

# MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND POLICY

## Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Committee

Initial Meeting Material  
November 20, 2020

Master of Public Administration in Environmental Science and Policy  
School of International and Public Affairs | The Earth Institute  
Columbia University



COLUMBIA | SIPA

School of International and Public Affairs

THE EARTH INSTITUTE  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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### **About the Committee (Draft):**

The ESP Diversity, Equity & Inclusion committee will oversee the anti-racism work of the MPA in Environmental Science and Policy program, provide accountability for the implementation of recommendations that emerge from committee discussions, and communicate periodically with students, alumni, and faculty on the program's progress.

The committee will determine how it functions and set its own agenda. The committee will comprise two members each from the faculty, student body, alumni, and staff. Students and alumni will solicit self-nominations from their peers, and they will select their respective committee representatives. Students will serve on the committee for the duration of the program. Alumni representatives will serve on the committee for terms of up to two years, but no less than one, in order to ensure continuity and sustained effort. The committee may occasionally invite others to meetings, who can provide expertise or valuable perspectives.

The faculty representatives may include the program director and another member selected through a self-nomination process. The staff representatives will be selected from among the program administrators.

The committee will convene on a quarterly basis, and it will be initially chaired by the Earth Institute's Director of Academic and Research Programs. The chair serves a one-year renewable term. The position of chair may rotate among committee members, if the committee so decides. The committee is to make decisions by consensus.

According to Scholtes and Streibel, "Consensus decision making is a search for the best decision through the exploration of the best of everyone's thinking. As more ideas are addressed and more problems are discussed, a synthesis of ideas takes place and the final decision is often better than any single idea presented at the beginning. Consensus does not mean: a unanimous vote, everyone getting what they want, everyone finally comes around to the right opinion, reaching a compromise. Consensus means: everyone understands the decision and can explain why it's best; everyone can live with the decision." (The Team Handbook, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p. 3-27).

### **Members:**

- Dr. Steve Cohen (Faculty)
- Dr. Adela Gondek (Faculty)
- Rashika Choudhary (Current Student)
- Maya Navabi (Current Student)
- Rachel Patterson (Alumni)
- Iara Vicente (Alumni)
- Stephanie Hoyt (Staff)
- George Sarrinikolaou (Staff)

ESP Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Committee  
Initial Meeting Agenda  
November 20, 2020  
4:00 pm – 5:30 pm ET  
[Zoom](#)

4:00 pm - 4:10 pm	Introductions	All
4:10 pm - 4:40 pm	Purpose and Function	George with Committee Members
4:40 pm – 5:00 pm	Review of actions to date, new syllabus, consultant contract.	Stephanie
5:00 pm – 5:25 pm	Brainstorming of actions for the Spring semester	All
5:25 pm -5:30 pm	Next steps and Adjourn	George

## List of Actions

Curriculum		
Course	Semester	Updates
Sustainability Management	Fall 2020	The study of equity, including the strategy of stakeholder engagement, has been incorporated into all sections of the required Sustainability Management course.
Ethics, Values, and Justice	Fall 2020	Reworked the required Environmental Ethics course to focus additional attention on issues of race, including who suffers most from climate change.
Workshop	Fall 2020	Modified the political analysis and performance management outputs in the Fall workshop to account for anti-racism/environmental justice.
Workshop	Spring 2021	Workshop selection in the Spring may include projects that pertain to anti-racism, but it will continue to be based on student preferences and the faculty's ability to obtain projects that reflect students' interests.
Workshop	Future topics	We will seek to include environmental laws that pertain to equity and environmental justice.
New Elective	Spring 2021	Building Resilience in 21st Century Detroit: Roots and Remedies to Racial Injustice
All Courses	Fall 2020 and beyond	We have encouraged faculty to incorporate anti-racism/environmental justice into all course materials when possible.

Co-Curricular			
Name	Date	Number of ESP Students in attendance	Honorarium
Building Resilience in 21st Century Detroit: Roots and Remedies to Racial Injustice, from Policing to COVID-19 with Donna Givens	July 23, 2020	6	\$2,000
Anti-Racism Workshop	August 3, 2020	40	-
Intersectional Environmentalism with Leah Thomas	September 23, 2020	6	\$2,000

Anti-Racism Monthly Training	September 18, October 16, November 20, and January 15	20-30 Students	\$2,000
We Act Skill Seminar on Environmental Justice and Activism	October 24, 2020	5	\$1,500
Stopping the Atlantic Coast Pipeline: Lessons Learned from Indigenous and Environmental Justice Advocate Donna Chavis	November 13, 2020	7	\$500

Faculty/ Student/ Staff Diversity		
Fellowship	Dean's Fellowship in Environmental Science and Policy	The fellowship is intended for student from historically underrepresented groups, including but not limited to: Blacks/African-Americans; Hispanics; Native Americans/Alaska Natives; and persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, or Samoa.
Committee	Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity	Creation of a Permanent Committee
Orientation	Anti-Racism Training	Moving forward, orientation will include a session on anti-racism
Recruitment	Expanded traditional efforts to include the intentional recruitment of BIPOC Students	Postering, advertising, social media, and emails.
Recruitment	LinkedIn	Creation of educational layers on LinkedIn ads that specifically target HBCUs and MSIs.

## Consultant Contract

Department or School Name: MPA in Environmental Science and Policy (SIPA)

PI or Project Name: DE&I Audit- MPA ESP

Project Start Date: 11.16.20 Project End Date: 6.1.20

ARC Requisition #: \_\_\_\_\_

Supplier Name: IERE Strategies, LLC

*\*Note: Project dates should not begin prior to the issuance of an official University Purchase Order.*

*Explain any different schedule in the description below.*

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Describe the work to be performed by the Supplier, with project goals, objectives, and any related phases.

### MPA in Environmental Science and Policy Program

This immersive one-year program prepares future environmental sustainability leaders to address the most serious and complex environmental problems the world faces.

Founded two decades ago, it is the world's premier program of its kind, and is offered jointly by the School of International and Public Affairs and Columbia's Earth Institute. It seamlessly integrates science with environmental policy and management. Graduates hold key positions in important organizations worldwide in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Number of current students: 42

Number of faculty: 20

Number of alumni: 925

Number of required courses: 17

The aim of this work is to gather as much DE&I-relevant data as possible so as to determine patterns and themes related to the climate within the MPA in Environmental Science and Policy Program by conducting surveys, focus groups/interviews, curricular analysis, classroom observations, human resource policy analysis, and any other useful/relevant data sets that clients have gathered on their own. Detail below:

- SURVEY: Conducting an anonymous survey that will be distributed to all current students, faculty, alumni, and staff. Both the quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys will be analyzed for patterns/themes, and significance. This survey will

be created and deployed by IERE. MPA ESP will help facilitate contact with the various groups, and will encourage participation.

- **FOCUS GROUPS/INTERVIEWS:** The survey will feature an option for respondents to register personal contact information if they wish to participate in confidential focus groups and/or interviews. The total number of groups/interviews will be determined by the number of persons who register interest on the survey. Focus groups and interviews will be conducted and recorded (via zoom) and analyzed by IERE. The transcription will be completed by a reputable firm.
- **SYLLABI:** Curricular analysis: IERE will analyze 10 of the 17 syllabi from the MPA program.
- **HR POLICIES:** Human resources policies: Most faculty seem to be adjunct; IERE will examine the process of identifying/hiring adjunct and their onboarding processes. Questions related to HR policies will be asked in the survey. IERE will interview staff who are directly involved with hiring and onboarding of adjunct.
- **OBSERVATIONS:** Classroom observations: IERE will observe some of the required courses. Classes selected for observation will be observed at least 2 class sessions in a row. MPA ESP will inform faculty of the observations and secure permission from individual faculty whose classes will be selected.
- **MISCELLANEOUS:** IERE will collect any reports on DE&I that MPA ESP and/or EI have created on their own prior to this audit. IERE will meet with the DE&I teams within MPA ESP during and after the data collection.

Report to be generated on findings and recommendations after this analysis.

Describe key deliverables/expectations/milestones to be furnished by Supplier (i.e. reports, data, website, applications, executive candidates, completed services, and timeframes/milestones, etc.)

- 1) November 23: surveys concluded, start of interviews. Progress report submitted to MPA ESP with invoice #1
- 2) December 18: Conclusion of focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations. Progress report submitted to MPA ESP with invoice #2
- 3) When the project is completed (date TBD) Final reports with recommendations submitted to MPA ESP with invoice #3

Indicate Columbia resources required to complete the Scope of Work (i.e. systems access, equipment, workspace, staff, etc.)

None.

What is the final product provided by the Service Provider (i.e. training, web design, research, software coding, programming, photography, videography, marketing, graphic design, etc.)?

Final report with recommendations.

### Payment Terms

In full monetary consideration for the performance of this SOW by the Service Provider hereunder, the University shall reimburse the Service Provider in an amount **not to exceed \$16,700** \_\_\_\_\_, which is based on (***select one below***):

- ☐ A fixed fee including all costs; or
- ☐ A rate of \$\_\_\_\_\_per \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. hour/day/month, etc.) for such units of time as the Service Provider actually performs services as called for by this SOW; or
- ☐ A milestone rate schedule as specified in an addendum to the Agreement; or
- ☐ A percentage rate schedule specified as follows: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ The attached detailed payment schedule as agreed by the Parties

**Note:** The total consideration provided in this SOW includes any and all related expenses, including travel, transportation and subsistence expense, which shall be reimbursed to the Service Provider in accordance with the reimbursement practices of the University; or as otherwise specified in an addendum to this Agreement.

“Service Provider”

Columbia University Department/School  
(Business Owner)

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** *This SOW is governed either by the Terms and Conditions as set forth in the attached Agreement between the parties or, if no such formal Agreement has been agreed upon by the parties, by the terms and conditions of the Columbia University Purchase Order (<http://finance.columbia.edu/files/gateway/forms/Purchase%20Order%20Terms%20and%20Conditions%20080115.pdf>).*

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***Please attach any additional information or supplier***

*proposal to best qualify the Scope of Work with specific details for this engagement.*

#### ***ADDENDUM***

Payment will be made as outlined below:

Invoice #1, 11/16/20, \$5,566

Invoice #2, date, \$5,567

Invoice #3, at completion of project, \$5,567

## **Building Resilience in 21st Century Detroit: Roots and Remedies to Racial Injustice**

**[Scheduled Meeting Times]**

**[Number of credits]**

**Instructor:** Donna Givens Davidson, dgivens@ecn-detroit.org

**Office Hours:** Scheduled, as needed in ½ hour increments. Zoom

**Response Policy:** [Include a statement about your preferred means of communication and when students should expect a response from you. Will you be available 24/7 or during the workweek only? Will you generally respond within 12 or 24 hours?]

**Facilitator/Teaching Assistant, if applicable:** [Name, title, email address and phone number]

**Office Hours:** [Time and location]

**Response Policy:** [Include a statement about your preferred means of communication and when students should expect a response from you. Will you be available 24/7 or during the workweek only? Will you generally respond within 12 or 24 hours?]

### **Course Overview**

Detroit is well-recognized as the Blackest big city in America within one of the most segregated metropolitan areas. At one point in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Detroit was home to the largest Black middle class, the highest percentage of Black homeowners, and one of the most powerful Black political machines in the nation. This pre-eminence collapsed over the span of the past 40 years, under the weight of racist public policy, public and private malfeasance, financial disinvestment, and the temporary usurpation of Black political power. In an effort to better understand current conflicts between Black citizens and their government, this class will examine the role of race in public policy formation, institutional systems, and government.

Detroit's racial inequality is rooted in a protracted and uninterrupted history of racist laws, policies, and practices that deny full citizenship to Black Detroiters, undermine Democracy, and position the city as a poor colony within a thriving metropolis. Racism has disfigured the social, physical and economic landscape of Detroit to produce profound levels of neglect, abuse, and exploitation of its residents, resulting in wealth extraction, housing insecurity, healthy food and water scarcity, educational malpractice, and environmental destruction, all within the framework of wealth attraction, tax incentives, subsidized growth and capital accumulation in the greater downtown.

Through this course, we will examine the thesis that sustainability and racism cannot co-exist; that sustainability is rooted in inclusive social wellbeing now and in future generations, whereas racism is rooted in hoarding of power and resources for one dominant group. This hoarding of resources for a favored population impairs preservation for future generations. Furthermore, environmental racism disconnects the consequences of environmental destruction from its beneficiaries and therefore interferes with feedback loops that are needed for course correction.

Detroit serves as an American example of longstanding racist public policy, resulting in massive depopulation, blight, abandonment, and concentration of risks that cannot and will not be fixed through neo-liberal redevelopment strategies that ignore its racist past and the racist underpinnings of public policy. We will explore grass-roots efforts to address root causes, community development efforts to build sustainable communities, and alternative approaches to restructuring local economies.

Students will learn advocacy, management, and political tools and strategies for pursuing sustainability in a place fraught with racism:

- Community organizing
- Coalition Building
- Stakeholder engagement
- Resident-Driven Planning
- Community benefits agreements and
- Models for Alternative Economic Development

### **Learning Objectives**

1. Evaluate how racist laws, policies and practices undercut urban sustainability and the role of citizenship in building sustainable systems.

2. Examine the evolution of Black power in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Detroit and how this power has been harnessed and sustained over time, through social, civic, economic and political institutions;
3. Describe evolving patterns of white resistance to racial inclusion and social equity from restrictive housing covenants, to policing, rioting, political scapegoating, legal and policy hurdles, to financialization and emergency management.
4. Compare and contrast competing narratives of the new Detroit through analysis of population data, housing and business trends, laws, policies, and economic outcomes.
5. Diagram power relationships between key Detroit stakeholders and leaders, contrasting roles and influence over spending and resource allocations.
6. Critique differing strategies to building resident equity from direct action, to protest/movement building, political advocacy, collectivism, and community development, describing strengths, weaknesses and uses of each approach;
7. Propose an equity initiative to address specific harms imposed by one of three case studies depicting corporatist land use decisions which are opposed by local residents.

## Readings

### Required:

Bates, B. T. (2012). Chapters 1-5. In *Making of Black Detroit in the age of Henry Ford* (pp. 15-67). Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press. (129 Pages)

Barreto, A. A., & Lozano, K. (2017). Hierarchies of belonging: Intersecting race, ethnicity, and territoriality in the construction of US citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 21(8), 999-1014. doi:10.1080/13621025.2017.1361906 (15 pages)

Darden, J. T., & Thomas, R. W. (2013). Historical Causes and Consequences of the 1967 Civil Disorder White Racism, Black Rebellion, and Changing Race Relations in the Post-Civil Disorder Era. In *Detroit Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide* (pp. 1-135). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press (135 pages)

Peck, J., & Whiteside, H. (2016). Financializing Detroit. *Economic Geography*, 92(3). doi:10.1080/00130095.2015.1116369 (29 pages)

Atuahene, B. (2020). Predatory Cities. *California Law Review*, 108(1), 107-182. (75 pages)

McDonald, Kristi, director. *How Detroit Has Streamlined Its Fight Against Blight*. *PBS Newshour*, Detroit Journalism Cooperative, 29 Sept. 2014, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=43ldAQhkdY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43ldAQhkdY) (9 minutes)

Stafford, K., & Tanner, K. (2020, October 17). Children were at risk so Detroit promised to halt demolitions. But that didn't happen. Retrieved November 07, 2020, from [Detroit demolitions never stopped as promised](#) (22 pages)

Stafford, K. (2019, November 08). Detroit demolition program mismanaged, riddled with problems, auditor says. Retrieved November 07, 2020, from [Detroit demolition program target of blistering audit: What it said](#) (5 pages)

White, Monica M. "Environmental Reviews & Case Studies: D-Town Farm: African American Resistance to Food Insecurity and the Transformation of Detroit." *Environmental Practice*, vol. 13, no. 4, Dec. 2011, pp. 406-417., doi:10.1017/s1466046611000408. (11 pages)

Taylor, Dorceta E., and Kerry J. Ard. "Research Article: Food Availability and the Food Desert Frame in Detroit: An Overview of the City's Food System." *Environmental Practice*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2015, pp. 102-133., doi:10.1017/s1466046614000544. (31 pages).

Poething, E.C., Schilling, J., Goodman L., Bai, B., Gaster, J. Pendall, R. & Fazilli, S. The Detroit Housing Market: Challenges and Innovations for a Path Forward. Urban Institute (66 pages)

Clark, Cristy. "Race, Austerity and Water Justice in the United States." *Water Politics: Governance, Justice, and the Right to Water*, by Farhana Sultana and Alex Loftus, Routledge, an Imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2020, pp. 175–185. (10 pages)

Rector, Josiah John. "Accumulating Risk: Environmental Justice and the History of Capitalism in Detroit, 1880-2015." *Wayne State University*, Digital Commons @ Wayne State University, 2017, pp. 259-304 (45 pages)

Meerow, Sara, and Joshua P. Newell. "Spatial Planning for Multifunctional Green Infrastructure: Growing Resilience in Detroit." *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 159, 29 Nov. 2016, pp. 62–75., doi:10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.10.005. (13 pages)

"Making Urban Greening Sustainable." *Green Gentrification: Urban Sustainability and the Struggle for Environmental Justice*, by Kenneth Alan Gould and Tammy L. Lewis, Routledge, 2017, pp. 151–172. (21 pages)

Niekerk, A. J. (2020). Inclusive Economic Sustainability: SDGs and Global Inequality. *Sustainability*, 12(13), 5427. doi:10.3390/su12135427 (17 pages).

### **Suggested:**

Cassells, Halima and Kate Levy, directors. *A People's History of Detroit*, Creative Commons Attribution, 2015, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcAvvr6yYJM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcAvvr6yYJM). (69 minutes viewing).

Carmichael, S., Hamilton, C. V., & Ture, K. (1992). White Power: The Colonial Situation. In *Black power: The politics of liberation in America* (pp. 2-32). Vintage Books. (30 pages)

O'Grady, S. K. (Director). (2016). *Land Grab* [Video file]. Atlas Industries. Retrieved 2020, from <https://www.amazon.com/Land-Grab-John-Hantz/dp/B07FYJ77NP> (75 minutes)

Rector, Josiah John. "Accumulating Risk: Environmental Justice and the History of Capitalism in Detroit, 1880-2015." *Wayne State University*, Digital Commons @ Wayne State University, 2017, pp. 20–75, 305-368 (63 pages)

## **Resources**

### *Columbia University Information Technology*

[Columbia University Information Technology](#) (CUIT) provides Columbia University students, faculty, and staff with central computing and communications services. Students, faculty, and staff may access University-provided discounted software downloads (<https://columbiait.onthehub.com/>).

### *Columbia University Library*

Columbia's extensive library system ranks in the top five academic libraries in the nation, with many of its services and resources available online: <https://library.columbia.edu/>.

### *SPS Academic Resources*

The Office of Student Affairs provides students with academic counseling and support services such as online tutoring and career coaching: <http://sps.columbia.edu/student-life-and-alumni-relations/academic-resources>.

## **Course Requirements (Assignments)**

1. Participation in 10 online discussions. This will include posting two or three paragraphs in direct response to detailed questions and response and engagement with at least two other student responses.

2. Completion of three essays, evaluating problems described in case studies. Students will be asked to assess issues of citizenship and justice, sustainability impacts, and power relationships between primary actors. Minimum of two pages.
3. Final project, proposing a policy change, program, or initiative that addresses a sustainability issue relevant to Detroit residents. Students will choose one of five outlined issues or select an issue of their own. Each paper will be between 8 to 10 pages in length and will include references. Projects will include the following elements:
  - a. Description of need, using available quantitative and qualitative data
  - b. Discussion of race equity concerns
  - c. Power analysis between primary stakeholders
  - d. Brief historical description,
  - e. Type of intervention
    - i. Direct Action
    - ii. Community Organizing
    - iii. Political Action
    - iv. Research
    - v. Community Development
    - vi. Other
  - f. Program Objectives
  - g. Expected Outcomes
  - h. Resource Requirements

## Evaluation/Grading

[Articulate here how you will evaluate student work and measure their progress towards course goals. Describe how and when you will assign grades, how those grades contribute to the final grade, and whether you wish to include self or peer assessment. Assessment activities should:

- measure the stated learning objectives,
- align with course activities and resources,
- include specific and descriptive criteria for the evaluation of students' work,
- be sequenced, varied, and appropriate to the content being assessed, and
- assign no more than 15% of the final grade to participation.]

The final grade will be calculated as described below:

### FINAL GRADING SCALE

Grade	Percentage
A+	98–100 %
A	93–97.9 %
A-	90–92.9 %
B+	87–89.9 %
B	83–86.9 %
B-	80–82.9 %
C+	77–79.9 %

<b>C</b>	73–76.9 %
<b>C-</b>	70–72.9 %
<b>D</b>	60–69.9 %
<b>F</b>	59.9% and below

<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>% Weight</b>
Discussion Prompts	40%
Case studies	30%
Final Project	30%

## Course Policies

### *Participation and Attendance*

You are expected to complete all assigned readings, attend all class sessions, and engage with others in online discussions. Your participation will require that you answer questions, defend your point of view, and challenge the point of view of others. If you need to miss a class for any reason, please discuss the absence with me in advance.

Or

I expect you to come to class on time and thoroughly prepared. I will keep track of attendance and look forward to an interesting, lively and confidential discussion. If you miss an experience in class, you miss an important learning moment and the class misses your contribution. More than one absence will affect your grade.

### *Late work*

There will be no credit granted to any written assignment that is not submitted on the due date noted in the course syllabus without advance notice and permission from the instructor.

Or

Work that is not submitted on the due date noted in the course syllabus without advance notice and permission from the instructor will be graded down 1/3 of a grade for every day it is late (e.g., from a B+ to a B).

### *Citation & Submission*

All written assignments must use [citation format], cite sources, and be submitted to the course website (not via email).

## School Policies

### *Copyright Policy*

Please note—Due to copyright restrictions, online access to this material is limited to instructors and students currently registered for this course. Please be advised that by clicking the link to the electronic materials in this course, you have read and accept the following:

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

### *Academic Integrity*

Columbia University expects its students to act with honesty and propriety at all times and to respect the rights of others. It is fundamental University policy that academic dishonesty in any guise or personal conduct of any sort that disrupts the life of the University or denigrates or endangers members of the University community is

unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. It is essential to the academic integrity and vitality of this community that individuals do their own work and properly acknowledge the circumstances, ideas, sources, and assistance upon which that work is based. Academic honesty in class assignments and exams is expected of all students at all times.

SPS holds each member of its community responsible for understanding and abiding by the SPS Academic Integrity and Community Standards posted at <http://sps.columbia.edu/student-life-and-alumni-relations/academic-integrity-and-community-standards>. You are required to read these standards within the first few days of class. Ignorance of the School's policy concerning academic dishonesty shall not be a defense in any disciplinary proceedings.

#### Accessibility

Columbia is committed to providing equal access to qualified students with documented disabilities. A student's disability status and reasonable accommodations are individually determined based upon disability documentation and related information gathered through the intake process. For more information regarding this service, please visit the University's Health Services website: <https://health.columbia.edu/services/ods/support>.

#### Class Recordings

All or portions of the class may be recorded at the discretion of the Instructor to support your learning. At any point, the Instructor has the right to discontinue the recording if it is deemed to be obstructive to the learning process.

If the recording is posted, it is considered confidential and it is not acceptable to share the recording outside the purview of the faculty member and registered class.

## Course Schedule/Course Calendar

Lecture/Discussion Topics	Readings	Assignment
January 13, 2021 Course Overview	Required: Bates, B. T. (2012). Chapters 1-2. In <i>Making of Black Detroit in the age of Henry Ford</i> (pp. 15-67). Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press. Suggested Viewing:  Cassells, Halima and Kate Levy, directors. <i>A People's History of Detroit</i> , Creative Commons Attribution, 2015, <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcAvvr6yYjM">www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcAvvr6yYjM</a> .	Discussion Prompt
January 20, 2021 Sustainability and Citizenship	Required: Barreto, A. A., & Lozano, K. (2017). Hierarchies of belonging: Intersecting race, ethnicity, and territoriality in the construction of US citizenship. <i>Citizenship Studies</i> , 21(8), 999-1014. doi:10.1080/13621025.2017.1361906 Suggested: Carmichael, S., Hamilton, C. V., & Ture, K. (1992). <i>White Power: The Colonial Situation</i> . In <i>Black power: The politics of liberation in America</i> (pp. 2-32). Vintage Books.	Discussion Prompt
January 27, 2021 Lecture 2: Urban Roots: Leaving the Plantation and the Rise of Black Detroit	Required Bates, B. T. (2012). Chapters 3-5. In <i>Making of Black Detroit in the age of Henry Ford</i> (pp. 70-144). Chapel Hill, NC: University Of North Carolina Press.	Discussion Prompt Topic for Final Project Due
February 3, 2021	Required:	Discussion Prompt

Lecture 3: Black Resistance and Rebellion	Darden, J. T., & Thomas, R. W. (2013). Historical Causes and Consequences of the 1967 Civil Disorder White Racism, Black Rebellion, and Changing Race Relations in the Post–Civil Disorder Era. In Detroit Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide (pp. 1-27). East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press	
February 10, 2021 Lecture 4: Building Black Political Power	Required: Darden, J. T. (2013). The Emergence of Black Political Power in 1967: Impact of the Civil Disorders on Race Relations in Metropolitan Detroit. In J. Darden (Ed.), Detroit Race Riots, Racial Conflicts, and Efforts to Bridge the Racial Divide (pp. 93-135). East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.	Discussion Prompt
February 17, 2021 Lecture 5: Dismantling Black Detroit: Bankruptcy and Emergency Management	Required: Peck, J., & Whiteside, H. (2016). Financializing Detroit. <i>Economic Geography</i> , 92(3). doi:10.1080/00130095.2015.1116369	Case Study: Emergency Management
February 24, 2021 Lecture 6: Wealth Transfers and Land Grabs	Required: Atuahene, B. (2020). Predatory Cities. <i>California Law Review</i> , 108(1), 107-182. Suggested: O'Grady, S. K. (Director). (2016). Land Grab [Video file]. Atlas Industries. Retrieved 2020, from <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Land-Grab-John-Hantz/dp/B07FYJ77NP">https://www.amazon.com/Land-Grab-John-Hantz/dp/B07FYJ77NP</a>	Discussion Prompt
March 10, 2021 Lecture 7: Deconstructing Detroit - Mass Demolitions	Required:  McDonald, Kristi, director. <i>How Detroit Has Streamlined Its Fight Against Blight</i> . PBS Newshour, Detroit Journalism Cooperative, 29 Sept. 2014, <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=43ldAQhkdY">www.youtube.com/watch?v=43ldAQhkdY</a>  Stafford, K., & Tanner, K. (2020, October 17). Children were at risk so Detroit promised to halt demolitions. But that didn't happen. Retrieved November 07, 2020, from <a href="https://www.freep.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2020/10/16/detroit-demolitions-stopped-neighborhoods-lead/5975230002/">https://www.freep.com/in-depth/news/investigations/2020/10/16/detroit-demolitions-stopped-neighborhoods-lead/5975230002/</a>  Stafford, K. (2019, November 08). Detroit demolition program mismanaged, riddled with problems, auditor says. Retrieved November 07, 2020, from <a href="https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2019/11/08/detroit-demolition-auditor-general-report/2522761001/">https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2019/11/08/detroit-demolition-auditor-general-report/2522761001/</a>	Case Study: Problem Analysis I Proposal N

March 17, 2021 Lecture 8: Food Systems	<p>Required:</p> <p>White, Monica M. "Environmental Reviews &amp; Case Studies: D-Town Farm: African American Resistance to Food Insecurity and the Transformation of Detroit." <i>Environmental Practice</i>, vol. 13, no. 4, Dec. 2011, pp. 406–417., doi:10.1017/s1466046611000408.</p> <p>Taylor, Dorceta E., and Kerry J. Ard. "Research Article: Food Availability and the Food Desert Frame in Detroit: An Overview of the City's Food System." <i>Environmental Practice</i>, vol. 17, no. 2, 2015, pp. 102–133., doi:10.1017/s1466046614000544.</p>	Discussion Prompt
March 24, 2021 Lecture 9: Water Rights	<p>Required:</p> <p>Clark, Cristy. "Race, Austerity and Water Justice in the United States." <i>Water Politics: Governance, Justice, and the Right to Water</i>, by Farhana Sultana and Alex Loftus, Routledge, an Imprint of the Taylor &amp; Francis Group, 2020, pp. 175–185.</p> <p>Suggested:</p> <p>Rector, Josiah John. "Accumulating Risk: Environmental Justice and the History of Capitalism in Detroit, 1880-2015." <i>Wayne State University</i>, Digital Commons @ Wayne State University, 2017, pp. 20–75, 305-368</p>	Discussion Prompt Outline for Final Project Due
March 31, 2021 Lecture 10: Affordable Housing	Poething, E.C., Schilling, J., Goodman L., Bai, B., Gaster, J. Pendall, R. & Fazilli, S. The Detroit Housing Market: Challenges and Innovations for a Path Forward. Urban Institute	Discussion Prompt
April 7, 2021 Lecture 11: Air Quality and Soil Contamination	Rector, Josiah John. "Accumulating Risk: Environmental Justice and the History of Capitalism in Detroit, 1880-2015." <i>Wayne State University</i> , Digital Commons @ Wayne State University, 2017, pp. 259-304	Case Study: FCA Expansion

April 14, 2021 Lecture 13: Green Infrastructure and Stormwater Management	Meerow, Sara, and Joshua P. Newell. "Spatial Planning for Multifunctional Green Infrastructure: Growing Resilience in Detroit." <i>Landscape and Urban Planning</i> , vol. 159, 29 Nov. 2016, pp. 62–75., doi:10.1016/j.landurbplan.2016.10.005.	Discussion Prompt
April 21, 2021 Lecture 12: Building Power	"Making Urban Greening Sustainable." <i>Green Gentrification: Urban Sustainability and the Struggle for Environmental Justice</i> , by Kenneth Alan Gould and Tammy L. Lewis, Routledge, 2017, pp. 151–172.	Discussion Prompt
April 28, 2021 Lecture 14: Sustainable Social Wellbeing	Niekerk, A. J. (2020). Inclusive Economic Sustainability: SDGs and Global Inequality. <i>Sustainability</i> , 12(13), 5427. doi:10.3390/su12135427	Final Assignment Due April 30, 2021

## **Communications between Program Director and Students/Alumni**

- [Monday, August 24, 2020: Letter from Dr. Cohen to Students/Alumni](#)
- [Thursday, August 20, 2020: Letter from Dr. Cohen to Students/Alumni](#)
- [Monday, August 17, 2020: Letter from Concerned Students and Alumni to Dr. Cohen/Program](#)
- [Thursday, July 23, 2020: Letter from Dr. Cohen to Students/Alumni](#)
- [Demand the MPA-ESP Program Commit to Prioritize Racial Justice](#)
- [Initial Letter from Students to ESP Faculty](#)

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### ***Monday, August 24, 2020***

Dear Students and Alumni:

Last month, I circulated a letter to students and alumni that enumerated the anti-racism actions that our program was taking in the short-term. Now I would like to provide you an update of this work in the form of a correspondence I have had with a group of concerned students and alumni. The group sought information about our long-term plans and requested further action on their demands ([linked](#)), as well as clarification of actions that the program is taking.

As background, I am providing both the group's recent letter and my initial response in July.

I look forward to providing you periodic updates on our work on anti-racism and to your continued engagement with the program.

Best Regards,

Steve

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### ***Thursday, August 20, 2020***

Dear Students and Alumni:

My letter of July 23, which I made public by sending it to all students and alumni, outlined measures that the MPA in Environmental Science and Policy program was taking immediately to advance anti-racism, while it also foretold of a plan to establish a committee of faculty, students, alumni, and staff that would lead a systematic and sustained effort to integrate the study of equity in the curriculum and to improve the diversity and inclusion of the program.

In the month since that letter, we consulted Earth Institute colleagues and others, with expertise in this area, and concluded that a thorough audit of our program is needed. The purpose of the audit

will be to assess what our program has done to address racism and to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion. The findings will set a baseline against which we will gauge progress and it will generate recommendations for systematic improvement. Next, we will select a consultancy with experience and expertise in auditing of this kind to undertake the project, which will represent a significant undertaking that will require time and money. We are also discussing the possibility of coordinating with other Earth Institute programs, which may also wish to conduct audits.

The committee, which we will form early in the fall semester when prospective members are back at work, will oversee the audit and eventually provide oversight of the implementation the recommendations that emerge from it. The committee will consider and decide the best way to engage with interested students and alumni.

You raise numerous clarifying questions about the other measures that we have been implementing. I provide you the answers you seek below.

1. Anti-racism discussions in courses: The purpose of the summer courses is to teach students basic applied environmental science and science communication. Discussions of anti-racism were appended to these science courses, and it is understandable that they might have seemed to some students additional rather than integrated. Still, I have encouraged faculty to pursue these discussions and they have responded willingly. The “enforcement” you propose runs counter to the principle of academic freedom on which we operate and would be ineffective in generating meaningful discussion.
2. Briefly, equity is defined as the distribution of resources that accounts for both past history and current position, so that future outcomes are fairly distributed. So far, the integration of equity and the viewpoints of BIPOC authors is taking place in the following ways: a) at least one week is to be spent on equity and sustainability in every section of the Sustainability Management course (see readings below); b) a reconfiguration of the Ethics course with new readings. The course, however, will not solely use an EJ lens to teach ethics.

The Sustainability Management readings include at least the following.

Fairchild, Denise and Weinrub, Al. “Introduction.” *Energy Democracy: Advancing Equity in Clean Energy Solutions*. Ed. Denise Fairchild and Al Weinrub. Washington DC: Island Press, 2017. 1-19.

Tishman, Maggie. “Community-Anchor Strategies for Energy Democracy.” *Energy Democracy: Advancing Equity in Clean Energy Solutions*. Ed. Denise Fairchild and Al Weinrub. Washington DC: Island Press, 2017. 173-194.

“Struggle and the City: Conflict-Informed Collaboration.” *Equity, Growth, and Community: What the Nation Can Learn from America's Metro Areas*, by Chris Benner and Manuel Pastor, University of California Press, Oakland, California, 2015, pp. 130–160. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ffnd4.9](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ffnd4.9).

Eastside Community Network. *Neighborhoods First Engagement Model*. [www.ecn-detroit.org/neighborhoods-first-engagement-model](http://www.ecn-detroit.org/neighborhoods-first-engagement-model)

3. Workshops: We will seek to include environmental laws that pertain to equity and environmental justice. We are modifying the political analysis and performance management outputs in the Fall workshop to account for these issues. Workshop selection in the Spring may include projects that pertain to anti-racism, but it will continue to be based on student preferences and the faculty's ability to obtain projects that reflect students' interests.
4. New course: The course will be an elective offered by the Sustainability Management program and open to all Earth Institute students. The prospective instructor is a Black woman. She will determine the syllabus, which will be reviewed by a faculty committee.
5. Co-curricular programming is non-credit and optional by definition. Courses are the vehicles for mandatory education.
6. Student Recruitment: The program recruits students in-person at graduate fairs, college campuses, and occasionally at venues, such as sustainability conferences and employers' offices. In addition, it recruits online through advertising, social media, and email. It also sends program information to chairs of pertinent departments at colleges and university environmental studies departments, and, in normal times, posters on numerous campuses. In recent weeks, the program has expanded to include all Minority Serving Institutions in its recruitment, and it has added criteria to its online advertising on LinkedIn to better reach prospective BIPOC students. We are also exploring ways to do something similar on Google. The purpose of this recruitment is to reach as many likely applicants as possible. It's measure of success ultimately is the number of strong applicants who are accepted and who enroll. In terms of diversity, the metric is the number of BIPOC students who enroll. Your suggestion that there is a lack of transparency is off target. The data that we use to evaluate recruitment has to do with web traffic and application numbers, not demographic data. We want every single admitted student to enroll, although that isn't possible. Whether we publicize the data has no bearing on diversity.
7. Fellowships: The fellowships that we have dedicated to BIPOC students are available annually. The Dean's Fellowship, which is a full-tuition grant, includes an Earth Institute internship.
8. International Students: Our program provides untiring service to all students, including international students, although that does not necessarily alleviate bureaucratic hassles. The pandemic has exacerbated conditions for international students by making it necessary for them to navigate Columbia University remotely, and it has caused changes and delays to ordinary procedures.
9. Training: This sort of training will be incorporated into student orientation, making it a routine session for students. Similar training will be offered to faculty and staff. Whether it will be required is yet to be decided.

10. Professional development class for and by BIPOC students: I will refer this request to SIPA's Office of Career Services.
11. Partnership with local EJ organizations: We are eager to pursue such partnerships. I would be grateful for the assistance of alumni and students in developing and maintaining these partnerships.
12. Creating internships for admitted BIPOC students and fee waivers for prospective BIPOC students: We seek to provide meaningful internship opportunities for all students who want them. There is an application fee waiver that any prospective student may request.
13. Planning for recruitment, retention, and advancement for BIPOC faculty and staff, including program directors and advisors: I expect that the audit will bring to the surface ways to improve in this area. I am deeply committed to pursuing this objective and welcome suggestions from students and alumni of potential faculty and staff we might recruit. This is most easily accomplished with adjunct faculty, and I welcome your proposals.
14. Allow alumni to audit certain classes online and for free: I will convey this request, which I support, to Columbia's administration.
15. Create a culture of intentionality: I share your sentiment and look forward to better understanding students' experiences through the audit process.

Best Regards,

Steve

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***Monday, August 17, 2020: Letter from Concerned Students and Alumni to Dr. Cohen/Program***

Dr. Cohen,

Thank you for your email and patience with our response - we very much appreciate your point-by-point responses to our demands and the transparency with this plan. [President Bollinger has committed to anti-racism](#) for the broader Columbia community, and the actions you've outlined reflect a step in the right direction towards promoting an anti-racist culture within the MPA-ESP program. We encourage you to share this action plan, and all subsequent efforts, publicly.

The program teaches us to make science-based policy decisions, but the program must recognize that its students need to be able to combine scientific rigor with acknowledgement that true sustainability only manifests when we support our communities by clearing a path for justice, equity and opportunity. The work of the sustainability professional is to be engaged in policies, in agencies and organizations, not originally imagined to be serving the environment and only the environment

(which as a community, has historically mostly celebrated and perpetuated opportunities for those who are white). We believe that this work needs to be an ongoing and permanent fixture of the program that not only engages students, alumni, faculty, and staff, but also allows for input and leads to actual implementation of suggested actions. As a priority, we would like to see some sort of formal forum for direct engagement for those interested, whether that be through the diversity committee you've identified or some other vehicle.

In addition to the over 200 signers of our original petition, last week, a group of current students and alumni held an anti-racism town hall to engage ESP alumni - we had over 30 attendees from almost 10 different cohorts. It is clear that our students and alumni are trying to create a more just and equitable world, and perhaps this program did not provide us with the adequate tools to do so. Please see below our aggregated suggestions and questions to the action plan:

#### Curricular and Co-Curricular Actions

- **Anti-racism discussions in courses:** While current faculty's efforts to incorporate teachings of anti-racism into their curriculums this summer is admirable, we would like to see more structure and enforcement around this. Current students have expressed that the incorporation of anti-racism into courses has felt like an afterthought for some professors or added on optional work which adds extra burden for those interested in the topic and leaves out those who need to learn more but choose not to. We would like to see professors include more BIPOC authors in their courses' required readings. However, incorporation of anti-racism in required courses must go beyond "diverse perspectives" and must overtly discuss the limitations of how fields of study fail to address inequality (for example, actively remind students how economics is often used as a justification for placing environmental harms in communities of color and how economic efficiency does not mean equity). Further, what options are available for making this more enforceable? Professors that actually put in the emotional labor for these types of discussions should be rewarded in their performance reviews and career advancement.
- **Workshops:** While we understand that students express their interests in different workshop topics, we believe the topic of racial justice and equity should be core, especially for the Summer and Fall Workshops that are not beholden to client requests. The Summer and Fall Workshops could require deliverables related to the environmental justice (EJ) implications of proposed legislation and program designs. EJ could also be incorporated into each deliverable. Further, previous Spring Workshops have included clients and projects related to EJ (e.g. *Advancing Urban Agriculture* in Spring 2018, *Senior Participation in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program* in Spring 2019), and we would like to see the program seek out these types of projects more often.
- **Changes to Sustainability Management:** We would like more information on the changes made to the Sustainability Management course - how is "equity" being defined; were the case studies changed?
- **Changes to Environmental Ethics:** We are pleased to see this course will be reworked to better incorporate issues of race and climate change - we believe this course has the potential to be a great course on ethics with EJ as the lens through which the course is taught.
- **New course on sustainability and equity:** Will this course be required or an elective? How and from whom are you collecting input to determine the curriculum for this course? Further, we encourage that this professor is BIPOC.

- Co-curriculars: Co-curricular workshops and Skills Seminars should be made mandatory for students. Making all of these optional signals to students that anti-racism work is not a priority of the program.

## Student Recruitment

- Admission and recruitment statistics: We are glad that the program has recruited specifically at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and plans on continuing to do so. However, we would like to have information around recruitment efforts and eventual admissions transparent and publicly available. Transparent recruitment and admissions statistics (beyond gender and nationality), as well as plans and goals, will help keep the program accountable and reflect on how to better reach potential BIPOC students. This should include data on how the program is recruiting students, and where efforts are strongest and weakest so that actions can be amended to be most successful. Further, while recruitment at colleges and universities is effective, the program should examine how it could improve recruitment from the workforce to encourage more entry- and mid-level BIPOC professionals.
- Financial aid: We are very pleased to hear of the new fellowship that will be awarded to students of historically underrepresented groups. Will this only be a one-year gift, and if so, will there be efforts to make this a sustained gift? Further, we encourage that the program also look into securing internships and application fee waivers for prospective and admitted BIPOC students.
- Committee on diversity and inclusion: We are also very pleased that this committee will be an established and permanent fixture of the program, and we hope it will not become a tokenized situation in which the group's advice will not be seriously considered and implemented. This committee should have a certain level of power to actually set goals and create change supported by program administration. We would like to learn more about the formality and structure of this committee (is there a way to structure it in such a way that makes it accessible to all and encourages participation, perhaps by having varying levels of involvement?), and how it will interface with the newly established Anti-Racism Board within the program's Student Government Organization (SGO).

## Training for Students, Faculty, and Staff

- International students and context: We hope the administration will look into how it can improve the experiences and education of international students. It has been expressed by alumni that international students do not get adequate support from the program regarding bureaucratic hurdles before and after the program (for example, required paperwork), as well as how to navigate the job market in the United States as a non-citizen. Further, course discussions and trainings should help domestic students understand EJ in a global context.
- Diversity and inclusion/racial bias discussions and trainings: Any anti-racism workshop or training should be made mandatory for all students and made available to every cohort of students. In addition to training during orientation and a follow-up workshop, racial bias

training that will be given to faculty and staff should also be open to students and alumni. Further, this training should be annual and required.

We understand that not all of our original demands could be addressed immediately, but we would like to point out that the following demands were not addressed in the action plan, but could easily be implemented into it:

1. Professional development class for and by BIPOC.
2. Creating an ongoing partnership with local EJ organizations that allow students to meaningfully advance the mission of the organizations.
3. Transparent admission statistics for race.
4. Creating internships for admitted BIPOC students and fee waivers for prospective BIPOC students.
5. Planning for recruitment, retention, and advancement for BIPOC faculty and staff, including program directors and advisors.

Additionally, after holding the anti-racism town hall for students and alumni, we would like to include these additional suggestions:

1. Allow alumni to audit certain classes online and for free, to help address gaps in our educational experiences and to encourage alumni interaction with students and with each other.
2. Create a culture of intentionality that encourages students to think about who is being represented in different program experiences, such as Workshop briefings.

We are grateful that the program is listening to our demands and implementing an action plan. However, just as the goal of ESP is to create tangible change within the environmental field, the program needs to better define terms and goals for tangible change within its own community. ESP needs to create a structure around these efforts so that they are measured and sustained for the long-term, and so success metrics and accountability mechanisms should be developed. As mentioned above, engagement like this needs to be formal, permanent, and enduring across all cohorts. We hope that the formation of the diversity committee is underway so that we can have these discussions in a sustainable and structured manner - we cannot sustain a path towards systemic change over email. Further, we cannot speak for *all* MPA-ESP alumni, and hope to see more forums where more alumni can provide their opinions directly.

As you said, the involvement of our ESP community in both the program and the broader social movement against racial injustice is incredibly inspiring. But, as current students and alumni, the onus is not completely on us to change the program for the better. We hope the administration, staff, and faculty rise to the occasion and continue to take anti-racism seriously by incorporating all of our demands and keeping engagement meaningful with those students and alumni that are interested in helping with program changes. We look forward to working with you further.

Best Regards,

Concerned Students and Alumni

### ***Thursday, July 23, 2020: Letter from Dr. Cohen to Students/Alumni***

Dear Alumni and Students:

I would like to thank you for your contribution to our efforts to better integrate the study of environmental justice and equity in the curriculum of the MPA in Environmental Science and Policy program and to improve the program's diversity. I believe that it is of paramount importance for our program to advance anti-racism. As I discussed in an earlier letter to you, achieving sustainability requires addressing both racial justice and economic inequality. The program, along with the School of International and Public Affairs and The Earth Institute, is taking concrete steps to incorporate these issues in our teaching, student recruitment, and hiring. Your petition includes many good ideas, which we are incorporating in the action plan that I outline below.

#### **Curricular and Co-Curricular Actions**

1. This summer, each faculty member has made space and time to discuss anti-racism as it pertains to environmental science and the management topics covered in Workshop.
2. The study of equity, including the strategy of stakeholder engagement, has been incorporated into all sections of the required Sustainability Management course.
3. A co-curricular workshop, "Racism and Community Resilience," led by Donna Givens, President and CEO of Detroit's Eastside Community Network was scheduled for July 23rd.
4. A Fall Earth Institute Skill Seminar will be led by WE ACT and focus on Environmental and Climate Justice as well as activism on October 24<sup>th</sup>.
5. Professor Gondek has begun reworking the required Environmental Ethics course to focus additional attention on issues of race, including who suffers most from climate change.
6. I am encouraging all instructors, including those who teach the Environmental Policy and Economics courses, to incorporate diverse perspectives in their course materials and teaching. The design of all courses rests with individual instructors based on the principle of academic freedom.
7. We are working to field a new course on sustainability and equity this academic year.
8. The Spring client-based workshops will deal with the issue of equity to the extent that students express this issue as their preference. As you know, project selection begins with a discussion in workshop during November and then a poll of student preferences. Given the enhanced visibility of anti-racism, I expect students will propose topics and clients in this area, and as always, faculty will respond to their preferences.

#### **Student Recruitment**

1. The program conducts outreach to Historically Black Colleges and Universities, as part of its outreach to environmental science and other pertinent departments at colleges and universities throughout the country. In November 2019, Earth Institute recruited prospective students for the MPA-ESP program at the HBCU Climate Change Conference in New Orleans. The program will participate in the event again in 2020. The program will also seek additional ways to recruit Black students, such as graduate fairs and presentations hosted by HBCUs.

2. The Earth Institute staff conducts online advertising on behalf of the MPA-ESP program. Staff will explore ways to hone this advertising so that it better reaches BIPOC students.
3. Since the inception of the Dean's Fellowship in Environmental Science and Policy, a full-tuition grant and Earth Institute internship, it's been the program's practice to award it to a student of color who meets the criteria of academic excellence and financial need. We are revising the description of the fellowship to make it clear that the fellowship is intended for student from historically underrepresented groups, including but not limited to: Blacks/African-Americans; Hispanics; Native Americans/Alaska Natives; and persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, or Samoa.
4. In 2019, we established the John and Teresa Waldes Fellowship, a partial fellowship that is awarded annually to students from historically underrepresented groups, including but not limited to Blacks/African-Americans; Hispanics; Native Americans/Alaska Natives; and persons having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, or Samoa.
5. The program is participating in a SIPA-wide assessment of a diversity and inclusion audit.
6. The program is creating a permanent committee on diversity and inclusion, comprising alumni of color, faculty, and administrators, as well as at least one representative from the current class. The committee will pursue opportunities to help the program diversify its student body, faculty, and staff.

#### Training for students, faculty, and staff

1. A discussion of diversity and inclusion, led by an outside facilitator, is going to be part of Orientation. A follow-up workshop for students is going to take place toward the end of each academic year.
2. We are instituting racial bias training for faculty and staff. A first workshop is scheduled for August 3rd. If you would like to join, you can [register here](#).
3. We will add questions about race and diversity in the student end-of-the-year survey.

Since its inception in 2002, the MPA-ESP program has sought to create a community of students, faculty, alumni, and staff who are dedicated to making the world a better place to live. Your involvement in the program at this crucial time in the United States speaks to this community and makes for a valuable contribution. My colleagues and I look forward to your continued engagement with the program.

Best Regards,

Steve Cohen

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***Demand the MPA-ESP Program Commit to Prioritize Racial Justice***

## Demand the MPA-ESP Program Commit to Prioritize Racial Justice

Columbia SIPA | The Earth Institute | MPA - Environmental Science and Policy

### *Petition from MPA-ESP Alumni and Students*

**The undersigned MPA-ESP alumni and students unequivocally stand for Black Lives Matter and racial justice.** The discussions and protests around the country have led us to reflect on our educational experiences and recognize its shortcomings. We demand that the program institute sweeping reform that prioritizes racial justice into its recruitment, admissions, faculty, curriculum, and culture. While some [actions are underway at the Earth Institute](#), steps focused on data collection and analysis are insufficient and trivial when we know there are concrete actions the program could take immediately and in the long-term for tangible change. As part of the MPA-ESP community, we are asking MPA-ESP faculty and leadership to turn these analyses into meaningful action.

In the MPA-ESP program, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) have been consistently underrepresented in the students, faculty, and staff. For example, in the class of 2019, **only one of 57 students - 1.75% of the entire cohort - was Black**. The total enrollment of Black students at Columbia is over 5%. The Black population in the United States is almost 15%. The racial diversity within MPA-ESP faculty and staff is also severely lacking: of the twelve professors who teach required program courses (not including workshop), **only two were people of color** for the 2019 cohort. This lack of diversity is unacceptable. Beyond the moral implications of these statistics, increased classroom diversity provides a [myriad of benefits for all students](#), such as significantly reducing implicit bias and its detrimental effects, and improving critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership abilities.

The environmental movement was founded with and continues to perpetuate racist ideals -- the environmental field has historically excluded BIPOC employees, especially in positions of leadership. A [report on racial composition in environmental organizations](#) found that even though BIPOC make up 36% of the entire U.S. population and comprise 29% of the science and engineering workforce, they do not exceed 16% of the staff in any of the organizations surveyed. BIPOC are also disproportionately affected by [environmental pollution, as well as the impacts of climate change](#) -- 1.5 million BIPOC live in areas vulnerable to contamination and 70% of the country's contaminated waste sites are located near low-income housing ([20% of Black households are low-income](#) while only 6% of white non-Hispanic households are low-income). [Oil and gas facilities are often located near Black communities](#), forcing them to breathe in toxic air pollution. Though the United States' national parks are meant to preserve nature for all, [Black people are less likely to visit them](#). Hurricanes, which are becoming more powerful with climate change, are [exacerbating racial inequality](#).

As a program aimed at developing leaders in sustainability, MPA-ESP should be facilitating the growing need for BIPOC voices in the environmental space. In order to create the political coalition

needed for the structural change required to address climate change, we need to prioritize the needs of BIPOC communities. **We must understand how the environmental movement has perpetuated structures of racial oppression. We must learn to center and elevate BIPOC viewpoints. We must be actively anti-racist.**

As a starting point, we are proposing the following short- and long-term steps that MPA-ESP can commit to today. If SIPA and the Earth Institute are truly committed to anti-racism, the MPA-ESP program will put in place the following demands:

**Demand 1: Take action to increase recruitment and admissions of BIPOC students.**

*Immediate Steps:*

- ❖ Hire an outside source to perform a Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) audit of the program.
- ❖ Create a permanent committee on D&I within the MPA-ESP community, including alumni of color, professors, and administrators, as well as one representative from the current class.
- ❖ Direct the committee to set goals to increase recruitment and admission of BIPOC students once the audit has been completed.
- ❖ Recruit specifically, and attend job fairs, at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).
- ❖ Make admissions statistics and results of the audit publicly available.
- ❖ Devote the fully-funded Dean's Fellowship to a BIPOC student.

*Long-Term Steps:*

- ❖ Dedicate scholarships (in addition to the Dean's Fellowship), internships, and application fee waivers for BIPOC students. Increase recruitment, retention, and advancement of BIPOC faculty and staff in both administrative and academic positions within SIPA and the Earth Institute.

**Demand 2: Implement training for students and professors.**

*Immediate Steps:*

- ❖ Hire an outside consultant (not a professor of the school) to facilitate a diversity discussion during orientation, and provide a follow-up workshop at the end of the program.
- ❖ Require racial bias training for each professor, facilitated by an outside consultant as determined by the D&I committee.

*Long-Term Steps:*

- ❖ Incorporate questions in the end-of-year survey about instances of racial insensitivity and feedback to improve the diversity training for students and faculty.

**Demand 3: Include environmental justice education that incorporates community engagement into core MPA-ESP curriculum.**

*Immediate Steps:*

- ❖ Replace or rework the Ethics Course to be one focused on environmental justice (EJ).

- ❖ Require an output for the Summer and Fall workshops to focus on EJ implications of a policy or program. Although the Spring workshop outputs are dictated by clients, professors should still encourage students to consider racial justice implications as they produce deliverables.
- ❖ Select one EJ-related workshop project every semester (similar to how the program currently aims to always have at least one energy-related project every semester).
- ❖ Require that the Environmental Policy course include discussions about who benefitted from each policy discussed, who was left out of the conversations, and why. Course goals should include evaluating and understanding why the environmental movement in the U.S. is predominantly white (and remind students that this is a result of policy choices), and better informing international students who may not have an understanding of the U.S. policy context. Conversely, this course should also highlight EJ issues in the global context -- for example, the role that the Global North plays in carbon emissions that disproportionately impact the Global South -- to ensure that domestic students challenge U.S.-centric viewpoints.
- ❖ Mandate that Economics courses actively remind students how economics is often used as a justification for placing environmental harms in communities of color and how economic efficiency does not mean equity. The underlying framework of economics is that there are limited resources with which to meet unlimited wants, but we failed to discuss how those resources are distributed inequitably. When we learned about concepts such as cost-benefit analyses, the Coase Theorem, externalities, and revealed preferences, we did not discuss how the [racial wealth gap](#) and unequal access to power and resources should affect our conclusions drawn from economic analyses.
- ❖ Add an additional professional development class inclusive to the job market realities of race and gender, allowing students to speak with a diverse set of people within the industry to understand the challenges they face (this should be taught by a BIPOC).
- ❖ Work with local EJ organizations for meaningful contribution by students and alumni in ongoing partnership, and in a way that is led by said organizations. Contributions should support and advance the mission of the organization.

*Long-Term Steps:*

- ❖ Develop a consistent platform to provide ongoing dialogue about the program's efforts towards improving racial justice within the MPA-ESP community, as well as within the broader environmental policy field.

We believe that the actions listed here are important steps towards creating an inclusive and anti-racist learning environment and creating leaders who will have the knowledge and skills to create equitable environmental change. We look forward to engaging with MPA-ESP administration, faculty, alumni, and students to discuss next steps and identify both the possibilities and barriers regarding our demands. **We will no longer accept the program as-is. We can and must do better.**

**Signed,**

A. Carolina Rosero, 2015	Anonymous	Claire Desser, 2020
Abigail Edwards, 2021	April Lee, 2010	Claire Ferguson, 2014
Aimee Barnes, 2007	Asha Kreiling, 2014	Colleen Neely, 2021
Aiyana Bodi, 2019	Ashley Mastroddi, 2019	Cornelia Wu, 2019
Alexandria Henke, 2018	Ashley Toombs, 2015	Daniella Simari, 2020
Alexei Gittelsohn, 2017	Aurora Barone, 2019	Dannie Dinh, 2014
Alisha Lee, 2020	Beryl Sinclair, 2020	David Berliner, 2011
Alison Wolters, 2019	Betty Crenmins, 2009	Derina Man, 2011
Alla Sobel, 2007	Britni Steingard, 2010	Dr. Joseph Nyangon, PhD, 2012
Allison Day, 2021	Caitlin Boas, 2018	Dr. Kimberley Miner, 2013
Allison Pace, 2017	Caitlin Harris, 2019	Drew Poling, 2021
Alona Bunning , 2013	Caitlin O'Donnell, 2016	Elaine Angeles, 2019
Alyssa Nielsen, 2019	Carlos Calvo Ambel, 2011	Elena Belletti, 2020
Amy Burns, 2013	Carlos Rymer, 2009	Elizabeth Engoren, 2013
Anastasia Gordon, 2020	Carolina Griggs, 2011	Elizabeth Griffiths (Sands), 2007
Andrew McCornack, 2012	Caroline Fox, 2012	Elizabeth Medford, 2017
Andrew Solfest, 2021	Caroline Berman, 2019	Elizabeth Wilson, 2021
Angelie Gomez, 2020	Carolyn Langford, 2009	Emily Becker, 2021
Anindita Chakraborty, 2015	Casey Talon, 2007	Emily Clark, 2019
Anna Beeman, 2021	Catherine Louie, 2019	Emily Miner, 2011
Anna Liebowitz, 2019	Catrina Rorke, 2007	Emma Gosliner, 2019
Anna Loizeaux, 2018	Cecilia Magos, 2021	Emmelyn Leung, 2015
Anna Nikolova, 2021	Celeste Zumwalt, 2021	Erica Glenn, 2019
Anne Leone, 2019	Chelsea Vargas, 2020	
Anonymous	Christophe Jospe, 2014	

Erifili Draklellis, 2020	Jared Messinger, 2013	Kelly Rose Nunziata, 2020
Erika Leung Rodriguez, 2009	Jayson VanBeusichem, 2017	Kelsey Wooddell, 2018
Erin Dickinson, 2020	Jeffrey Irvine, 2013	Kendall Singleton, 2013
Eva Iveroth, 2019	Jen Holzer, 2010	Kevin Fertig, 2017
Fahima Islam, 2015	Jenisha Shrestha, 2020	Lara Bryant, 2011
Felicia Horwitz, 2019	Jennifer Bock, 2021	Lara Wallentine Hussain, 2005
Frederic Klein, 2016	Johnathon de Villier, 2017	Larissa Johnson, 2012
Gabriel Cowles, 2009	Jonas Goldman, 2020	Laura Thornton, 2020
Garrett Berghoff, 2021	Jonathan Eckman, 2020	Lee Hager, 2019
Grace Relf, 2015	Jonathan Lesser, 2020	Leila Pourarkin, 2007
Haley Gabbard (née Rogers), 2011	Joseph Conway, 2021	Leo Tidd, 2006
Hayley Herzog, 2021	Joshua Cohen, 2008	Ligia Henriquez, 2015
Helen Morris, 2007	Joshua Cooper, 2020	Louise Efthimiou, 2020
Hetal Jain, 2004	Juan Pablo Osornio, 2007	Louiza Molohides, 2021
Ingerid Huus-Hansen, 2015	Julia Koppman Norton, 2019	Maham Ahmed, 2013
Ingunn Gunnarsdóttir, 2015	Julue Manoharan, 2018	Malika Chatterji , 2016
Isaac Wilkins, 2017	Karin Teixeira Kaechele, 2013	Mara Elana Burstein, 2014
Isabella Powers, 2020	Katharine Gross, 2013	Maria Chavez, 2019
Isabelle Branco-Lo, 2020	Katherine King, 2007	Maryka Paquette, 2015
Jackson Guze, 2019	Katherine McNamara, 2017	Matt Gray, 2006
Jaclyn Rabinowitz, 2014	Kathleen Szeleper, 2008	Matt Klasen, 2007
Jacqueline Geaney, 2013	Katie Edmond, 2014	Maureen Loman, 2014
Jake Higdon, 2019	Katrina Martynowicz, 2006	Maya Fuller, 2020
James Marshall, 2009	Kaysee Arrowsmith (Tom), 2014	Maya Navabi, 2021
James Vener, 2007		Mea Halperin, 2012

Megan Gilbert, 2007	Sam Rosen, 2015	William Wepsala, 2015
Mia Perez, 2018	Samantha Tress, 2008	Yichu Lu, 2020
Michael Hanlon, 2012	Samuel Barnes, 2019	Yousef Koutnik, 2019
Mika Maekawa, 2014	Sarah Braverman, 2021	Zachary Byrum, 2020
Milo McBride, 2020	Sayoko Lisa Kubotera, 2017	Zachary Rosenblatt, 2019
Miranda Alquist, 2019	Sejal Soni, 2016	
Molly Dunton, 2020	Shannon Binns, 2007	
Nathalia Nagai, 2020	Shilin Xia, 2019	
Ni Ni, 2014	Shirley Binder, 2019	
Nick Burant, 2012	Shravy Jain-Conti, 2015	
Nicole Haghpahan, 2019	Siddharth Tulsiani, 2019	
Olivia Alves, 2020	Sophie Capshaw-Mack, 2020	
Olivia Taylor, 2019	Stacia Carrington, 2019	
Paige Olmsted, 2008	Stacy Lee, 2011	
Parisa Mahdad, 2013	Stav Gilutz, 2016	
R. Louise (Venables) Della Pesca, 2017	Stephanie Díaz, 2019	
Rachel Goodgal, 2021	Stephanie Yang, 2015	
Rachel Hamburger, 2014	Sue Kim-Ichel, 2006	
Raphaelle Ortiz, 2019	Sylricka Ruwadi, 2016	
Rashika Choudhary, 2021	Tamar Aharoni, 2019	
Rebecca Miller, 2015	Tess Arzu, 2016	
Robbie Copley, 2014	Thomas Pellicano, 2015	
Rosario Giufre, 2019	Timothy Woodruff, 2021	
Rosemarie Radford, 2013	Wendi Bevins, 2011	
Sage Solomine, 2019	William Hsu, 2019	

## *Initial Letter from Students*

Dear ESP 2020 Faculty:

In light of the ongoing protests for Black lives matter, it's important to look deeply at life in academia from the perspective of Black/indigenous/people of color (BIPOC). We are in the clear minority in this program and since the start, have felt as though we are failing to contribute to a movement for equality by being a part of an institution that seems to only reinforces the very thing our friends and families are fighting against — racism.

We know and understand that this is a multifaceted systemic issue and that the bias against BIPOC is often a very subconscious one. That said these are hardly brought up in class in a meaningful way, and if they are, it's as though it's a passing thought rather than anything meaningful. Our experience so far has been beyond overwhelming as we try to navigate life during this pandemic, focus on our school, all while also trying to do our part to fight for the basic rights of all Black lives — something our fellow white classmates have the privilege to not think about. Whether we are Black or not, this is something we all must fight for and represent.

Many of us have expressed feeling uncomfortable or odd being in class while others fight for the right to live *during a pandemic that disproportionately affects marginalized communities in large part due to environmental factors*. In order to make these necessary feelings of discomfort productive, we must continue to discuss our roles as future colleagues and scientific advisors to decision makers. For us to best use these skills to make the most beneficial decisions, the concepts must be presented in such a way that is easily understood in order to pass on.

Unfortunately, It's also so easy for our voices to be disregarded, considering we only really exist via a screen or through typed words that may be overlooked. This movement is a major shift in our lives that we have never experienced before and it is important, despite the mental and emotional toll of all the traumas that it triggers. We are reliving traumas from our lives that taught us that the world favored people based on the color of their skin. We are experiencing the pain and anger and frustration of seeing a system work fairly to our white friends but with severe inequality towards our own. And it goes on.

It is not our job as BIPOCs to educate our peers on our experiences with racism that is so foreign to them. To put it bluntly, we do not feel like the University feels the need to check in on our situation, whether it be in regard to the pandemic or the protests. While we appreciate the resources or informatics to help our mental health, it's a passive act that really just puts the responsibility on the student rather than on the University to find ways to actively support us when we know the resources are there.

This is our reality and it's taking a toll on us and our experience in this program. We want to have these conversations, but none of us have the emotional bandwidth to do so as our experiences and current events have come across as unimportant to dedicate class time to. So please, with that, I ask that you see our needs and dedicate the time and resources you have to support your students of color through these times and onwards.

Our thoughts and concerns are reflected throughout this document alongside the rest of our cohort and we would appreciate being a part of the conversation as you make critical decisions on the following. We acknowledge that this program is intense by nature and that online schoolwork is extremely difficult to facilitate. We thank everyone who is making this semester possible. We also would like to recognize that many of these concerns are directed at a specific course, it is incredibly challenging for us to share these thoughts while we are in class as the online format is not conducive to these kinds of discussions.

That said, we look forward to creating real tangible changes that the MPA-ESP program represents.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
2021 Columbia MPA ESP Cohort

Topic	Solutions
Racial Justice	Anti-racism discussion led by experienced facilitator
	More substantive curriculum consideration for environmental justice
	More diversity among faculty (female and faculty of color)
	More intentional recruitment of BIPOC ESP students

Topic	Problems
Mental Health and Student Support	Unable to attend social events due to load of courses
	Lack of access to mental health check ins
	Faculty awareness that students are not in an academic setting/lack emotional/financial support
	Pace of the program may impede depth
	Solutions
	Pass/fail option for summer
	Weekly advisor/liaison check ins
	Faculty ask for feedback on the program

General	Problems
	Long zoom times of 7-8 hours a day leave little energy for completing individual coursework
	Group work is inefficient across time zones
	Solutions
	Streamline/make consistent access to resources across courses
	Provide breaks
	Coordinate groups among time zones
	Pivot to individual assignments
	Have more flexibility in lab session times (possibly go back to 2 sections)

Environmental Chemistry	Problems
	Chemistry language has not been established, so students are unable to understand the lecture in a common vernacular
	Learning objectives are not clearly defined/realistic
	Far more work than any other class
	Pace is far too fast
	Solutions
	Readings posted earlier
	Realistic learning objectives
	Establish common language and define fundamental concepts in class
	Move away from the full written lab report
	Refocus the class to what is applicable
	Proposed structure: case study, lecture on the chemistry behind it, discuss in break out rooms with TAs/liaisons
	Prerecord at least part of the class

	Remove the final exam to focus only on a final report
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	Problems
	Debates are a large chunk of class time and are only a small part of grading
	Solutions
	More time in the lab for actual work on the labs
Ecology	More lab-lecture linking at the beginning of lab

	Solutions
	Clearer links to racial injustice, explicit discussion based on this (at least 1 reading per week)
	More guidance on assignments
Policy	Clear expectations of learning objectives

	Problems
	Individual assignments and labs cover the same topics twice
	Solutions
	More office hours due to conflicts with chemistry assignments on wednesdays
Climatology	Only 1 assignment (lab or individual) graded per week

	Problems
	Disappointment with the address of STEM strike
Workshop	Solutions

	More acknowledgement of the greater injustice context we are working in
	Problems
	Inaccessible, not responding to emails, not following up on calls, etc.
	\$200 reimbursement does not cover the serious value loss and fees to account for things that are inaccessible
	Solutions
	Have a financial aid counselor follow up
Financial aid	Additional fees need to be reduced to reflect the actual access