

## Department of Linguistics Racial Justice Statement

We in the linguistics department are raising our voices in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and protestors across the U.S. We must stand together and speak out against the dehumanization of and violence against Black people by police.

We believe Linguistics has a lot to offer in fighting and organizing against anti-Blackness, both in outreach and understanding the power of language in racial justice and the discourse surrounding it. At the same time, we recognize the importance of acknowledging the systemic anti-Blackness that has pervaded and influenced both the history of our discipline and the U.S.

We recognize that the makeup and activities of this department do not currently center the experiences and interests of Black lives and language to the degree they should. It's important to us that our department is not only a welcoming place for everyone, intolerant of discrimination, but that we are actively working to dismantle power structures that serve to discriminate against underrepresented populations. Inspired by the [LSA's statement on race](#), in the coming year we will increase efforts and officially, systemically prioritize specific actions that reflect these values and beliefs:

- Strengthen our curriculum by revising our undergraduate and graduate syllabi to reflect the [diversity of voices in the field](#). We believe this is essential to our core curriculum and extends beyond the courses that center language diversity and power structure. In addition to the voices of researchers and communities, we will continue to promote language diversity in our courses.
- We continue to identify creative pathways of support for students of diverse backgrounds to participate in our department, thrive in it, and shape it to the benefit of themselves, their communities, and their careers. Our faculty and staff have worked very closely with prospective students from disadvantaged, underrepresented backgrounds to overcome barriers (logistic, financial, and otherwise) to come study with us, and to support them in carrying out the courses of study that are meaningful to them.
- Yearly climate survey questionnaires sent to graduate students, faculty, and staff. The survey will be followed by transparent reporting of the results and accessibility to resources for graduate students, faculty, and staff.



- Promoting critical dialogues and activities that raise awareness and support for inclusive behavior. In particular, we will schedule events such as [Rehearsals for Life](#) which aids in expanding bystander interventions and addressing department climate. We will also discuss, engage with, and model after works and initiatives regarding anti-racism in Linguistics, such as those by [Dr. Anne H. Charity-Hudley](#).
- Frequent review of our departmental [Diversity Action Plan](#), which outlines our departmental goals and actions each year. We will also review our committee makeup and department progress toward action items.
- Systemic problems require systemic support in order to be addressed. While resources everywhere are scarce, we are more directly allocating resources to address the systemic problem of under-resourced efforts to support marginalized individuals and groups. Further, we are prioritizing seeking out additional resources to back up the actions we have committed to regarding the dedication to diversity and inclusion at the department, college, and university levels.

While we reflect on the actions we as a department can take in this time, we urge everyone who shares an interest in Linguistics to reflect on actions you as individuals can take to continue to fight for justice.

We implore you to be conscientious of the ways the language used by the media, politicians, and individuals around you can reflect and perpetuate biases against those already disadvantaged and/or fighting for justice. You have learned in your education several ways our biases about society manifest through language, particularly in covert and coded ways. Anti-Blackness adversely affects the ways in which Black people are discussed, and the ways in which the language of Black people gets perceived and judged. We hope you take this knowledge, and the skills you have developed, to speak out against injustice and continue to be mindful of your language within your own dialogues.

Linguistics Diversity Committee  
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