

Statement by the Faculty of the Department of Anthropology In Solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement

The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology at Grinnell College share in the outrage over the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks and so many other Black and Brown people. We vehemently affirm that Black Lives Matter and support the Black Lives Matter movement.

We affirm that, in spite of the fact that race and racial hierarchies are a biological myth, as a social construct race categories have held – and continue to hold – enormous power in our society. White supremacist and other racist views are deeply embedded in our society and the institutions we have created, including but not limited to our criminal justice system. Our institutions have functioned to systematically disadvantage and oppress those identified as Black, Brown and Indigenous, decreasing access to education, health, and wealth while simultaneously increasing surveillance, arrests, incarceration and state sanctioned physical and structural violence.

We recognize that it is not enough to affirm that Black Lives Matter. We bear responsibility as individuals, as an institution, and as a discipline. We accept that our everyday choices and interactions, the policies and practices of Grinnell College, and the discipline of anthropology have been and continue to be implicated in systematic racism.

We call on our leaders in institutions across the country to implement anti-racist policies and dismantle these systems of oppression. We commit to working with the college administration, faculty, staff, and students to further this process at Grinnell.

We further commit to work harder to support and promote anti-racism and dismantle white supremacy in our own department through a close examination of our own syllabi and curriculum. This includes:

- Decolonizing our syllabi and providing greater representation of Black, Brown and Indigenous scholars.
- Ensuring that our curriculum teaches students to recognize and understand underlying aspects of systematic racism, as well as preparing them to engage in individual and collective action to help create a more just society. This includes teaching on:

- The lack of a scientific basis for race.
- How race evolved as a social construction.
- Multiple ways in which power, hierarchy, and identity shape social interactions and its implications for human lives.
- An appreciation for cultural diversity.
- How social change comes about and how anthropology can contribute to exposing inequality and injustice and bringing about change.