



# THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT STAFF COUNCIL

To: All UVM Staff

Date: March 26, 2021

Subject: Unequivocal Support of Our Colleagues Impacted by White Supremacy and Racism

UVM Staff Council stands in solidarity with people who are harmed by white supremacy, racism, and sexism, whether here on campus or anywhere in the world. We stand unequivocally against all acts of violence, oppression, and discrimination.

Recently, many of our friends, family, and colleagues have been harmed by events both national and at UVM. We have heard from concerned and harmed staff who do not feel safe, seen, heard, or valued. It is emotionally exhausting to navigate toxic work environments, white supremacy, and racism. As your staff colleagues, we see and hear you, and we will continue to advocate and fight for staff safety and wellbeing.

We know that we often fall short. Even the process we've engaged in as we composed this letter is part of the problem, with its attendant delays due to varied opinions, fears, policies, and administrative hurdles. We understand this letter is the bare minimum and want to be more proactive in supporting staff. We welcome your thoughts and feedback about this.

Those of us who are white believe we must continue to notice and analyze the roles which [whiteness](#), [white supremacy culture](#) and white skin privilege play in our lives. We believe that asking white people at UVM to examine their relationship to racialized systems of oppression is vital to dismantling white supremacy and reducing harm.

We recognize that this work may be discomforting to some white people. However, any discomfort felt by white people doing this necessary work is negligible compared to the pain and suffering that continues to be experienced by our BIPOC colleagues and neighbors. We welcome the ongoing opportunity to unpack and dismantle our own participation in these systems, and we support the efforts of UVM staff to continue to engage us in this work around diversity, equity, and inclusion. We value the leadership of all the colleges, units, departments, and individuals who are courageously taking up this work. We also honor the important legacy of work which Dr. Heading-Grant entrusts to us as she departs UVM.

Recent national events underline the fact that *not* addressing white supremacy, structural inequities, and racism continues to result in physical harm, trauma, and sometimes death. We share in the sadness, anger, and horror expressed by so many at the shooting of Asian and Asian-American people, particularly women, in Georgia. We also acknowledge that oppression and harm toward Asian and Asian-American communities in our country is not a new phenomenon; if some feel surprised, it is because white privilege has meant it hasn't been necessary to pay attention.

Here are a few resources to aid in education, understanding, activism, and healing:

- [Self-Evident: Asian America's Stories](#) – podcast
- [Asian Americans](#) – PBS documentary series
- [Asian Americans Advancing Justice \(AAJC\)](#)
- [Asian Mental Health Collective](#)
- [Bad Indian Wife](#) – free BIPOC mental health services in VT
- [Employee Assistance Program \(InvestEAP\)](#)

Sincerely,

Members of the Staff Council Executive Board

Brendan Andrews  
Barbara Asiimwe  
Kristen Cella  
Laura Clayton  
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Christa Hagan-Howe  
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Mindy Kear  
Michael O'Sullivan  
Holly Pedrini