

Anti-racist Values and Actions – Columbia Epidemiology - June 22, 2020

The Columbia University Department of Epidemiology is committed to addressing and actively working to eliminate all forms of racism, including structural and interpersonal racism within our own departmental community, and beyond. Intrinsic to our fundamental values as a Department is recognition that our Black, Latinx, and Indigenous staff, students, and faculty experience racism and that it is harmful to them and our department, a hinderance to all aspects of our work as epidemiologists, and fundamentally unjust. Our ability to move ahead will hinge on making meaningful changes to combat [the White supremacy and racism that permeate the academy](#), and gravely affects our Black, Latinx, and Indigenous staff, students, and faculty, and the communities whose health we seek to improve. As a Department we acknowledge the collective and systematic killings of and violent action toward Black people at the hands of police and other institutional structures. We also acknowledge the intersectional nature of anti-Blackness and White supremacy and the unique burdens faced by other under-represented and marginalized groups. Ultimately, we commit to [becoming an anti-racist, multicultural organization](#) in which racial, ethnic, and cultural differences are recognized, respected, and celebrated in and of themselves, and as assets to our teaching, service, and science.

We recognize that a value statement is important but only as a basis for actual change. As a Department, we cannot wait for the next tragic event or our students to cue us to act. We must match our values with actions. We must make changes within and beyond the Department, in the school and university, and in our communities and our field, working to leverage our science to better serve Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. With these points in mind, and after input from our staff, faculty, and students, a series of actions are now part of the Department's 5-year mission along with a commitment that progress on these actions be overseen twice a year by the Chair's Leadership Group and the Department's Human Resources/Faculty Affairs, with status reports and opportunities for further input from students, staff, and faculty.