

URBAN PLANNING ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS ANTI-BLACKNESS AND RACISM

Updated February 2022

The faculty and students of the UCLA Department of Urban Planning have affirmed a renewed commitment to pursuing racial justice. This commitment includes challenging the urban planning field's complicity in anti-Blackness and racism, and evaluating and strengthening our department's own practices.

In a key step, we launched an Ad Hoc Racial Justice Working Group composed of 6 faculty members and 11 students (both groups 2/3 of color) who worked intensively from July-October 2020 to formulate an ambitious set of proposals for change. It was not possible to implement all these wide-ranging proposals immediately, so we are now going through a continuing process of specifying and implementing changes.

This Action Plan spells out our plans and progress toward these ends. The Action Plan is an ongoing work-in-progress that will be evolving over coming years, with guidance from a standing Racial Justice Committee, once more with participation from both faculty and students. We will periodically update the web page. We welcome any input from the full range of stakeholders in the UCLA Department of Urban Studies and Planning, including communities impacted by urban planning.

The Action Plan encompasses four broad areas of work, and specific action steps under each.

1. Increase department accountability to racial justice goals

- We have formed a standing Racial Justice Committee, comprising students and faculty, that monitors and advises ongoing change directed to racial justice goals.
- Those involved in implementation—the department chair, other standing committees, and staff, are keeping students and faculty informed about their work.

2. Review Urban Planning curriculum and strengthen racial justice content

- The Curriculum Working Group is, over time, determining how to best implement the proposal to add a program-wide course requirement on racial justice.
- The Urban Planning faculty has adopted a requirement that each Area of Concentration offer *at least* one elective devoted to racial justice every year.
- The department will pilot a new course on Black Communities in 2021-22, and evaluate prospects for offering it regularly.
- We have done one round of reviews of selected course syllabi to offer suggestions about how to strengthen racial justice content, and plan to do more.

- Urban Planning has begun discussions with the African American Studies Department about possible collaboration, ranging from cross-listing courses to offering a joint Master's degree.

3. Improve departmental and classroom climate for racial justice

- We conducted a faculty training on maintaining an anti-racist, inclusive, and welcoming classroom during 2020-21, and will conduct another during 2021-22. We will explore how often it will make sense to conduct ongoing trainings.
- We have instituted some new forums for information-sharing and getting questions answered: regular Town Halls and an annual Fall round of AOC meetings, with more rounds possible to the extent that students and faculty decide it would be useful.
- The Chair has instituted regular check-ins with organizations representing students of color.
- Staff are paying added attention to the match between students and faculty in interests and background in assigning advisors.
- Faculty hiring opportunities are currently limited, but looking forward, the Department of Urban Planning reaffirms its commitment to prioritizing racial and ethnic diversity in future search processes.

4. Bolster admissions and improve funding for students who are Black, Indigenous or people of color

- Starting in the 2021-22 recruiting cycle, we will implement new strategies to target recruitment of potential students of color, above all Black students, who remain underrepresented in our student body.
- We have dropped the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) requirement in the 2020-2021 recruiting cycle, and will examine whether to continue making it optional in future years.
- Staff will track and annually report the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of applicants at each stage of the process (application, admission, enrollment).
- We have targeted a guaranteed minimum funding package for to incoming students who are particularly concerned with planning in Black communities.
- The department is providing baseline funding support for Black Planners Network and Planners of Color for Social Equity, two organizations of Urban Planning students that have played leading roles in working for racial justice.
- We have launched the [UCLA Urban Planning Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Fund](#), to raise additional external funds to support fellowships and assistantships for students who are particularly focused on racial justice and students from underrepresented groups.

We have much work still before us, but we see this as an important start, which we will continue to build on.