

Dear members of the CEOAS Community,

We write to you today in solidarity with Black communities across the nation and to condemn the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the countless other acts of violence which occur due to pervasive systemic and institutionalized racism in this country. We support Black Lives Matter and ask that you join us in committing support to the Black community and in creating a more equitable and just academic community.

It is important for us to acknowledge that, as educators, scientific experts, and individuals working at an institution of higher education, we are in a unique position of power. Our actions and our words resonate; they have the power to not only shape the climate of CEOAS, but also to influence our students, community members, and political leadership. We have opportunities to express support for justice as we share our science and innovations, as individuals and together in groups.

In a [recent college-wide email](#) on June 3, CEOAS leadership stated, “We write to express our support for all members of our community, and most especially, our underrepresented members that have faced discrimination by those who have had greater advantages and privileges.” We need to recognize that STEM spaces are often hostile to students, faculty, and staff of non-dominant identities. Notably, the geosciences are among the least diverse STEM disciplines and have one of the lowest representations of Black Americans (see [Livingston 2018](#), [Bernard and Cooperdock 2018](#), [King et al. 2018](#), [Dutt 2020](#)). Truly, if we intend to act “in solidarity with all individuals that seek equity, justice, and peaceful co-existence”, then we need to address the climate of institutionalized racism that we all participate in. Stating that one stands in solidarity with minoritized communities is not enough -- we must reflect on our individual roles in intentionally creating an inclusive climate in our college, our university, and STEM fields in general.

Moving forward, we, the organizers of the Unpacking Diversity: CEOAS PLC recommit to the following in our activities:

- We commit to using our voices and our work to support non-dominant communities and to amplify the voices, struggles, and narratives of Black and Brown communities. We must actively listen to Black and Brown voices and understand their lived experiences, and remain vigilant in ensuring their realities are not dismissed in conversation.
- We commit to keeping our sessions and events a brave space for students, faculty, and staff from all non-dominant identities. We will follow from example from invited facilitators who prioritize safety for all non-dominant identities, and further learn how we may better support our college members in STEM environments.
- We will listen to students as we fulfill our capacity as educators and mentors when creating welcoming learning environments. However, in our efforts to foster equitable classrooms, we may fail to respond to marginalized students' needs. We will anticipate this shortcoming and address such needs, whether those needs are explicitly asked for by individual students or not.

For those of us with the privilege that enables these events to move out of focus, we have to understand this work is ongoing. Our attention cannot end even after recent events and demonstrations fade from the foreground. This is the lived experience of Black and Brown communities every day. While often uncomfortable, it is incumbent upon us, particularly those of us from dominant identities, to strive for a more socially just society. We must show that we are willing to put in the effort, work, and care to actuate change.

We hope that you, as part of the CEOAS community, will join us in these commitments to create an inclusive, diverse, and equitable college by signing your name below.

In solidarity,

Unpacking Diversity: CEOAS Professional Learning Community Organizers