

### Graduate Student Responses:

As a white person in defense of black lives, I recognize the need to proactively be anti-racist: listen to our leaders of color, put our bodies on the line, and invest in black people and organizations. I call on Astronomy and Physics departments across the country to invest in anti-racism by recruiting, admitting, empowering, and listening to their black faculty, staff and students. -- *Jacqueline Goldstein*

I am a minority in some ways, but still **far** more privileged than any black person in our country and have to use the power I have to protect and advocate for black lives - everyone else should at least do the same **and** more. -- *Dhanesh Krishnarao (DK)*

The cruelty committed against Black people is not confined to the physical brutality inflicted in the streets: academia perpetrates its own violence by excluding Black people from these backgrounds from careers in science. A refusal by the powerful & privileged decision-makers within colleges & universities to address the systemic barriers impeding access to careers in science is to commit an injustice. To **dismiss** this or to **decline to act** is a **choice to continue committing violence**. -- *Zach Pace*

On top of the horror of George Floyd's murder, it's been salt in the wound for me to realize that our nominally progressive, forward-thinking University system, city government, and state leadership seem to be silent at best (and hostile at worst) in the face of unchecked police brutality and state-sanctioned racism. I can only hope that our Astronomy department, as well as our partners in Physics, will take a stand in the coming days, months, and years to denounce and combat injustice. -- *Logan Jones*

I wholeheartedly condemn the savage actions of the police officers that murdered George Floyd and the countless other acts of police brutality leading up to this event and those that have occurred since. We are long overdue for dismantling the systemic oppression of non-white persons in the United States and I am committed to taking actions in line with this cause. -- *Rachel McClure*

We all live in a community where 5.5% of the population is Black while 50% of the jail population is Black, and work in a department whose grad student populace has zero Black people and has become overwhelmingly white and male-dominated over the past few years. I firmly believe that if we in this department care about Black lives, we will meet this movement not with silence and inaction, but with every action in our power to create a community and a department that is actively anti-racist. -- *Melissa Morris*

As someone who's had many of my childhood friends arrested, killed, or otherwise destroyed by the cruelty of our racist justice system, it's become impossible for me to remain silent about the latest string of wanton murders of Black and Brown Americans by police. I will use my platform as a scientist to stand with #BlackLivesMatter and all their proposed policies, to advocate for the complete reconstruction of our broken justice system, and to demand UW divest from its police department into essential programs. -- *Aaron Lopez*

"White silence is violence."-Unknown. Academics, tenured academics in particular, need to acknowledge their role in perpetuating the exclusion of Black people within their academic circles, and begin to actively, vocally fight against it. According to the APS, between 2013 and 2017 four Black people were awarded PhDs in Astronomy. Just four. P.S. Defund the systemically racist organization that is the police. -- *Kendall Hall*

Systemic racism is more than just the targeted violence of our society that destroys the lives and communities of people of color; it also includes the explicit and implicit biases we bring when making decisions from a position of power that limit the opportunities for people of color because of the color of their skin. One-time policy changes and performative support are not sufficient anymore. Generational problems require sustained efforts to change. We need to call out and fix these injustices when we see them, especially when they come from ourselves. -- *Evan Linck*

As a person of privilege, I recognize the racist system I have benefitted from, and condemn the inaction of the white majority against the institutionalized racism which has resulted in so many atrocities against our Black populations. As an academic scientist, I refuse to believe we can be removed from the context of the society we live in. No more lip service--It is time for real action, in which we recruit, fund, mentor, publish, collaborate with, and promote the voices of Black scientists rather than excuse ourselves as "too busy" to make fundamental change. -- *Julie Davis*

"Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim."-Elie Wiesel. We cannot remain silent while black lives are in real danger. We must speak now to condemn the violence perpetrated against black and minority lives, and we must take definitive, devoted, and continuous action to dismantle oppressive structures in this department and the university as a whole, as well as to work towards equity and justice. -- *Andrew Nine*

This past week has again reminded us that, as a society, we have failed to adequately acknowledge, understand, and care about the inequalities endemic in all parts of modern society. We (especially those of us in privileged positions) need to work to

reform the unfair policing, economic, educational, social, and political systems that continue to afflict minority communities through our words and, far more importantly, through our actions. -- *Dan Rybarczyk*

The number of times I've feared for my life can be counted on one hand, maybe less. I can't truly imagine what it feels like to be a person of color under the current circumstances, but I **can** recognize my own white male privilege and **choose** to be anti-racist: to actively seek out and eliminate racist behavior in myself and those around me. I strive to exist in a future where **all** people are treated equally, a future where people of any race can live without the persistent fear of death. This is a basic necessity that some do not currently have. -- *Joshua Oppor*

The recent occurrences in the past weeks highlight long-persisting patterns throughout history indicative of fundamental disparities in American culture and society. We must support peaceful efforts to address these fundamental disparities and work toward crafting a brighter future. -- *Anthony Taylor*

As an indigenous woman, growing up on a reservation I witnessed many cases of injustice committed by police (the murder of a young boy, unwarranted arrests, unfair sentencing, among many others) and each time something happened I was appalled that the people who are meant to protect our community could commit such heinous acts against people of color. I stand in solidarity with the protests happening due to the murder of George Floyd, as I too want to see justice brought upon these officers and the reform of law enforcement; these crimes have happened far too many times. Only good can come from the Black Lives Matter movement and all minority groups need this change to happen if they are to survive because they won't without a change in the system. -- *Jennifer Stafford*

"We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe." -Frantz Fanon. As an Asian-Latinamerican who has also witnessed and experienced racist words and acts towards me, my family and friends, I stand in solidarity and in battle with Black North-Americans to fight against and put an end to the structural violence they've suffered throughout the history of this country, and in particular, by the police. I can and will use my position as a scientist to strive for the inclusion and recognition of Black people as scientists within academia, and rightful citizens within the U.S. society. -- *Francisco Ley*

As a white person of privilege, I recognize the need to be anti-racist in both my thoughts and the actions I take to help remove the barriers that come with systemic racism. We

cannot ignore the violence against the Black community nor can we ignore the inequity faced by Black people in academia, and I will use my position as a scientist to help create a more equitable department and university. -- *Catherine Witherspoon*

I believe that police in America are too violent, and that Black people are forced to bear the brunt of this violence. I believe the justice system has been twisted to allow for the continued violence of police forces to grow unchecked. I am privileged and white and can and have ignored problems that Black Americans have been marching and organizing against since before my grandparents were born. I believe this movement is a wakeup call to others like myself to among other things: read, donate, and educate those around me. I have felt uncomfortable these past few weeks and I believe that is the point. It is my moral duty to turn that discomfort into action for the rest of my life. -- *Ben Rosenwasser*

The tragedies and injustices we've witnessed over the past weeks, which are only the most recent incidents in a history of systematic violence, racism, and suppression extending back centuries, are a reminder that we must all use whatever power we've been given and whatever tools are available to us to improve our communities, our society, and the world, to bring them closer to the way they are meant to be. Intentions and words are good, but action is the main thing. -- *Teva Ilan*