



WATSON INSTITUTE

for International and Public Affairs

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT THE WATSON INSTITUTE



Statement from Incoming Diversity and Inclusion Committee Chairs:

Dear Colleagues,

We, as incoming co-chairs of the Watson Institute's DIAP committee, would like to express our solidarity with the struggle for justice, anti-racism and equality. We are outraged and saddened by the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, and many other Black people who have been killed as a result of racism and police brutality. We stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement and the many protesters who challenge racism, police brutality and the impunity of police actions.

Black lives matter, and we need to speak out and act.

We understand our role as incoming DIAP co-chairs to be much broader than to focus on issues of representation and diversity. We believe that it is our responsibility as employees of an elite institution to use our privileged position to protect and support Black lives, and to fight institutional and structural racism, starting from within the Watson Institute, Brown University more broadly as well as outside institutions. As faculty, staff and students within the Watson Institute we are called to collectively interrogate our own histories of complicity in racism

and white supremacy, and challenge these through our teaching, learning and engagement with communities we research and live in or next to.

We also want to provide resources for members of the Watson community to engage with anti-racist activities in the communities they live in or to engage through their research. We are collectively tasked to address the long-term, structural racism and violence in the U.S., which has not only led to the countless deaths of Black people at the hand of the police but has also manifested itself in the disproportionate rates at which African Americans, Latinx, Native Americans, and impoverished immigrants have been dying in the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

We have provided a list of just a few ways you can engage in this work that are both reflective and action oriented.

Educate yourself

What is anti-racism? Learn the history and commonly used terms such as systemic racism, microaggressions, implicit bias, and white privilege.

A sampling of recommended readings (as there are many):

- [So You Want to Talk About Race](#) by Ijeoma Olu
- [White Fragility: Why It's so Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) by Robin Diangelo
- [How To Be An Anti-Racist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [The New Jim Crow](#) by Michelle Alexander
- [Pushout](#) by Monique Morris

Get involved

- Commit to decolonize the curricula you are teaching and reflect on your pedagogy
- Call or write local legislators to support state-wide criminal justice reform
- Join anti-racist organizations and initiatives
- Attend town halls and events with local politicians

Donate to organizations that are doing hands on work

- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [NAACP](#)
- [The Sentencing Project](#)
- [Color of Change](#)

We are angry and in pain, but also deeply committed to fight for justice. We hope you will join us.

Nadje Al-Ali
Melissa Nicholas

Standing in Solidarity

Brown's Senior Leaders: Confronting Racial Injustice

[University leaders write to the Brown community](#)

Colonialism in the Curriculum

On May 20, a group of students, faculty, and staff gathered virtually for a very productive discussion on issues of colonialism and the curriculum. The discussion reflected a common sense among all participants that learning and knowledge development is deeply impeded if curricula do not purposefully strive to encompass a wide variety of scholarly voices, materials, and epistemologies from across the globe. Put differently, the participants all recognized that the production of knowledge and pedagogy reflects structures of societal power, structures that in many cases reflect long legacies of oppression, subjugation, and exclusion. The discussion focused on how our curricula can, in recognition of this reality, purposefully expand the range of voices, materials, and paradigms - particularly from traditionally excluded regions and scholarly traditions - that are presented to students. The discussion began an exploration of how students and faculty can work together to build these curricula and measure progress along the way.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

New Diversity and Inclusion Role

Beginning June 1, Melissa Nicholaus' role as MPA Program Manager expanded to include overseeing and implementing the strategic objectives outlined in Watson's departmental Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Among her responsibilities are to monitor diversity-and-inclusion outcomes and to communicate progress; to plan and coordinate workshops, programs, and meetings; and to serve as Watson's essential point of contact about Watson's climate with regard to diversity-and-inclusion values. The entire Watson community warmly welcomes Melissa to this new realm of leadership and service to the institute.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Podcast with Senior Fellow ZZ Packer: 'The 1619 Project' and the Power of Narrative

In 1619, the first ship carrying enslaved Africans arrived at the English settlement of what is now Virginia. From that year forward, slavery and the United States became inextricably linked; in some ways, that date can be viewed as the birth of the country. Last year's '1619 Project' from the New York Times aimed to re-frame American history to reflect this possibility, and won a Pulitzer Prize in the process. On this episode, Sarah Baldwin talks with ZZ Packer, writer and Senior Fellow at the Watson Institute, about her work on The 1619 Project, and about how we all can benefit from challenging the stories we've been told.

[Listen to the episode >](#)

Recent Events

Colleagues across Watson have worked hard during the past three months to maintain our sense of community and ongoing dialogue. [Virtual events](#) brought together staff, faculty, and students on issues such as the impact of COVID-19 in the U.S., South Asia, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe, neoliberal economic policies, and the Sociology of W. E. B. Du Bois. Our regular podcast hosted scholars from across the university including [this week's conversation with incoming Dean Ashish Jha](#) on racism, coronavirus, and economic catastrophe in the US.

Student Leadership

Student members of the DIAP Committee and the Watson Student Advisory Committee [hosted numerous community building events](#) this year for Watson students of color and first-gen students. We are currently discussing efforts to maintain and grow this program, especially as we grapple with the impact of COVID-19 on in-person gatherings.

FEATURED COURSE

ANTH1911: Gender and Sexuality in the Middle East

The aim of this course is to offer an overview of the key issues in the study of

gender and sexuality in the Middle East. It provides a gendered understanding of prevailing structures, ideologies, social practices and trends for those students interested in Middle East societies, cultures and politics, as well as those interested in women and gender studies. Many of the assigned readings are by women from the region or its diaspora who have critically reflected on both their positionalities but also the historical orientalist representation of the Middle East. *Taught by Professor Nadjie Al-Ali.*

*Nominate a course to spotlight that challenges ideas of diversity and colonialism by emailing Watson-DIAP@brown.edu.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

The Watson Institute embraces Brown's goal of increasing representation, voice, and participation by members of historically-underrepresented groups, with equal regard to research and teaching, event programming, and student experience. Since 2016, a Diversity and Inclusion Committee of faculty, staff, and students has convened regularly to foster the Watson Institute's realization of these values. This quarterly newsletter, launched in early 2020, will provide updates and news from the Committee, as well as spotlight pertinent research, courses, and event programming throughout the Institute. [Learn more about the committee](#) and email suggestions and ideas to Watson-DIAP@brown.edu.

*Interested in learning more about Watson's DIAP Committee? Join us the third Tuesday of each month at 2 p.m.

Follow us on social media.

