

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

June 11th, 2021

We hope this letter finds you doing well. We are writing to members of the Toulon School of Urban Studies and Planning community with an update on our efforts on anti-racism. In fall 2020, [we shared this letter](#) (follow the link to access), which was in part a response to the “MURP Students and Alumni Action Letter” sent in July 2020 (and shared on our website [here](#)). In that letter we described a plan to tackle the important issues raised by the MURP students. While we have made progress on some of our efforts, we have much work still to do.

Here some things we are really proud of:

- Our MURP program is widely recognized as a leading program in the United States for equity planning and racial justice. Equity and social justice is one of the primary MURP student learning outcomes and embedded across the curriculum. Equity and social justice are also key values in the Community Development and Urban Studies programs.
- Our [Portland Planning Diversity Award](#) (including the [Tony Lamb Racial Justice Fellowship Fund](#)) supports students from under-represented backgrounds to attend our MURP program.
- We have perhaps the most racially diverse faculty in US planning schools. [Check us out.](#)
- Our faculty (including our two newest faculty members, Dr. Julius McGee and Dr. Corbin) pursue research that focuses on equity and social justice and urban areas, including the theory and practice of equity planning, and on issues of houselessness, gentrification, climate justice, environmental justice, food justice, transportation justice, and more. [Check out some of our recent publications here.](#)
- TSUSP was able to hire one new faculty member and bring in another from another department - both with a strong focus on racial equity and urbanization. CUPA’s dean and several TSUSP faculty advocated to PSU administration to waive the budget freeze to proceed with one of the hires.
- [See more about how our School prioritizes equity and social justice on this page.](#)

And yet, we can do better. In fall, we committed to do more when it comes to working against racism, and towards greater social justice and equity, within our School. The Belonging, Justice and Dignity committee developed [a more transparent spreadsheet of our School priorities, activities, and outcomes here](#). Below are some details and highlights of the things our School committees have been working this past academic year 2020-21:

Belonging, Justice, and Dignity committee (previously the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee). Members of the core committee include: Dr. Megan Horst (chair), Dr. Aaron Golub (ex-officio), Dr. Kacy McKinney, Dr. Ozcan Tunalilar, Natalie Chavez (MURP student representative), Minji Cho (Urban Studies student representative), and Valeria Tapia/Isaiah Jackman (Undergraduate Representative). Liaison members include: Dr. C.N.E. Corbin (MURP Executive), Dr. Jenny Liu (Undergrad Executive), and Dr. Julius McGee (Urban Studies Executive).

- We renamed our committee to better align with our values and intention. We also re-organized our committee to have greater faculty participation (including liaisons from the Executive Committees), stronger connections across the School, and participation by the School Director.
- We clearly articulate reporting options for students [here](#). We have received feedback from about five unique individuals this past academic year, and acted in response to each piece of feedback.

- As a follow-up to the [curriculum review done by the DEI committee in June 2020](#) and to ongoing calls by students, Dr. Kacy McKinney is facilitating a Community of Practice, a group of seven TSUSP faculty members focused on course revisions focused on anti-racism and inclusive pedagogy. The Community of Practice will also invite a group of students from across our programs to provide feedback on these courses during the Spring 2021 term.

Faculty Evaluation Committee. Members include: Dr. Greg Schrock (chair), Dr. Jennifer Dill, Dr. Connie Ozawa, and Dr. Liming Wang.

- The Faculty Evaluation Committee worked with the DEI committee to revise the student course evaluation forms used in TSUSP courses, adding two DEI-related questions and language at the top of the form reminding students about implicit bias based on race, gender and age as they rate their instructors. FEC will work with the School Director and the BJD committee to review the results of these evaluations and relate that information to program committees as appropriate.

Undergraduate Executive Committee. Members include: Dr. Moriah McSharry McGrath (chair), Dr. Jenny Liu, Dr. Gerry Sussman, BreAna Loranger (student representative) and Tayler Blasko (student representative).

- The Glasper West Memorial Leadership Award was established in 2020 to honor the special contributions of Glasper West to the Community Development program and larger community. This award supports Community Development undergraduate students who are building connections among CD students in and outside the classroom, embody inclusiveness positivity and are committed to investing in communities of color, particularly Black/African American communities.
- In terms of the CD curriculum...
 - we worked on revising CD major student learning outcomes with a strong focus on racial justice and intersecting identities
 - we have revised the major elective list to include more courses that center experiences of communities of color and build intercultural competence/anti-racism skills
 - the committee has approved study abroad options (both in-person and online) to increase intercultural competence
 - we have initiated course name changes to address concerns and to highlight course content that address social and racial justice issues such as gentrification
- To further support our diverse undergraduate student body...
 - we are increasing one-on-one outreach for majors to support student success
 - we are developing a handbook to empower students to navigate through the program and find support resources
 - we are piloting permanently remote delivery of USP460 (Community Development Field Seminar) to facilitate participation by students with diverse needs and living situations

MURP Executive Committee. Members include: Dr. Jennifer Dill (chair), Dr. Corbin, Dr. Greg Schrock (ex-officio), Natalie Knowles (student representative), and Ariel Kane (student representative).

- The Committee asked all regular faculty teaching in the MURP core courses to incorporate Student Learning Outcome (SLO) 1 Planning for Equity and Social Justice into their core course(s). To further that goal the committee reached out to all faculty and instructors teaching MURP core courses to assess how the SLO was currently being incorporated and ask if faculty need assistance in incorporating the SLO.
 - All survey respondents indicated they either have or plan to incorporate SLO 1 in their course learning objectives and content. However, the survey also revealed that all but three core courses only address SLO 1 at an “introductory” level. As a result, the Committee is mapping out a strategy for scaffolded and progressive learning on SLO 1

throughout the program. One option being explored is introducing a new core course specifically addressing equity and social justice, which would provide an introduction to core concepts allowing other courses to expect a base-level of knowledge and engage students in higher-level discussions and learning. This will be on the committee's agenda for AY21-22.

- Two other survey results of note include materials (e.g. readings, videos, websites, etc.) and assessments. Regarding the former, the Committee is working to provide students, as well as other faculty, a clearer listing of materials used in each course via more complete syllabi or materials lists and exploring approaches to creating a shared database of materials on equity and social justice for faculty and instructors to use in their courses. Regarding the latter, nearly all respondents requested assistance developing better assessments for facilitating and gauging student learning on SLO 1. The Committee is working to plan a workshop on assessment and rubrics for Fall 2021.
- The Committee agrees that USP 540 is an important course for addressing racial equity. The Committee will focus effort on the increasing coverage of SLO 1 in the course once a new permanent instructor is identified.
- The Committee asked the faculty in the fields to review courses in the pathways to see how SLO 1 can be incorporated into those courses.
- The Committee is working on new pathway options that include Black Studies and the School of Gender Race and Nations (SGRN). We expect to finalize these next year, after SGRN hires new faculty which will likely change and expand course offerings. In the interim, we will suggest that students work with their advisor and use courses from the graduate certificate in GRN for a pathway.

Urban Studies Executive Committee: Members include: Dr. Liming Wang (chair), Dr. Julius McGee, Dr. Connie Ozawa (ex-officio), Dr. Vivek Shandas, Heather Bartlett, (MUS student representative) and Lauren Everett, (PhD student representative).

- The committee discussed the GRE requirement in the MUS/PhD applications and its inherent inequitable nature, as it may deter underrepresented applicants & becomes a barrier to education. The removal of GRE requirement for MUS and PhD application was approved in the committee and subsequently by the faculty.

The Toulan School as a whole. Current School Director: Dr. Aaron Golub.

- We adopted a policy to enable students to access department funds to offer stipends to participants (especially those from systematically oppressed backgrounds) in MURP Workshop and thesis/dissertation projects.
- We adopted a policy to compensate guest speakers from under-resourced organizations such as non-profit and community-based organizations.
- We will be reviewing and likely adopting an equity lens to apply to all School decisions.

We acknowledge that the work will be ongoing in the years ahead. We continue, like we did in our fall 2020 letter, to ask that students and alumni be collaborators in the school's ongoing efforts to put anti-racism into practice. We encourage student representatives on our committees to apply an equity lens to their engagement. 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 Toulan School Diversity Fund](#) that supports PPDA, and introduce us to new community partners whose perspectives have been underrepresented at the School. Please contact us with your further ideas!

We are committed to being transparent in our ongoing efforts to becoming an anti-racist institution. See the School's website pages [here](#) and [here](#) for ongoing updates and for ways to contact us.

Sincerely,

Dr. Aaron Golub, TSUSP Director & Dr. Megan Horst, Belonging, Justice, and Dignity (formerly Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) Committee Chair
And the TSUSP faculty