

IDGP Action Items

The Interdepartmental Graduate Programs (IDGPs) at UMass recognize the urgent need to address the issue of systemic racism within our society. We are outraged by the murder of George Floyd, and by all racist acts. We applaud the efforts that our students are taking to hold our community accountable, and to demand engagement and change. Witnessing the worldwide protests for social justice gives us hope that this is a pivotal moment. We are committed to being part of the much-needed change and pledge to work to make our community an equitable, inclusive and diverse place.

IDGP students from each of the four interdepartmental programs are gathering to identify and implement plans of action. We support you and applaud your commitment and efforts. As an administrative unit, the *IDGPs pledge to work to coordinate these important efforts and provide financial support moving forward.*

1. IDGPs affirm our support and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in thoughtful and clear statements displayed on our websites and links to resources at UMass and beyond. We will work with all our faculty to include DEI statements, and links to resources, on their individual laboratory websites as well.
2. We will strongly encourage faculty to have conversations with their lab groups and mentees to openly discuss racism, to listen to their group members, and to open lines of communication so that Black students feel welcome and supported. We will mentor and train faculty to support these efforts. We will make use of the resources at UMass and beyond to move forward to end racism (<https://www.umass.edu/diversity>).
3. IDGPs will work with program leaders and individual PIs to recognize and ameliorate the emotional toll and burden that racism has placed on Black students.
4. We believe that education is a key tool to change deeply ingrained societal patterns. We will strongly encourage IDGP faculty to attend training, offered by UMass and CNS, to learn about racism and white privilege. We will encourage all members of the IDGP community to make use of the resources for learning about systematic racism
https://www.umass.edu/newsoffice/article/taking-action-umass-amherst-combat-racism?_ga=2.233108062.1756088.1594051197-101158792.1425071003
<https://www.umass.edu/diversity/antiracism-resources>
5. We will strongly encourage that all incoming IDGP students receive training in DEI, including participation in an [OPD](#) workshop on implicit bias and TA training in DEI.
6. IDGPs will coordinate efforts and provide financial support to *recruit, retain and support Black graduate students.*

Recruitment: These activities include, but are not limited to, visits to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other institutions in the New England area; and a strong UMass

presence at meetings for underrepresented young scientists including SACNAS, ABRCMS, MANRRS, and NOBCChE, in addition to others. We will provide a diversity panel for prospective students as part of our recruiting events. We will coordinate with existing graduate training programs on recruiting efforts and work with the Graduate School on the issue of fees associated with the graduate school application process. We will develop programs to provide relocation assistance for incoming students in need for all 4 IDGPs.

Retention: We are committed to supporting black students from matriculation to graduation. Our efforts will include, but are not limited to, collecting data on retention and time to degree and developing mechanisms to provide funds to facilitate research progress for students in need. We will expand existing near-peer mentoring activities, specifically by using the model of Mutual Mentoring groups to provide support to IDGP students. We are committed to not only initiate and expand retention efforts but also to evaluate, improve and modify these activities as needed. We will survey our Black students to gather input and feedback that we can and will use to improve our programming going forward.

7. IDGPs provide the financial support for seminar series within each program. We will convene a working group to assess, promote and monitor diversity in all of our seminar series each semester. We pledge to support at least one BRiDGE seminar within each program's seminar series. We will **initiate a new IDGP wide seminar series** devoted specifically to the topic of Social Justice in STEM. Social justice seminars will occur within existing program seminar series. We believe that exposure to these important topics is a fundamental tool for educating our entire community.

Our faculty working group is committed to work with the entire IDGP community - students, leaders, faculty - to create a supportive atmosphere for our Black students and to eliminate systemic racism in all its forms.

Faculty working group:

Madelaine Bartlett, Ted Castro-Santos, Kirby Deater-Deckard, Scott Garman, Sam Hazen, Li-Jun Ma, Tom Maresca, Jennifer McDermott, Sarah Pallas, Maureen Perry-Jenkins, Shelly Peyton, Luke Ramage-Healy, David Sela, Lynmarie Thompson, Pat Wadsworth, Paige Warren