Announcing a CoSE Task Force for Anti-Racism

Dear students, faculty and staff of the College of Science & Engineering (CoSE),

As leaders of the college, we wish to acknowledge how racism, and anti-Black racism in particular, inflicts tremendous and unfair burdens on our Black students, faculty and staff. CoSE stands in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and is committed to accountability as we work to achieve our vision for institutionalizing anti-racism in the college.

The first step of that process will be to establish a CoSE Task Force for Anti-Racism this summer. The task force will be charged with establishing short-, medium-, and long-term goals with accountability benchmarks that ensure that CoSE steadfastly and successfully pursues its mission to create an anti-racist culture and build an inclusive community throughout the college.

We will consult broadly to achieve diverse and equitable representation on the task force with multiple axes of diversity including race, gender, sexuality, disability, career stage, and role (tenured and tenure-track faculty, lecturer faculty, staff and students). This task force will publish its agendas, action items and reports quarterly on the CoSE website and will present its final report and recommendations at the Fall 2021 CoSE all-college meeting. The college leadership is committed to taking action on the recommendations of the task force by implementing anti-racist policies and fostering an anti-racist culture in the college.

It is essential for us to commit to investing time and resources to advance substantive change as we cannot support the success of all our students and train them to tackle the world’s most pressing challenges without addressing racial injustice, especially the racist structures that frame our work within CoSE. The scientific, psychological and pedagogical expertise of the college is diminished when the non-Black individuals among us fail to recognize and reject our own complicity in individual, cultural and institutional racism.

Despite past and present efforts by groups and individuals to create a more just inclusive environment in the college, it is clear we still have much more work to do. The non-Black leaders among us have not taken the needed proactive steps to address racism.

As we develop our action agenda for the Task Force for Anti-Racism, we call on non-Black and in particular white CoSE faculty, staff and students in all departments to self-reflect and educate ourselves on the ways in which we uphold the realities of historic and structural racism in our personal and professional lives, in our communities and in
the institutions like CoSE in which we have agency. We encourage all educators and staff in the college to engage with this compilation of anti-racism resources and challenge each of us to consider how we can embed anti-racist practices in our teaching, our research and our administrative practices and policies.

We welcome the participation and ideas of the entire CoSE community, as these words are only made meaningful by the sustained actions by each of us that follow. To reflect the ongoing commitment and transparency this work will require, we as CoSE leadership commit to reporting on our actions and progress at the start of each academic year, and to each year reaffirm and renew the commitment of the Science Council, including all new members, to our social justice and anti-racism goals.

Signed,

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CoSE Science Council Dated: August 18, 2020