

Dear Meredith Community,

On July 21, I announced an initial plan of action on race, which outlined four key action steps. Since then, we have adopted a Campus-Wide Initiative on Anti-Racism as the formal name of this effort and made progress on several of the action steps. Here are a few updates on work done to date.

Reviewing Policies and Procedures

Our Campus-Wide Initiative on Anti-Racism calls for us to review our policies and practices to ensure that our college is not unconsciously contributing to systemic racism. The first step toward addressing anti-racism when it comes to policies and procedures is to ensure that, moving forward, we know what racism looks like. Otherwise, we may continue to demonstrate racism in the execution of our daily responsibilities. Therefore, we have made anti-racism training available for all faculty and staff. This training began during [Faculty and Staff Planning Week](#) and will continue throughout the academic year.

Campus Climate Survey

In our plan of action, we acknowledged that in order to better address racism in our community, we must further understand the current realities of our students and employees. We have already heard painful stories of experiences that are in no way indicative of the Meredith spirit, and we are working through those stories to understand what must be done to ensure they do not reoccur.

To help us better identify and address the specific problems on our campus, we are also implementing a campus climate survey. With the help of Tomecca Sloane, assistant dean of students, and Dianne Raubenheimer, director of research, planning and assessment, we have thoroughly researched several possible instruments and selected the one that will best meet the needs of our campus community. We have also developed a timeline for the implementation of the survey, putting the survey in the field in early October. This timing will allow new students to acclimate to the College and participate fully in this important work. For more information about the survey, visit <https://www.meredith.edu/anti-racism-initiative/anti-racism-climate-survey>.

Addressing our Past

Meredith's faculty and staff and students have worked on diversity and inclusion for decades, opening admissions, scholarships, and other forms of financial assistance to women of color; revising the curriculum to be more inclusive of the contributions and treatment of people of color; enhancing the diversity of our faculty and staff; adopting key employee and student policies to address harassment and other forms of intimidation; and encouraging cultural competency in both national and global settings. We are grateful for the leaders throughout those years who encouraged Meredith to be more inclusive, to be better. **It is clear there is still so much more to do.** With this initiative, we continue the work — work that demands a steady review of our past in order to create a better future where systemic racism cannot continue.

In this current work, we committed to evaluating our institutional history and any linkage to systemic racism, through joining the Universities Studying Slavery Initiative and

forming a taskforce to develop principles to guide the Board's decisions on naming buildings. Earlier this month, the Taskforce on Historical Context and Naming had its first meeting. This 18-member group, which is diverse by race, age, and gender, reviewed its charge, began productive discussions on the outcomes of their work and began research. Our second meeting is this week. The taskforce will provide an update to the Board of Trustees at its October meeting.

New Anti-Racism Web Page & Future Communications

We have created a special web page, meredith.edu/anti-racism-initiative, that allows you to track progress on each of the action steps in our plan. You can also find news stories about this initiative, answers to frequently asked questions, and links to partner offices who provide support and assistance to students and employees across campus. We have also set up an email address, anti-racismupdates@meredith.edu, for you to contribute ideas, questions, and concerns.

Thank you for being part of Meredith's commitment to addressing racism. We will continue posting updates to the web page and sending you updates via email throughout the semester.

Sincerely,

Jo Allen, '80, President

Sent 8/24/20
9:29 a.m.