

Dear Meredith community,

We continue to make progress on the Collegewide Anti-Racism Initiative. Here are some highlights of the work that has occurred since my last update to you in late September.

The Executive Leadership Team participated in the two-day anti-racism work offered by the Racial and Equity Institute (REI). The workshop was illuminating, deepening our understanding of systemic racism and its devastating effects and strengthening our resolve to tackle root causes, not just treat symptoms, of racism.

As one means of sharing these insights with faculty and staff, we coordinated and funded opportunities for 93 employees to participate in REI's Groundwater training last Friday afternoon. Early feedback from those who participated in the workshop suggests that the workshop was impactful, with attendees saying they learned powerful lessons they plan to apply in their classrooms, offices and with their families.

Our campus climate survey that includes students, employees, and alumnae has been in the field since early October. We appreciate efforts by the Student Government Association, the Black Student Union and other offices and groups on campus to promote the importance of everyone participating in the survey.

You may be wondering what happens after the survey closes later this month. We should have results and analysis this winter. From those findings, we will be conducting focus groups with students, employees, and alumnae, bringing together a diverse cross-section that will allow us to dig more deeply into the particular experiences and potential solutions to address racism. At that point, if not before, we will also know the kind of Diversity Equity and Inclusion professional(s) we need to hire to support this ongoing work at Meredith.

Meanwhile, our board-led task force on historical context and naming of buildings, which was charged with developing criteria, has submitted its work product to the full Board of Trustees who will review and move forward. On Friday, the Board also heard a foundational review of exclusion/ inclusion at Meredith. Our faculty and archivist are working with the national consortium on Universities Studying Slavery and will be presenting preliminary findings in a meeting with me soon. Several anti-racism discussion groups are also underway on campus. The School of Arts and Humanities has launched a year-long initiative on "Belonging," opening with an historical perspective on inclusion at Meredith and followed by a student panel who offered thoughtful insights on their experiences and solutions. Student affinity groups of all races (and nationalities) offered an excellent opportunity last week for students to voice their experiences and observations regarding race and issues at Meredith.

Let me leave you with two important reminders. First, there is room for everyone in this important work. One of the reasons our work on diversity and inclusion is broadly

focused is our effort to fully reach every part of the campus's culture where racism may exist. Whether you were one of the early voices in this initiative or you are just joining the Meredith community and want to get involved, we need your perspective and your participation. You can share your ideas via the anti-racismupdates@meredith.edu email address. You can also attend a future diversity and inclusion training session.

Second, as you can tell from the updates above, we are very much still in the working phase. I know the pace is too slow for some and too fast for others. We are working to strike the right balance for full inclusion at every turn. Quick fixes, history teaches us, are not the key. Thoughtful, well-researched, collaborative exploration and problem solving is a more likely avenue to lasting change.

I have been and remain transparent about our work. These regular communications and our website <https://www.meredith.edu/anti-racism-initiative> very publically track all work *and* updates. I hope that as we continue this critical work that we will be united by a commitment to inclusion and integrity.

Jo Allen, '80
President