

Commitment to Anti-Racism, Inclusion, and Equity

The program of Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee condemns the systemic racism, hatred, and bigotry that is pervasive in the world today. We as a society have been silent and complacent regarding the violence and injustices against individuals who have been marginalized because of their race, culture, ethnicity, language/dialect spoken, religion, disability status, age, sexual orientation, and/or identity. This violence and injustice has plagued this world and our country for hundreds of years.

We recognize that our profession does not represent the diversity of those we serve, especially in the city of Milwaukee. Only 3.5% of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) identify as Black, and that in a white-dominant profession we perpetuate systemic racism. We will actively work towards dismantling white privilege to provoke change in our field and in the communities that we serve. We recognize the impact of systemic racism, lack of diversity, and white privilege in academic programs in CSD that marginalize students and faculty who are BIPOC. It is our responsibility to acknowledge these injustices and work to change them.

These times call for much needed discussions regarding race, diversity, equity and inclusion. Our program has initiated a process of reflection, discussion, and action to be inclusive of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Tackling the symptoms of systemic racism will require long and difficult self-examination and a great deal of work. We pledge to:

- Acknowledge the overwhelming racial injustices within education, healthcare, and policing
- Actively challenge our implicit biases and advocate for historically marginalized communities through honest learning and reflection
- Reject racist notions expressed by our non-black clients, their families, and our colleagues, promoting opportunity for conversations and education
- Openly embrace the value of African American English and other dialects and educate others about the history and importance of diverse dialects
- Hold ourselves to higher standards of cultural humility as opposed to cultural competence, recognizing that this is a life-long learning process
- Continue to support and advocate for our BIPOC clients and their families to help them receive care that is equitable, culturally responsive, and evidence-based
- To actively and continuously listen, engage, support, and stand by the BIPOC members of our community in Milwaukee

The program of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee is committed to long-term change. We have taken the following actions as

beginning steps to deconstructing racism. We know this is a continuous process and we will update this list as new initiatives are added.

- We are creating a page on our department's website to share our progress and provide resources to our students, alumni, and community members to lead and participate in anti-racism and anti-hatred efforts. We will also share these resources through our department social media feeds.
- We no longer require or consider GRE scores as part of our graduate application materials due to the racial, ethnic, and cultural biases inherent in standardized testing.
- We will strive for full participation among faculty members in existing programs to ensure academic success of students of color, including the TRIO and UWM Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Programs, the American Indian Science Scholar Program (AISSP)
- We will continue to nominate our students for the Advanced Opportunity Program (AOP) Fellowship and are committed to supporting all our students in scholarship and grant applications.
- We recognize the disparities in educational opportunities in the field of CSD and have implemented a holistic admissions review process to fairly assess all applicants, mitigate implicit reviewer biases and increase the diversity of our graduate student cohorts
- We will continue to add student members to our Recruitment and Retention Committee to ensure that their voices are heard
- We continue to serve diverse clients to meet their unique communication needs across on-campus and off-campus clinical settings and we are committed to serve all clients regardless of financial need. We are planning to develop relationships with Milwaukee Public Schools to promote the fields of communication disorders to diverse students
- We will revise our mission statement to reflect our commitment to anti-racism and serving diverse populations in the Milwaukee area and beyond.
- We will actively reach out to students of color to build community and welcome them to the department.
- Our program also endorsed a petition that will be sent to ASHA, CAA, and CAPCSD to advocate for an Antiracism Task Force to review the current ASHA standards and to develop new standards for antiracism training in university programs.

These changes and commitments are only the beginning to what is a process of continuous improvement. We may make mistakes along the way, but we pledge to learn from these mistakes and improve. Dismantling racism takes commitment from every member of society. We recognize that there is much more that we can do and are committed to doing our part.