NSM Faculty Pledge to Promote and Support Anti-Racist Practices Across the Division

Wesleyan University as a community is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion at all levels. Importantly, we are working to create a community that fosters growth and removes all barriers to success for all of its members. With sadness, we have watched events unfold this summer and speak the names of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and so many others to underscore that their lives had meaning and that their lives mattered. We can no longer be silent. We speak against injustice, we speak against racism, we speak against intolerance.

Events this summer and those in our collective past have shown us that there is much work to be done to build a just and equitable world for all inhabitants. We know that in our science and mathematics communities, there has been significant oppression of many different groups, Black and brown individuals, women, those of different abilities and many others. We recognize that science has been used as a tool of oppression and that barriers that deny equal opportunity for all individuals to study science and math have been erected. We, in the Natural and Mathematical Sciences, reiterate our commitment to improving our community in terms of welcoming all individuals, ensuring everyone's right to be heard and everyone's right to pursue their passion, wherever it might lead them. We recognize that all of us must work towards the change that we want to see, including breaking down all barriers that prevent the participation of each and every person in our scientific enterprise of creativity, learning and discovery.

To effect long-standing alterations to the systems and structures that lead to racism, inequity and injustice, we begin within our own community. We commit to the following actions as a first step towards mitigating the structural barriers that lead to the promotion of one group or gender over another.

We commit to:

1. **Educating ourselves and others in these issues and fully understanding the perspective of marginalized voices.** To fully support students in our role as mentors, we need to be cognizant and understanding of their various experiences. We will use this knowledge to improve our mentoring and help our students be successful to their fullest extent. We are building an Inclusion in STEM website which has an online repository of materials focusing on equity issues in our classrooms, and on our faculty. This is an active, ongoing repository, please forward your contributions. Original materials compiled by Alison Williams, '81, VP of Equity and Inclusion.

2. **Acknowledging and understanding our own biases, implicit and explicit.** To identify these biases in ourselves, one option might be to take at least one implicit association test. https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html. Other options relate to educating ourselves in implicit bias, such as written about here:

https://www.aafp.org/fpm/2019/0700/p29.html. This knowledge and identification of our own biases will facilitate our work towards building a community without bias.

3. **Achieving real change within our community and working towards equity of all groups.** To do this, we need to know the composition of our community and identify the areas with the largest amounts of bias. We ask that the university provide annual statistics on the success of our students broken down in terms of the groups who have traditionally been marginalized (e.g. BIPOC, women, first generation, low income). Thus, we request enrollment information in 100- and 200-level introductory science and math courses by demographic breakdown and subsequent longitudinal information on course completion, enrollment in advanced courses and declaration of science majors. We particularly seek this information to understand who is not progressing in our fields; to identify and repair the holes in our 'leaky pipeline.'

4. **Providing a space for all voices.** We ask for the creation of science ombudspeople (students and/or staff), who will be available to students to discuss experiences in classes and labs, provide valuable guidance and steer students toward resources. These ombudspeople will provide an avenue for students to voice their concerns. Through these conversations we also hope to identify structures or systems that particularly disadvantage underrepresented groups. Comments will be aggregated anonymously to ensure that there are no repercussions for voicing concerns.

5. **Creating a Safe Space for all.** We ask for training of faculty and staff members in bystander interventions that provide individuals with the confidence to step up and say something when they witness something, such as a microaggression or more blatant racist, sexist, ableist or xenophobic comments. Similar trainings should be available for students and it is important to note that anyone - students, faculty or staff - can be the bad actors in these situations. We think such trainings are appropriately facilitated through the offices of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs and Equity and Inclusion.

6. **Highlighting the voices of the underrepresented.** Ask that each NSM department host at least one seminar each semester that features a member of an underrepresented group (e.g. BIPOC, women) to illustrate the great work being done by these marginalized voices and provide appropriate role models for all students. We will also bring in more speakers and host more events centered on educating everyone in the scientific literature of bias to illustrate that science has biases and is not solely a meritocracy.

7. **Ensuring our TAs are a representative, diverse group.** We will work to include TAs from all underrepresented groups in our courses, each year. We encourage instructors to use the form developed by the NSM coalition as one means of removing bias and we also encourage instructors to recognize that there are many dimensions of a student that

would make them an excellent TA (communication skills, approachability, potential as a role model, etc), beyond solely their numerical performance in a course.

8. **Valuing everyone's efforts to promote diversity and combat bias.** We ask that Academic Affairs explicitly values (at promotion and in merit review) the unpaid and heavy burden of "work" that falls disproportionately onto the shoulders of URM faculty including but not limited to: 1 – being informal advisors to URM students; 2 – being advocates for proper treatment of students; 3 – attending conferences/workshops/trainings to support POC or to help combat bias; 4 – being a member of many different university committees to ensure that the committees have representation from all groups.

9. **Hiring more faculty and staff members who are BIPOC** (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). Through our participation on hiring committees and other venues, we will ensure that considerations of diversity and representation are included in any decision-making process. Once hired, we will support these individuals to the fullest extent possible to ensure their success at Wesleyan.

10. **Arranging more conversations for students to voice their concerns.** Although these conversations are difficult, they provide an important mechanism for marginalized voices to be heard and help faculty and staff members to understand the challenges that some of our students face. (Note: CIS plans to organize and host such an event in the Fall semester.)

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