**Equity and Diversity Committee Statement on**

**Our Commitment to Dismantling Systems of Anti-Black Racism**

**Woodring College of Education**

**Western Washington University**

**June 8, 2020**

We acknowledge that Western Washington University is located on the ancestral homeland of the Coast Salish Peoples. We are grateful to be here.

The members of the Equity and Diversity Committee for the Woodring College of Education, want to express our grief and outrage at the killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Iyana Dior, Tony McDade, Manuel Ellis and the many many other Black people killed at the hands of the police. We see our communities in Washington, across this country, and around the world erupting in grief, pain, and courage. The fact that some “professionals*”* working in law enforcement are choosing violent and repressive responses to people who are protesting is unacceptable. Law enforcement must not be lethal. The targeting of Black lives and communities across the country MUST stop.

We also acknowledge the world is in the midst of a global pandemic and it is clear we do not have functional leadership for public health culture in the United States. Due to centuries of structural and systematic racism, Black communities are yet again disproportionately impacted.

We denounce the actions of local white supremacist hate groups against Western’s Black students, staff, faculty, and local community members taking place on our campus through the distribution of posters, stickers, and in-person intimidation. We call on white and non-Black people of color in the WWU communities to unite and resist these intimidation tactics that are seeking to separate us further from each other. Hate will not be tolerated. We stand in solidarity with the many students and colleagues who have been harmed by anti-Black racism.

Moving forward, Woodring’s Equity and Diversity Committee will work to be proactive and visible. This is not a moment, it is a movement.

In recognizing that we have been complicit in the long-standing racism permeating our campus and community, the Equity and Diversity Committee (EDC) in Woodring College of Education commits to the following actions:

1. We commit to dismantling anti-Black racism in Woodring programming, policies, practices, and teaching.
2. We commit to investing in deeper partnerships with local schools and community-based organizations. We will advocate for community teaching models of pre-service education that support social justice and are sensitive to the necessity of co-locating counselors, nurses, school psychologists, and social workers in schools to meet the needs of children and families[[1]](#footnote-1).
3. We commit to acknowledging our historical and present role in perpetuating the underrepresentation of teachers of color in Washington state and in our region. Nearly 90% of Washington State teachers are white, while more than 48% of Washington’s children and youth are not white. Human services professionals and nurses of color are also underrepresented in similar proportions. We will work intentionally to graduate students who reflect the demographics of our state.
4. We commit to partnering with Woodring’s Diversity Recruitment and Retention office to prioritize the recruitment, retention, and nurturing of Black and Brown students in alignment with our College’s [mission](https://wce.wwu.edu/mission-vision), [vision](https://wce.wwu.edu/mission-vision), and [strategic plan](https://wce.wwu.edu/files/WCE/WCE%20-%20StrategicPlan18-25.pdf). For generations, Black students in Woodring have experienced marginalization and dehumanization, while Woodring’s primarily white faculty called on them to educate white and non-Black  peers of color about race and identity. We commit to ending this practice. Black students have shared stories about their experiences in Woodring and at Western, and we believe them. We will listen, engage in an ongoing dialogue, and work in solidarity to regularly develop action plans with measurable and transparent outcomes to address student concerns.
5. We commit to working as advocates for recruiting, retaining, and supporting Black staff and faculty. Given that faculty and staff who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color (BIPOC) are underrepresented in Woodring, we stand in solidarity with our colleagues by acknowledging that they have borne the burden of this work for too long. It is past time for white staff and faculty in the College to put their espoused beliefs and values into action. We commit to working on ourselves and availing ourselves of the many available professional development opportunities, and we call on all members of the college to join us in professional development in the areas of equity, allyship, and anti-racism.

**Implementation**: Our implementation plan involves monthly review and discussion of this statement at EDC meetings to ensure we are holding ourselves accountable for lasting systemic change. Outcomes will be transparent and updated monthly to the EDC webpage. We will collaborate with LinCS and the Diversity Recruitment and Retention office in Woodring, while also holding each other accountable for reaching out to community-based organizations, local schools, WCE departments, and other on and off-campus partners.

**Outcomes**: Using an Empowerment Evaluation model, the EDC will work to create a feedback loop that assesses ongoing commitment to change and encourages all stakeholder’s voices to be heard while evaluating the five action items listed above. This evaluation will initially take place once each quarter under the direction of the EDC Steering Committee.

During this pivotal time in our nation’s history, we acknowledge that we must do better. We will follow through on these commitments by holding ourselves, our college and our university accountable for working to end systemic anti-Black racism and white supremacy.

Sincerely,

Members of the Equity and Diversity Committee

Woodring College of Education

Western Washington University

1. As of 2016 1.7 million students were in schools with police but no counselors; 3 million students were in schools with police but no nurses; 6 million students were in schools with police but no school psychologists. (U.S. DOE, Civil Rights Data Collection from ACLU: <https://www.aclu.org/report/cops-and-no-counselors>). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)