

Dear HDFS Students,

We, HDFS Program Faculty, are writing to reaffirm the college's commitment to racial justice as expressed in Dean Thomas's email re: Solidarity Against Racism, Police Abuse, and Injustice sent Monday, June 6th. We also acknowledge that as a program and discipline, we can and must do better to fulfill this commitment, and furthermore, that as faculty we are responsible for engaging in this work individually and with our students.

Social justice is necessary for optimal development and interpersonal relationships. While this is not limited to racial justice, that is our focus in this message, which we write just a few short weeks after the brutal murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN, at the hands of the police. This tragic event is one of countless other instances of anti-Black violence and injustice toward Black individuals. Now as ever, we must be clear about our commitment to addressing racism in the classroom and beyond and to standing in solidarity with our Black students.

In order to better create and maintain a learning environment that is affirming and supportive of our Black students, and one that necessarily engages all of our students, we as a program commit to:

- Addressing racism embedded in our practices, courses, and institutional policies, and supporting our Black students and other students of color, as a standing agenda item on HDFS program faculty meetings.
- Moving beyond acknowledgement of the shortcomings of our discipline and toward (i) more explicit implementation of theory and practice that reflects the diversity of individual development and interpersonal relationships, (ii) attending to the (in)equities present in developmental contexts, and (iii) diversifying our courses to include the essential work of Black scholars and the scholarship of other people of color.
- Ensuring alignment of HDFS program initiatives with the [College of Education and Social Service's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan](#).
- Incorporating anti-racist pedagogy and support of Black students as key components of our program's strategic plan.
- Creating opportunities for student engagement with the development and implementation of this work that does not place an unnecessary burden on Black students and other students of color but also intentionally holds spaces for voluntary engagement and amplifies the voices of our Black students.

For students looking for ways to initiate or expand their understanding of racism, the National Council on Family Relations has curated several [Resources to Address Racism and Racial Violence](#) that may be of interest. We also invite HDFS students, and especially White students needing or wanting to better understand the relationship between whiteness and racism, to join us this July in reading and discussing Robin De'Angelo's *White Fragility: Why it's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. If you would like to join, please [use this form sign up for the reading group](#).

The actions above serve as a starting point for work that will necessarily be ongoing in our program. As we move forward, we will collaborate with you, HDFS students, and other campus

partners to build and strengthen opportunities for student support and education related to race and racism. If you would like to communicate with us further about these actions in the meantime, you can do so by [completing a feedback form](#), which allows for anonymous submissions.

As we return to a full contingent of four faculty in the HDFS program this fall, we had planned to engage in a critical assessment and revision of HDFS curriculum. We commit to incorporating and addressing race and racism, as well as issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion more broadly, into that work. We also want to acknowledge that one of your fellow HDFS majors held us accountable for taking more timely action on this important work. For that, we are thankful.

As we look forward to our time together this fall, we commit to greater transparency as we work to create a more power-conscious and inclusive learning environment for and with you, our students.

In solidarity,

HDFS Program Faculty

Nicole Conroy, Camelia Maianu (Incoming HDFS Faculty Member), Larry Shelton, & Jackie Weinstock