



College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Anti-racism Initiative

June 29, 2020

Words are not enough. We cannot wait any longer to act. Although the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to restrict the University's operations and affect its financial resources, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is committed to making anti-racism—the policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance—central to all that we do. Over the course of 2020-2021 CLAS will invest significant funds and effort to advance the anti-racist initiatives described below. We do not promise overnight results; these measures are not a panacea for systemic racism that has been embedded in American life since its founding. But we do promise meaningful actions and a long-term commitment to reflection, scrutiny and positive systemic change.

The CLAS Anti-racism Initiative is not an isolated, one-time endeavor.

- It rests on the enduring foundation of Villanova's Catholic and Augustinian values, as expressed in the [Mission Statement of Villanova University](#), the [Mission Statement of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences](#), and the [University's Statement on Diversity](#).
- It builds on the work that began in 2017, when the CLAS leadership elevated diversity, equity and inclusion to become one of the College's top priorities; appointed Edward García Fierros, PhD, as the first Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; created a College-wide [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee](#); and mandated that every department create its own committee to advance diversity and create a more inclusive academic and community environment.

The CLAS Anti-racism Initiative seeks to:

- Support Black Villanovans and the BIPOC community;
- Educate white Villanovans on the origins, history and persistence of systemic racism in the United States, and promote allyship;
- Engage Black CLAS students in College reform initiatives by establishing a regular channel for them to express their views and tell their stories to the College leadership;
- Promote honest and productive dialogue on issues of race;
- Identify and reform racist structures, policies and assumptions in College operations.

The Anti-racism Initiative will focus especially on the following:

- Black student support and retention
- Black faculty and staff recruitment, support and retention
- Student learning and research
- Interdisciplinary courses and research
- Policies
- Community engagement

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Leadership

Adele Lindenmeyr, PhD, Dean

Emory H. Woodard IV, PhD, Dean of Graduate Studies

Seth Matthew Fishman, PhD, Assistant Dean

Edward García Fierros, PhD, Associate Dean

Colleen Hinds, MBA, Assistant Dean

Susan Jacobs, MA, Assistant Dean

Joseph Lennon, PhD, Associate Dean

Crystal J. Lucky, PhD, Associate Dean

Rebecca Rebalsky, MMgt, Assistant Dean

Barry S. Selinsky, PhD, Associate Dean

The CLAS Anti-racism Initiative includes but is not limited to the following projects:

1. Evaluating and revising the CLAS Diversity requirement.
2. Raising the profile and impact of the CLAS Africana Studies Program.
3. Enriching the CLAS curriculum with new courses addressing racism:
 - a. make racism the theme of the Course Initiative Grant Program in Spring-Summer 2021 to support the development of new courses or revision of existing ones (five grants at \$2,500 each to faculty for summer course development). A special invitation will be extended to submit proposals for team-taught courses on the theme of anti-racism in the humanities, social sciences and sciences.
 - b. Propose racism as the theme of the university's 2021-22 Villanova Integrated Academics (VIA) courses.

4. Ensuring that all CLAS faculty and student Committees (e.g. Core Curriculum Committee, Third Year Review Committee, OUS Student Ambassadors) are representative and inclusive.
5. Reviewing CLAS admissions and academic policies for possible bias:
 - a. Graduate admissions and academic policies
 - b. CLAS undergraduate policies that may limit academic opportunities
 - c. Ways in which racism affects retention of students of color in CLAS
6. Strengthening the recruitment and advancement of Black faculty and staff:
 - a. Faculty recruitment: CLAS sets a goal of doubling the number of both Black tenure-track faculty and Black continuing non-tenure track faculty by 2025;
 - b. Staff recruitment: CLAS sets a goal of doubling the number of Black staff by 2025;
 - c. CLAS will create a Professional Development Fund for Black faculty and staff, with financial support for participating in professional development workshops, networking and mentoring associations. The fund will distribute five grants per year of up to \$5,000.
7. Sponsoring community engagement initiatives and events that educate about racism:
 - a. Resource libraries;
 - b. Reading and discussion groups, with compensated faculty moderators;
 - c. College-wide dialogues in collaboration with CLAS centers and programs;
 - d. Minicourses for Personal Enrichment students (senior citizens from the community) and alumni with compensated faculty moderators;
 - e. Efforts to make the membership of the Dean's Advisory Council and other advisory councils in the College more inclusive, and especially to recruit Black alumni.
8. Supporting research on topics related to racism:
 - a. Create CLAS-funded undergraduate Villanova Research Fellowships (VRF) fellowships for faculty-mentored student research related to racism (2 VRF grants per year at \$3,500)
 - b. Fund an annual CLAS Summer Faculty Grant for faculty research projects on themes related to racism: one grant per year \$10,000
9. Providing anti-racism training for white faculty and staff.

The initiative will be funded by a \$75,000 gift received by the college from a donor as well as a contribution from the CLAS Dean's Strategic Initiatives Fund.