

June 2, 2020

Dear Chair Wick Haxton and administrative staff,

We write to ask you to broadcast a statement to our department condemning the systemic violence against Black people in our country. We are reeling from the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Steven Taylor, and too many others. We ask that our department speak out, as [others have](#), against these racist and despicable acts, and begin taking concrete action towards repairing the harm caused by persistent inequities in academia.

Both the ongoing crisis of police brutality and the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affect Black people and other people of color. The effects of institutional racism and oppression are wide-reaching, and our Physics community is not immune. We cannot expect our community members to focus on their academic or administrative work when they may fear for their own lives, or for the lives of their family members, friends, colleagues, and neighbors.

However, our community also has the power to enact meaningful change. Although we are all experiencing the current crises in different ways, each and every one of us is responsible for taking action to oppose injustice and inequity. We therefore ask for the department to affirm that Black Lives Matter, condemn the recent acts of racist violence, and offer guidance for how we can each strive to be anti-racist in our personal and professional lives. The Astronomy department recently shared a [collection of resources](#) which we believe the Physics community may find useful, and we would also suggest including a reminder of how to access campus mental health and counseling services.

We further ask that the department identify specific steps that can be taken in the near future, including actions such as (but not limited to):

- explicitly calling out the harmful effects of white supremacist culture;
- making culturally specific resources, such as mentors, available to students of color;
- making transparent plans to actively recruit from underrepresented populations during hiring and admissions processes;
- and developing systems to address both explicit and implicit bias among faculty, staff, and students, such as comprehensive anti-racist trainings.

No action by our department can end police brutality or the violence of institutional racism, nor can we stop a pandemic in its tracks. However, we can choose to forge a path toward a more equitable Physics community that fairly admits, hires, and values Black people and other people of color.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sajant Anand (PGSA)

Ella Banyas (PGSA)

Micah Brush (RPR)

Taylor Cookmeyer (IGS & RPR)

Kayla Currier (SWPS & UAW)

Daniel Eilbott (PGSA)

Shannon Haley (PGSA)

Gwen Hanley (PGSA & RPR)

Donez Horton-Bailey (CP & IGS)

Aashrita Mangu (RPR & SWPS)

Gregory Meyer (IGS & RPR)

Vikram Nagarajan

Gregory Ottino (UAW)

Max Smiley (UAW)

Kenneth Vetter (PGSA)