



VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND COUNSELING

Department of Education and Counseling Statement of Commitment, Action, and Solidarity

In light of state violence against people attending civil protests and the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, and other people of color who are wrongfully brutalized, we feel we must emphatically state that Black Lives Matter. We acknowledge that we have been complicit in institutional and social orders that allowed these anti-Black and oppressive conditions to persist. As a largely homogenous group, we also recognize that we must confront our own biases and internalized beliefs that may prevent us from challenging systems of oppression. We have work to do.

The Department of Education and Counseling is committed to creating equitable and socially-just spaces for our students, staff, and faculty. In our mission, we state that our department “values diversity and embraces approaches that support the worth, dignity, potential, and unique intersectional identities of individuals within their historical, cultural, economic, political, and psychosocial contexts” ([Department Mission Statement](#)). Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee’s three-year goals are grounded in the belief that:

inclusivity must include conscious efforts to involve all people, including those who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized by a majority group, to ensure an understanding of and appreciation for the diverse perspectives and identities of our students, faculty, staff, administrators, and members of the communities we serve. This includes spaces (physical and theoretical) designed to include all individuals.

We remain committed to this and recognize that we must do more to challenge and disrupt inequity.

For systemic change we must take action.

To that end, we recommit ourselves to anti-racist and anti-oppressive efforts and to be in solidarity with those currently and historically engaged in dismantling systems of oppression.

We commit to the following actions, effective immediately:

1. Expand antiracist pedagogy and scholarship in our department by:

- Encouraging all faculty to integrate antiracist curriculum and pedagogy into their Fall 2020 courses in at least two of the following ways:
 - Ensure that at least 40% of materials on syllabi are by Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and other minoritized groups;
 - List one or more learning objectives that are anti-racist;

- Perform anti-bias audits of course materials, assignments, and teaching practices;
 - Annually attend trainings and workshops held by ODEI;
 - Annually participate in anti-racist trainings such as [a 21-day racial equity challenge](#).
 - In addition to the above support, providing trainings (beginning July 2020) for faculty on antiracist pedagogy and related implementation;
 - Compiling anti-oppressive resources for faculty and students.
 - Questioning how our scholarship and research perpetuates oppressive conditions by using theoretical and methodological norms that are WEIRD (White, educated, industrialized, rich, and developed) biased.
- 2. Provide support to our current students, prospective students, and alumni by:**
- Creating reading and discussion groups to learn more about anti-racism and privilege;
 - Continue to educate faculty and staff on anti-oppressive pedagogies and practices, such as anti-bias training and inter group relations trainings, to ensure that we recognize and respond appropriately when students report racism and other acts of prejudice to us;
 - Engaging in community-building that strives to de-center Whiteness as the norm;
- 3. Continue to provide local, regional, and national outreach that is focused on raising critical consciousness and redressing systemic oppression, such as:**
- Partnering with on-campus organizations and student groups, such as the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI), the Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA), the Center for Faith and Learning, LEVEL, and Special Olympics; teaching Inter Group Relations (IGR) courses; sharing our diversity-related expertise with other departments and colleges through workshops, trainings, and related presentations; organizing events like the African-American Read In and participating in the Freedom School.
 - Building partnership and support within our communities, including Radnor Township, Upper Darby, Haverford Township, and Norristown.
 - Continuing our efforts to raise consciousness of diversity issues in partnership with community and professional organizations, such as existing one with:
 - Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity;
 - The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth;
 - The National Board for Certified Counselors Foundation Clinical Mental Health Minority Fellows Program;
 - Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development;
 - The Havertown-Area Community Action Network; and the
 - Children’s Literature Assembly for the National Council of Teachers of English.

All people deserve to be seen as fully human and not defined by a single narrative - of being less-than, of being damaged. We intend to confront deficit frameworks and assimilationist education that is White-centered and rooted in White supremacy. Moreover, as we act, we will think beyond the Black-White racial divide to reflect on the interconnectedness of other systems of oppression (e.g., patriarchy, Christian hegemony, homophobia, etc.). Believing that we can “fix” racism without considering how it is woven into our historical roots and contemporary world is no better than putting a band aid on a broken bone. We are committed to moving beyond empty rhetoric and will confront our individual and collective discomfort in order to move toward more a just and equitable society.