

Progress Report on GPS's Commitment to Address Challenges of Advancing Anti-Racism in America



Oct. 2, 2020

Dear GPS Community,

Even as we enter a school year marked by uncertainty over the implications of COVID-19 for education and the most tumultuous U.S. presidential election in my memory, it remains a key task for the GPS community to live up to our commitment to address challenges of advancing anti-racism in America. Finding better ways to live up to our ideals is a fundamental task of a great university community. Today, I write with a progress report on work that will continue in the months (and years) to come.

Following an important student and faculty Town Hall meeting in June on the racial injustice roiling America and GPS's communal response to it, a group of approximately twelve faculty, students and staff spent the summer in dialogue.

Together, they began drafting an action plan which would enable GPS to spend the 2020-21 academic year making significant progress toward ensuring GPS is an inclusive and equitable school.

Here is a brief summary of key activities below. We will continue sending information to the GPS community for comment on this beginning.

Key changes at start of AY 2020-21:

Enlarging EDI committee

GPS has had a faculty EDI committee for a few years, but now the committee has been reconstituted - the membership is expanded to include staff and student representatives, and a new charge is being crafted. The committee will look specifically at 1) curriculum, 2) climate, 3) student recruitment and yield, and 4) recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.

Creation of the GPS EDI Fellowship

Each year, 2-3 GPS graduate students will be selected as EDI fellows. These students will work closely with the EDI committee and serve as vital liaisons with the student body. They will spend time assisting the faculty and administration furthering already identified efforts, as well as designing and developing their own ideas. We also hope these fellows will be important resources for our revamped Admissions strategies. (Application information will be distributed Oct. 5.)

Curriculum review

Over the summer, faculty were asked to consider how they were, or were not, incorporating EDI issues into their courses and where possible, they were asked to make revisions to bring in more issues of racial justice and current events. Further, courses that dedicate a number of class sessions to issues of equality and injustice were identified. Lastly, we are offering a course on the Politics of Multiculturalism in the fall quarter by Professor Claire Adida from Political Science. These are the initial steps; more will be identified and taken as the year progresses.

Creating a more diverse student body

GPS admissions has always had the goal of increasing the diversity of our student body. This summer we did a comprehensive review of our practices (including

scholarship awards) to identify new strategies to accomplish this goal. As a result, we have identified several promising approaches, including ways of using the growth of the BA/MA programs at GPS to advance diversity.

Student discussion

We will expand the number of diversity dialogues and town halls so that students can have more opportunities to express their feelings about racial injustice in the U.S. and around the world, as well as their concerns about discrimination, unfair treatment and micro-aggression on campus.

Soliciting feedback

GPS has created a place where students are always welcome to provide written [feedback](#) on ways the school can improve its climate. You can do this anonymously, or provide your name and email. Additionally, we've added a space to [report incidents](#) on our website - again with or without identification. This incident report is open for all in the GPS community.

Expanding trainings

Starting in July, GPS staff are now taking part in monthly, mandated EDI trainings. These 90 minute sessions have focused on racial issues this summer/fall, and will move on to other topics of equity, diversity and inclusion in winter and spring. The EDI committee will be asked to assess what additional trainings may make sense for faculty, students and staff.

Hiring more faculty and staff of color is a top priority

UC San Diego currently has a freeze on hiring, but as we move forward in recruitments, it will be top of mind. Despite reductions in funding to GPS as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on public finances, we will fund a new program to provide a stronger profile for GPS with the community of young Ph.D's from under represented populations.

As mentioned above, these are just a few efforts already underway. We promise to provide more routine updates, and always welcome feedback on how to make GPS more equitable and inclusive.

Thank you for being our partner in these efforts.



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