points of contact.

**Action 2** – Perform a gap analysis to determine what data are being collected, by whom and how the information informs current practices. Determine appropriate metrics and assessment for the goals and actions outlined in this document. Establish a framework for collecting, organizing, monitoring, analyzing and communicating quantitative and qualitative data to measure progress and inform the college's DEIJ strategic plan.

**Action 3** – Connect and collaborate with other colleges within the University to share resources, expertise, and programming.

**Action 4** – Support long-term DEIJ commitments with the creation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer position within the college. In the interim, identify point persons throughout the college, and University offices, who can act as point persons to promote the actions outlined in this document and track progress on our efforts.

**Action 5** – Increase the representational diversity, specifically Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC), of faculty, staff and students, through recruitment and retention strategies. Evaluate current hiring practices and formulate clear hiring guidelines that address biases in recruitment and that are deployed throughout the entire hiring process. Identify and proactively address factors influencing retention and identify opportunities for assessment through new and existing avenues.

**Action 6** – Create a performance management framework that incentivizes proactive supervision premised on inclusive processes that prioritize employee development and support BIPOC employee development and promotion. Set explicit collegiate expectations for faculty and staff engagement in DEIJ work and tie to metrics in the annual performance review process.

**Action 7** – Review and improve collegiate structures and processes that encourage participation and leadership at all levels of the organization. Review leadership positions within departments and across the college to determine the representation of BIPOC faculty in leadership positions and develop intentional and strategic methods to increase leadership opportunities for BIPOC faculty. Identify power structures and find ways to lower the stakes of those power imbalances.

## COMMUNITY & CLIMATE

**GOAL:** Actively build an anti-racist environment in which every one of our students, faculty and staff can thrive.

**Action 8** – Align incentives and recognition as a reflection of our values. Determine avenues to encourage and reward engagement in DEIJ, anti-racist, and culturally-competent teaching, mentoring, and training. Create formal awards and recognition for those going above and beyond in their engagement with DEIJ work and in building an inclusive and supportive culture.

**Action 9** – Formalize leadership and mentoring networks across all constituent groups (peer to peer, committees, etc.) throughout the college.

**Action 10** – Build inclusive and supportive cultures within the college and departments to retain BIPOC faculty, students and staff. Increase awareness of science identity and personal identity in the CBS culture. Create equal space for everyone and encourage a deeper sense of belonging.

## EDUCATION & TRAINING

**GOAL:** Set collegiate expectations for representational curricula and continuous learning opportunities for all members of the CBS community.

**Action 11** – Incorporate explicit historical context and diverse representation in course curricula. Identify evidence-based recommendations from the research on anti-racist teaching practices for improving representation throughout all of our educational programs. Develop a repository of curricular resources to support engagement in these improvements (e.g. providing examples to use in a wide range of science topics representing all the different areas taught and researched in the college).

**Action 12** – Set clear expectations for faculty, staff, students and collegiate leadership to participate in ongoing training on the topics of anti-racism, cultural competence, and context-specific teaching. Reward these efforts. Develop a sustainable model for training and identify resources to be disseminated at the college level.

**Action 13** – Promote and develop inclusive teaching practices. Encourage and incentivize participation in programs like the Early Career Teaching and Learning Program from the Center for Educational Innovation.

## SUPPORT & SCHOLARSHIP

**GOAL:** Identify, align, and commit resources, financial and otherwise, to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for faculty, staff and students to fully engage in the College of Biological Sciences.

**Action 14** – Develop a process to prioritize, communicate and set fundraising goals related to DEIJ goals and initiatives.

**Action 15** – Establish funds to support grassroots efforts related to DEIJ, including, but not limited to: financial support to students of color affinity groups, professional development for graduate students and postdocs, seed funding for collaborative exploration of DEIJ topics.

**Action 16** – Establish a research framework for the college within which all undergraduates have the opportunity to participate in a paid research position during their undergraduate career. Increase funding for undergraduate research (work-study, scholarships, career development fund, fundraising, UROP etc.). Ensure funding is available to everyone with no barrier to application and paid positions offer competitive wages. Increase faculty/student participation in McNair Research Scholars program.