

To the Meredith Community,

On August 24, I shared a progress report from our first month's work on the College-wide Anti-Racism Initiative launched in July. In that message, I promised to provide regular updates with the community. Since my last email update to you, we have made progress in several areas, including anti-racism training, addressing our history, and reviewing policies and procedures.

Our board-led task force on Historical Context and Naming, in coordination with the work of our faculty and staff in the national consortium of Universities Studying Racism, are working to guide discussions and, ultimately, decisions about the past and present of the College's relationship to racism and any evidence of redemption pertaining to the names of buildings.

In addition, here are a few more highlights from our recent work.

Anti-Racism Training

One of the most important steps we can take in becoming a more equitable campus is to educate ourselves on what "systemic racism" actually is, why and how it has been perpetuated in our country, how to recognize and eradicate it on our campus, and how to be actively anti-racist in all spheres of our lives. We are building on the anti-racism training sessions held for the Administrative Management Council in 2019-20 and prior to the start of the Fall 2020 semester for faculty and staff by launching a series of anti-racism discussion groups, led by our own faculty and staff.

Later this week, the rest of Meredith's Executive Leadership Team and I will participate in the [Racial Equity Institute](#)'s two-day Phase 1 workshop, which is designed to further develop our understanding of racism in its institutional and structural forms. While there is no one workshop that contains all of the answers for how to eradicate racism, we expect to come away from this renowned workshop with a better understanding of how we can make Meredith a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

Reviewing Policies and Procedures

A student-focused group on student conduct, the honor code, residence life, and other aspects of the student experience and racism has recently formed and begun its work. This group will review these policies and environments in the context of equity and accountability. Our Office of Human Resources has also begun leading a review of Meredith's recruiting and hiring practices and evaluating them for inclusivity; reviewing the employee handbook for clear processes for reporting incidents of racism or bias; and outlining consequences for employees who exhibit racist behaviors.

Campus Climate Survey

We are two weeks away from putting the Campus Climate survey in the field at Meredith, and we hope to have strong participation and response rates for this anonymous survey. The data we will get from the survey is one of the most powerful tools we have to understand and ultimately address in a lasting way the issues of racism here at Meredith. The survey is open for current employees, students, and

alumnae/i of the past 10 years in the hopes of aggregating dominant trends and experiences that will guide future direction and action.

Diversifying the Academic Experience

Some of Meredith's academic programs have already begun the process of further diversifying their course offerings. For example, after listening to the concerns and desires of students in the program, the music department has committed to revising its music history curriculum to include a global music component and to include more marginalized musicians through readings, research projects, and papers. This year's Arts and Humanities Common Experience is focused on the theme of Belonging and is making programming available to all students highlighting the collective experience of marginalized students and the steps that can be taken to achieve greater belonging for all members of the Meredith community. Faculty members Amie Hess, Shannon Gravelle, and Ali Howell are also leading twice monthly sessions aimed at helping faculty make their curricula more inclusive and equitable.

Anti-Racism Initiative Resources

Since launching the web page for [Meredith's Campus-Wide Anti-Racism Initiative](#) last month, we have been working to make more anti-racism resources available to the Meredith community. Several friends of the college and advocates for anti-racism, including our dean of Arts and Humanities, have worked with faculty and staff members to compile a list of anti-racism resources for faculty, staff, and students that will soon be available on our intranet, MyMeredith.

As we work through the multiplicity of elements of anti-racism, we are committed to using the aggregated information, data, stories, and other evidence of discrimination to shape a stronger future. We intend to hire a permanent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion officer to help teach and enhance the principles and practices of anti-racism throughout Meredith College.

This is not simple or fast work. We must be thoughtful and thorough in this initiative, and we will continue building on this work throughout the year and well beyond. Thank you to all who are working together in this effort to make Meredith a better place for students, faculty, and staff of color. If you want to help, please encourage responses to the Campus Climate Survey, send a message about your own experiences or opinions to anti-racismupdates@meredith.edu, or [make a gift](#) to our fund for our Campus-wide Initiative on Anti-Racism through the Office of Institutional Advancement).

Sincerely,

Jo Allen, '80
President

sent 9/21/20