

The Bowdoin College Library Commitment to Anti-Racism

The Bowdoin College Library stands in solidarity with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), in particular our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. As protests are underway across the world in response to the brutal murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade, the most recent of countless acts of violence committed against Black lives throughout history, we condemn and express our profound grief and outrage at the racial injustices that continue to be perpetrated in our communities. Black Lives Matter.

Libraries are not neutral, nor should they be silent. By their inherent nature, libraries strive to foster and advance social justice; to say and do nothing would only serve to reinforce the systems that have contributed to the inequities and injustices that we stand against. We acknowledge that systems of oppression operate within all libraries, including the Bowdoin College Library. Historical biases are ingrained in the classification systems we employ to organize our collections; published resources and local collections often reflect dominant narratives and values to the exclusion of marginalized perspectives; and the descriptive metadata standards used privilege whiteness and colonialism. As educators, information specialists, and citizens, it is our responsibility to identify and directly address these problematic systems in order to build inclusive and mindful access to materials and services.

As a staff, and as members of the Bowdoin community, we are committed to increasing our knowledge about anti-racism and the ways in which systemic oppression permeates our work, and to providing the campus with resources that will support and deepen learning. As the cornerstone of this effort we have developed an action plan with a goal to achieve an immediate and sustained impact on our practices. We will:

- **Engage in staff-wide anti-racism education to build a unified and informed foundation of knowledge.**
 - Hold dedicated staff meetings for focused and facilitated discussions on defining anti-racism and best practices for approaching anti-racist work.
 - Create opportunities for staff to learn together through reading groups, discussions, and participation in external forums.
- **Develop deeper understanding of how institutional racism permeates the structures in which the Library does its work and take action to address longstanding practices.**
 - Review the classification systems and descriptive methods we employ to provide access to collections.
 - Develop collections that represent the voices and experiences of BIPOC and other marginalized communities.
- **Review the broad scope of Library practices through the lens of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).**
 - Situate the Library's commitment to anti-racism within the broader context of intersectional DEI work.
 - Explore and employ pedagogical practices that are inclusive and culturally responsive.
 - Ensure Library spaces are welcoming and safe for all members of the Bowdoin community.
 - Examine the Library's services and policies to ensure they are equitable.

As we continue our work, we will engage with others at Bowdoin and within the broad library community so together we can challenge the status quo and create a Library that is genuinely inclusive and welcoming to everyone.