



Sam Houston State University

A Member of The Texas State University System

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Statement of Anti-Racist Solidarity

Department of Psychology and Philosophy

To our students of color, we see *you*, we hear *you*, we see what has happened, *you* matter. As a department, we fully acknowledge and recognize the gravity of the moment, and condemn systemic racism and perpetrators of Black violence. Though for many members of the Department, recent events have torn the blinders off, and we respond with shock, disgust, and outrage, these feelings are not new to the members of the Black community – students, faculty, staff, and neighbors. In the words of Michelle Alexander, “**We must face our racial history and our racial present.**”

All too often racism is construed as the intent to do harm. We reject this definition as insufficient, and instead recognize that the structures that perpetuate systemic racism operate both implicitly and explicitly. Those of us who benefit from the privileges these structures afford recognize the need to be vigilant in demanding accountability not only from ourselves, but from others.

And yet recognition is only part of processing. We understand the importance of also addressing the issue of historical/collective trauma perpetrated by legacies of racism and White supremacy and acknowledge, as consequences of this legacy, impacts to the health, safety, and economic lives of all marginalized communities. We know that this is not enough.

We have an ethical responsibility as educators, therapists, thinkers, scholars, and members of society to develop and implement strategies to dismantle the structures that perpetuate the injustice of White supremacy. As members of the Department of Psychology and Philosophy at Sam Houston State University, we commit to take action in the following four domains:

- 1. Education:** We will double down on our efforts to develop critical thinkers who understand the complexities of systems of oppression through open dialogue on (the meaning of) race, social justice, and moral responsibility. We will not only integrate this approach more fully into curriculum, but will also confront the dynamics of power that structure the educational environment, both in and out of the classroom. In our clinical training capacities, we will foster clinicians with increased awareness about our responsibility to confront injustice and work to remedy the ways it has impacted the people receiving our services.
- 2. Mentorship:** We commit to mentorship that enhances student success (as measured by the metrics of retention and graduation with minimal student debt). We will better engage students of color both to support their undergraduate education and to increase their flourishing in post-graduate education, and recognize that a key feature of this engagement is making space in our classrooms, labs, and clinics for the voices of students of color to enrich the learning experience for all.

Sam Houston State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

Huntsville, Texas 77341-2447 - 936.294.1174 - Fax 936.294.3798

3. Research: We will explicitly support research and scholarship on race, social justice, and systemic inequalities. We will promote programming that brings the multi-faceted research projects the Department undertakes to the forefront of Department activity and identity.

4. Service: We will better serve our local, state, and national communities, including school systems, by examining and remediating institutional practices that maintain an unjust status quo.

We acknowledge the cynicism that is a justifiable response to empty rhetoric and plans for reform. These are not empty promises. We commit to lasting change, which needs time and clear allocation of resources from upper administration at SHSU.

In closing, this is a conversation that, of necessity, will remain open. Our statement of anti-racist solidarity is just the starting point; we welcome and encourage suggestions from the community. Please reach out to us with your thoughts, concerns, ideas, resources, and feelings about how to initiate lasting change that affirms the worth and integrity of Black lives, that affirms, in short that: Black Lives Matter. To facilitate ongoing discussion, email us at Psychology@shsu.edu or phone 936-294-1174.

In solidarity, and on behalf of the Psychology and Philosophy Department:

Courtney Banks

Maria Botero

Laura Drislane

Jessica Elkayam

Craig Henderson

Chelsea Ratcliff

Yuma Tomes

Jorge Varela