

Equity and Anti-Racism Draft Framework for Action 2020-2021  
November 3, 2020  
Submitted to the Community by Kim Cassidy

Over the course of the past few months, members of the Bryn Mawr community have unified their voices in a call for action around equity and anti-racism. This draft document lays out a working plan for action priorities framed in principles of anti-racism. While this action document comes from me, I want to emphasize the labor of so many people who have made critical contributions to it, both directly and through their participation in community gatherings. I welcome continuing discussion, input, and revision as we move forward.

The work of equity and inclusion is not new to the College. This current action plan builds on [prior work](#) and also is informed by places where this work has fallen short.

Evidence-based research demonstrates that a critical part of individual and group success is a sense of belonging and feeling included as part of the community. BIPOC students deserve consistent recognition as full members of the community instead of limited and symbolic representation that feels like tokenism. Bryn Mawr is responsible for ensuring that all groups have that same support by proactively acknowledging and celebrating all its community members' academic, professional, and cultural contributions.

I hope that we can use this moment to move together, in generous collaboration, to identify and take immediate actions and longer-term approaches that will make a difference to our BIPOC students, faculty, and staff. Administrators, staff, and faculty have needed, and will continue to need, community input to prioritize actions and to ensure that change occurs throughout the institution. Concentrating our efforts will create meaningful and sustainable change.

It is important to remember that “the College” is all of us. No one person, group, or department can achieve this level of transformation. We all must participate. That said, it is critical that the labor not fall to our BIPOC colleagues and other people of color who have already given so much to advance this institution.

Over the past several weeks, faculty, staff, and student members of the Campaign for Anti-Racist Literacy at Bryn Mawr College (CARLA) have worked to draft a Framework for Anti-Racist Work. We acknowledge and are grateful for their commitment and contributions.

The principles of CARLA’s anti-racist framework help to organize the priorities for action we have set this year, as have issues articulated in the June 2020 Open Letter to the Bi-Co Community and in the Community Forums on Anti-Racism held this summer. We have sought to focus our resources of time, energy, and funding by setting priorities—resisting the impulse to try to speak to all issues, and instead directing those resources to achieve meaningful progress and impact.

Principle 1: Name racism that exists structurally at Bryn Mawr.

- The President’s Office will continue to implement recommendations of the History Working Groups. Specific projects include support for student “[telling histories](#)” projects, further development of the institutional history website, installation of the first stage of the “People Who Built Bryn Mawr” that makes visible the previously invisible contributions of a diverse group of people who have made Bryn Mawr, and continued exploration of a memorial project to those excluded from the College in its earlier history (possibly in conjunction with the Philadelphia Mural Arts Project). It is important that the telling of the College’s history include more recent histories as well.

**TIMELINE:** History website and student project support ongoing. People Who Built Bryn Mawr first installation up by Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>. Decision on memorial plan by May 28<sup>th</sup> by the President in consultation with the History Advisory Group.

- As of fall 2020, the Black at Bryn Mawr Tour is now required for all first-year students as part of THRIVE, as is a mandatory session on inclusion, identity and belonging. Many academic and administrative departments have participated in the tour as well. The Pensby Center will continue to support this all-campus engagement with the tour.

**TIMELINE:** Ongoing.

- The President’s Office, the Pensby Center, and the Communications Office will collaborate to create a centralized part of the website that increases the visibility and amplifies the significance of evolving work to build antiracist practice and advance equity so that it is more transparent to the community.

**TIMELINE:** Website launched by December 17<sup>th</sup>.

- The Bias Response Team will continue to revise its process for [reporting and addressing incidents of bias](#). This work will include educating the community about the processes available, providing avenues for difficult conversations and honest dialogue, as well as providing additional information about how reported incidences are addressed and resolved.

**TIMELINE:** Revisions are ongoing. Yearly report in May 2021.

Principle 2: Recognize racism as a central underlying condition/ organizer in society and at the College that impedes equity.

- All academic and administrative departments will participate in departmental education and work on racism, anti-racism, and equity. The Provost’s Office in consultation with faculty will develop opportunities for training or other forms of work for academic departments. The Senior Staff in consultation with members of

the Diversity Leadership Group will create opportunities for administrative departments. The College will provide both internal and outside resources in terms of facilitators, trainings, or other guidance, and will ask all department leaders to report on efforts and outcomes. Departments will have the opportunity for outside assessment and will be encouraged to include stakeholders in their learning and/or assessment. For academic departments, this work will be the basis of the yearly departmental assessment plans and reports for the Provost's Office, as a way to tap into existing campus work. It is important to note that many departments across the campus have already taken the initiative to engage in this work, and that these efforts will be iterative over time.

**TIMELINE:** Discussion, planning, and pilot efforts Academic Year 2021.

- With students, the Provost, Faculty, and Deans will discuss how we can make understanding racism and white supremacy a requirement of every student's education beyond the THRIVE course. Possible ideas range from a required course on Blackness and white privilege to a version of THRIVE that extends through senior year, to a special speaker to start each academic year to intentional spaces for facilitated discussion where all students are required to participate.

**TIMELINE:** Proposals discussed Spring 2021. Implementation timing will depend on scale and resource needs.

Principles 3 and 6: Dismantle structures that perpetuate and normalize white supremacy. Challenge and transform histories and structures that slow or reverse change, and value work that advances equity.

- Intensify efforts to hire faculty of color, especially BIPOC faculty, with particular focus on STEM fields. The Provost in collaboration with the Committee on Appointments will examine and revise our hiring processes and procedures to support this goal. They also will work together to recommend strategies to support and sustain these faculty members throughout their careers.

**TIMELINE:** Ongoing, but first proposed set of initial revisions by May 2021.

- The Provost and Committee on Appointments will review and revise the tenure and promotion process to:
  - Find ways to recognize contributions faculty under review for promotion make to advancing equity and anti-racism.  
**TIMELINE:** Ongoing
  - Find ways to recognize and reward the invisible labor that faculty of color give to mentoring and supporting BIPOC and FGLI students.  
**TIMELINE:** Ongoing

- The Provost’s Office will pilot a question on the course evaluation form that recognizes successful faculty work in creating inclusive and accessible classrooms.

**TIMELINE:** Will begin for Fall 2020.

- Establish a Racial Justice Impact Fund (initial fund \$10,000, fundraising ongoing) overseen by a committee including faculty, staff, and students and managed through the Civic Engagement Office—to provide fellowships and grants for undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff to pursue antiracist community engagement, service to organizations, and research that creates an impact beyond Bryn Mawr’s campus, as a mission-consistent way to contribute to anti-racist efforts in the broader community.

**TIMELINE:** Applications requested early Spring Semester 2021 for Spring and Summer 2021 projects.

- Support the work of campus groups advancing antiracist work, including CARLA and the Anti-Racism Committee (currently under discussion within the faculty), and empower these groups to collaborate with and help inform the larger work of the College.

**TIMELINE:** Ongoing.

Principle 4: Redress harm of existing structures:

- The President, Provost and members of the Faculty will plan and launch a pilot STEM bridge program to begin in Summer 2021. Create ways for the program to support STEM students beyond the first year through advising and mentoring.

**TIMELINE:** Initial funding secured. Director hired in Spring 2021. Program will occur beginning in Summer 2021.

- Expand the staffing of the Pensby Center to better support and advise BIPOC students.

**TIMELINE:** Position proposal and search Academic Year 2021. New staff to start Fall 2022.

- Using the new staff hiring handbook, Human Resources will work with departments filling open positions to build more diverse candidate pools, ensure equitable practices in reviewing and interviewing candidates, and in retaining employees once hired. The Senior Staff will continue its work to address the living wage and other forms of support for our lowest paid employees.

**TIMELINE:** Ongoing.

- The Board of Trustees will continue its work, launched in 2019-2020, to use a racial equity lens in identifying and appointing trustees, shaping committees' work, and stewarding the College's mission.

**TIMELINE:** Ongoing.

Principle 5: Redistribute power and resources:

- The Financial Aid Office and the Dean's Office will build on the increases to financial aid enacted in AY '20-21 to continue to address the financial pressures for students on financial aid. This work includes providing resources through the Dean's Emergency Fund and continuing to evaluate our approach to financial aid packages.

**TIMELINE:** Ongoing.

- The Provost's Office will support the continued development of the Africana Studies program (discussions ongoing). Discussion of developing a major is ongoing.

**TIMELINE:** Funding was increased for Academic Year 2021. Further requests for increases will be included in the Academic Year 2022 budget process in Spring 2021.

- The College will double current ECC funding to \$10,000; the Dean of the Undergraduate College will ensure an efficient, transparent mechanism for use of this funding.

**TIMELINE:** COMPLETED Fall 2020.

- Institute official College support of Black History Month. Provide administrative leadership from the ECC advisor, Conferences and Events, Communications, and the Director of the Pensby Center to support Sisterhood in the planning of events. Establish a dedicated budget of \$15,000 for a Black History Month speaker and related events.

**TIMELINE:** In-progress as of Fall 2020 for implementation for Black History month February 2021.

- Engage in community discussion of recognizing the histories of other communities of color.

**TIMELINE:** schedule discussions with AMO groups and gather community input during spring semester, and develop recommendation by May 2021.

- In collaboration with Black alumnae/i and alumnae/i of color, Alumnae/i Relations and Development has launched a fundraising effort for a fund that supports the professional and personal development of our Black students.

**TIMELINE:** COMPLETED Fall 2021. Fundraising is ongoing.

Assessment and accountability inspire progress, and having systems of regular assessment and accountability in place ensures we're measuring our progress against our principles and goals. Each priority names individual(s) or department(s) who will have responsibility for reporting on actions taken and measures of impact and/ or change. These assessments will be included in a final year-end report. In addition, at the end of the academic year, the College will conduct an assessment of the perception of impact of these specific actions on the lived experience of students, staff, and faculty through a campus-wide survey and through qualitative analysis.

NOTE: I had many important student, faculty and staff contributors to this plan. I am deeply grateful for their collaboration. I will acknowledge their contributions more fully in the final draft --- and when (or if) I have permission from the contributors.