

Race and Social Justice Initiatives

Sociology and Anthropology

In the Sociology & Anthropology Department, we are continuing to examine our institutionalized practices and biases with respect to our curriculum and teaching practices, graduate admissions and support for our graduate students, hiring and retention of faculty and staff, and the focus of our intellectual and social events in the department.

In 2021-2022, we continued to refine our department's holistic admissions process for the PhD student. Concerns about further establishing and supporting a representative graduate student body remained front and center in our admissions process. Our incoming PhD cohort of 6 students is comprised of two US citizen BIPOC students (one identifying as Afro-Latina and the other White identifying Latinx), two International students (one from Ghana and one from Nepal), and two non-BIPOC U.S. citizens. But in addition to admissions, we devoted considerable energy to developing mentorship teams that can help our students from underrepresented groups thrive.

Faculty recruiting has employed a similar holistic approach and emphasis on mentorship and peer support. Next year we will have at least four new faculty of color joining our department (Anjanette Chan Tack, Layla Brown, Isabel Martinez, and Sarah Riccardi-Swartz) and we are working together with the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice to build cohort-model of peer and senior mentorship support.

Our undergraduate assessment efforts this year have focused on assessing this program goals associated with promoting understandings of racism, racial justice, intersectionality, and the legacies and ongoing structures of colonialism, imperialism, and uneven development. These efforts remain ongoing, but with our continued focus on assessing these goals, we are working to ensure that our focus on anti-racism motivated by racial justice movements of the past several years is not fleeting represents a sustained departmental commitment.

At the graduate level, we dramatically reworked our classical and contemporary social theory syllabi and learning objectives with the objective of reframing the sociological canon to ensure that includes diverse voices from both BIPOC scholars in the U.S. and scholars from the Global South.

Our department's intellectual events, including our speaker series and pedagogy and professional development workshops, continued to center Black and Brown voices and issues of racial and gender justice in our activities. These included bringing to campus junior and senior scholars of color to engage with our doctoral students, including Vanessa Panfil, Victor Ray, and Joseph Ewoodzie, which enables more visibility for these scholars' work and provides our students with a more representative perspective of the discipline.