

Seattle University Academic Assembly  
Resolution adopted on 06-01-2020

"Members of the Seattle University Academic Assembly condemn the recent killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd and acknowledge them as racist actions supported by white supremacist culture and systems. Further, we see them as part of the racist and oppressive history of this country, as morally abhorrent, and as starkly opposed to the vision of social justice advocated by Seattle University. As faculty members, we further understand that in order to teach social justice, we must name it and name acts, systems, and structures that oppose it. Regardless of our disciplines, we must work to name the ways in which we, our fields, our methods, our positionalities, and our own history have worked to uphold white supremacy. As Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Natasha Martin reminded us in her message on Friday, our "willingness to acknowledge the racial terror upon which our country is built and the systemic structural forces that sustain and lock in advantage and disadvantage as a self-reinforcing system that has been operating for years is critical." If we are white-identified, we are especially called to do this work: to acknowledge how our words in classes or in scholarship might silence or damage, how our choices about curriculum, policies, and research topics might support systems that are oppressive, and how our silences about such topics might also mark our own complicity. To this end, we urge AcA to make anti-racist curriculum and pedagogy part of its curriculum review criteria and suggest that AcA form a committee to investigate how to do so, working with colleges and with the office of Diversity and Inclusion to design and implement those criteria. Finally, we stand with our colleagues and our students who are feeling scared, who are feeling alone, and who are feeling the weight of these events in ways that many of us cannot fully understand. We offer our solidarity and support as well as a renewed commitment to consider governance decisions in the light of not only structures on campus that might continue to uphold white supremacy but also in light of the events unfolding across the country and the world so that we can better support and educate our students and ourselves."