

## **Towson University Department of Theatre Arts Statement of Solidarity and Action**

The Department of Theatre Arts fully supports the COFAC statement on Solidarity and Purpose. In this same spirit of solidarity and commitment the Department of Theatre Arts affirms.....

Black lives matter.

The Towson University Department of Theatre Arts commits itself to solidarity with the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, faculty, staff, and artists in our community. We stand together in grief, in anger, and in fierce, uncompromising love.

We acknowledge that systemic racism is ingrained in higher education. We acknowledge that systemic racism is ingrained in the American theatre. And we acknowledge that this department has acted in accordance with the policies and practices of both these institutions.

The department has taken time in this moment to listen, reflect, and think deeply before we spoke. The problems we face are systemic, but it is our individual and collective responsibility, as faculty and staff members within that system, to be a positive force for change and to commit to the anti-racist work that change requires. Those who have been given power by the system must use that power to dismantle the system.

While we will continue to listen, reflect, and think deeply we will also **act**:

- **Listening, learning, and creating healing spaces**
  - We commit to an ongoing series of forums for BIPOC students to share, process, and discuss their needs and wants from the department and university.
  - We commit to an ongoing series of forums for all students to learn to implement anti-racist practices in the department and the field.
  - We commit to an ongoing series of anti-racist professional development workshops and training for all faculty and staff.
  
- **Holding ourselves accountable**
  - We commit to listening and holding each other accountable when our BIPOC students experience racial bias or microaggressions in any and all aspects of the Department of Theatre Arts.
  - We commit both to creating change and to building the trust that is so central to our learning and making art as a community.
  
- **Putting our money where our mouth is**
  - We will prioritize BIPOC-owned businesses when purchasing materials and services off-campus and hiring outside artists in any capacity, whenever the department has the authority to choose vendors.
  - We will advocate for and prioritize increasing the number of BIPOC professors, staff, and guest artists within the department and across the campus.

- **Decentralizing white voices**
  - We commit to revising Eurocentric biases and assumptions about the theatrical canon and centering the work of BIPOC voices and artists in our curriculum.
  - We commit to anti-racist practices in our season planning, production, and marketing. BIPOC stories, perspectives, and aesthetics are crucial to the art we need and want to make in the 21st century, and plays by BIPOC writers will be featured in every mainstage season.

**BLACK LIVES MATTER.**

With thanks to the African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American (ALAANA) theatremaker authors of the online petition *Dear White American Theater*; the Towson University Department of Communication Studies; for guiding our thinking in crafting these action steps.