



THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
GUND INSTITUTE
FOR ENVIRONMENT

The Gund Institute and Social Justice

June 4, 2020

Dear Gund Institute Community,

Like all of you, I have been listening and learning as our country has erupted in anger and violence. I am heartbroken about the murder of George Floyd and the systemic racism behind it, and I'm furious at so many of our leaders and police.

Listening and empathizing isn't enough. We all have an opportunity and a responsibility to be active allies in confronting racism and inequality.

The exchange among faculty and students on the Gund Community listserv has been heartening, with shared ideas, suggestions, and resources. It has reminded me of what a thoughtful group of people the Gund Institute brings together.

Messages of solidarity abound on twitter and email right now. But the most meaningful thing we can do is show up over the long term. Do the hard, slow work of making change that lasts. Be vocal allies every day.

I'm grateful to our Diversity & Inclusion Committee (listed below), which has spent the last two years helping to push the Gund Institute forward. We have diversified our fellowship appointments, established an ombudsperson position, and made our [commitment](#) to diversity and inclusion public and visible.

These are first steps, and this week we're reminded of how much further we all have to go. At the Gund, we are currently focused on two things: first, continuing to assemble a more diverse and inclusive community, particularly among faculty; and second, building justice and equity more strongly into our research activities, so that it is prominent in what we do, not just who we are.

As a leader with almost every conceivable privilege, I have a personal role here too: to listen, to voice my support, to mentor under-represented scholars, to talk to my kids, and to use my positions as researcher and teacher to understand and convey the roles of diversity and equity in our social-ecological systems.

The Gund is a special place, and we will always be working to make it the diverse and inclusive environment we all value. Doing so is core to who we are, and essential to achieve our vision for a truly sustainable world.

Take care everyone, and I'm looking forward to getting together again sometime soon.

Taylor Ricketts

Director, Gund Institute for Environment
Gund Professor, Rubenstein School
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Gund Diversity Committee: Stephanie Seguino, Bindu Panikar, Gillian Galford, Pablo Bose, Chris Koliba, Donna Rizzo.

Gund Ombudsperson for Diversity and Inclusion: Stephanie Seguino.