

**Graduate Journal of Food Studies**

# **Statement of Solidarity from the Graduate Association for Food Studies**

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The Graduate Association for Food Studies (GAFS) stands in solidarity with the Black community, demands justice for those murdered by police—George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, David McAtee and too many others—and vehemently condemns the ongoing police brutality and white supremacy across the United States and the world. GAFS condemns the systemic and institutional racism that permeates the daily lives of Black people. This is a pattern that has played out across the world that is neither new nor acceptable. This pattern also precludes the resilience, joy, and solidarity of the Black community.

We are not authorities on anti-racist work or organizing and certainly acknowledge the overwhelming whiteness of our GAFS student board, but we want to explicitly express solidarity with our Black members, as well as Black colleagues, Black scholars, Black students, Black mentors, and Black communities across the world. We stand with you and will listen to you because Black lives matter and Black voices matter.

We call upon fellow scholars in food studies, as well as the institutions and organizations that facilitate their work, to acknowledge that these systems and inequalities exist and to enact tangible steps to dismantle them. We do a disservice to the Black community, ourselves, our research, and the world at large by remaining silent. We also call upon our fellow scholars, institutions, and organizations to utilize our research, our knowledge, and most importantly our privileged positions to respond to this moment. Not only must we stand together to combat systemic racism and violence, but we must also cede space to the voices of those who have been historically — purposefully — excluded from the conversation.

We recognize that a public statement does not equate with creating material and systemic change, and offer this letter, and following action items, as an effort to keep ourselves and the field of food studies accountable and uncomfortable. It is through this discomfort that we create a growing edge within ourselves and our institutions and create change. GAFS pledges to fight against anti-Blackness, white supremacy, and institutional racism with the following action items to begin enacting immediately:

- We are dedicating our next Reading Collective (June 10, 2020) to discussing anti-black racism within food and agriculture. We are also opening this platform for our members to discuss the current events and police brutality. Discussions like these — with and among ourselves, friends, colleagues, institutions, and communities — give space for evaluation of our own organization and efforts, as well as broader processes. If you want to be part of this discussion, we encourage you to connect

- with us via our social media platforms ([Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#)) or via email at [graduatefoodassociation@gmail.com](mailto:graduatefoodassociation@gmail.com). We are ready to listen.
- We will be sharing reading lists and resources about anti-Blackness, white supremacy, and institutional racism and violence within food and agriculture.
  - We will be strategizing ways to address the institutional inequalities perpetuated by the financial burdens of scholarship and low and unpaid labor associated with graduate life, which takes its greatest toll on first generation scholars and scholars of color.
  - We are taking steps to being intentionally mindful about how we reimagine scholarship, mentoring, teaching, and building community in this moment while also acknowledging that this involves raising up the voices of those who have done the work to reimagine our world.
  - The *Graduate Journal of Food Studies* [recently shifted its publication format](#) to emphasize short-form pieces and now welcomes [submissions on a rolling basis](#). This new approach will allow for more flexibility in creating timely commentary, appropriate for thinking through institutional racism in all its insidious manifestations.
  - Additionally, we have been thinking through ways to incorporate public advocacy within GAFS Programming and strategies to use our platform to address these issues within food and agriculture and our own institutions and work.

Our job is not only to step up to condemn these actions, systems, and patterns, but to listen to and amplify the voices of our members and of the Black community. We are open to discussion and self-examination, and commit to continually pushing ourselves to learn more because we believe this is what support in scholarly communities ought to look like.

In Solidarity,

The Student Board of the Graduate Association for Food Studies

June 2, 2020