

Dear Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning community,  
Cc: CUPA Dean Sy Adler and PSU President Percy

October 14th, 2020

We are writing in response to the “MURP Students and Alumni Action Letter” sent in July 2020 (and shared on our website [here](#)). We’re grateful to the lead authors and all the signatories, and to those who wrote us individually, for your engagement and for holding the Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning (TSUSP) accountable to our commitment to becoming an anti-racist institution. We appreciate the concerns raised and the effort to propose the action steps.

While the letter focuses on the experience of Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) students, many of the issues identified extend beyond the MURP program and echo assessments by students and faculty over the years (e.g., the CD program exit survey, report on focus groups with Students of Color in 2018, and feedback sent to the School-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [DEI] committee). Your advocacy aligns with and brings new urgency to our ongoing work, and points to some new areas where we need to assess and act. Our response must take care to address diversity, equity and inclusion in all of our programs, including the undergraduate Community Development major, Master of Urban and Regional Planning, and Master/PhD of Urban Studies programs, and programs in which we partner, including the Master of Real Estate Development. This is the work of all in our community--faculty, students alumni, community partners and employers--and it is work we are committed to with sustained effort and resources.

We agree that we need to do more and do better when it comes to working against racism within our School. Some recent faculty activities include:

- We have more clearly articulated reporting options for students [here](#).
- We have shared annual reports on the student demographics [here](#).
- In response to the [curriculum review done by the DEI committee in June 2020](#), individual faculty members have committed to diversifying their syllabi and taking other actions to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion in our teaching.
- To facilitate student collaboration and engagement, we provided a shared orientation for student members to all TSUSP committees, including practice bringing an equity lens to decision-making.

In our first faculty meeting this year, the TSUSP faculty--including the School director-- actively committed to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion in all of our work. This will involve actions by each curriculum committee (Undergraduate, MURP, and Urban Studies) as well as individualized work by faculty and staff. Moreover, a re-constituted DEI Committee will build upon our [existing DEI-related working goals and strategies](#) and develop a more comprehensive action plan, with clear leads and timelines. We as a faculty will also advocate for leadership and resources from PSU administration to advance this work.

We ask that students and alumni be collaborators in the school’s ongoing efforts to put anti-racism into practice. Because of the value we place on student contributions, virtually all committees in the School



have student members; we encourage these “reps” to work across committees and programs to bring the diversity of student experiences to decision-making in the School and to report back to students about the committees’ work. We also encourage student groups, such as Planning Club and [Students Addressing Urban & Community Issues \(SAUCI\)](#) to use their resources in support of collective learning on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Alumni and community partners can host [Portland Planning Diversity Award \(PPDA\) students](#), [contribute to](#) the Toulon School Diversity Fund that supports PPDA, and introduce us to new community partners whose perspectives have been underrepresented at the School.

Again, we thank you for your efforts in holding our School accountable. We are committed to being transparent in our ongoing efforts to becoming an anti-racist institution and will share communications and updates on the School’s website.

Sincerely,

Dr. Aaron Golub, TSUSP Director & Dr. Megan Horst, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Golub".

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Megan Horst".

And the TSUSP faculty (Our faculty has changed, including three new members! Check out the current list [here](#).)