Racial Justice Fund Recipients

2021

OVERVIEW

$30,000 in funds supporting 12 projects across CEHD’s one school and three departments

To facilitate progress towards transforming CEHD into an anti-racist college

To engage the CEHD community in sustained reflection and action to address systemic racism, challenge anti-Blackness, and foster BIPOC-centered visions for change

College of Education and Human Development
The Cypher Presents | $6,200

The Cypher is an organic gathering of students, faculty, and staff in the Department of Leadership in Education (LE) that aims to identify and uproot racism and disrupt white supremacy, while promoting healing, restoration, and meaningful change at UMass Boston. In the spirit of The Cypher in LE and the cypher in hop-hop communities, we will host two academic “battles” in which a critical race scholar and/or a policymaker / community organizer will engage in a freestyle exchange of ideas and knowledge about racism, whiteness, and transformative justice in our schools and universities. A DJ/moderator will pose questions that each guest speaker will respond to from their own unique perspective, draw the audience into the “battle,” and incorporate music as appropriate.

Tara Parker and Cheryl Ching

Summer Scholars | $4,000

Results from recent research indicate students from minoritized backgrounds report not receiving adequate research mentorship in university settings (Graves et al., 2021). Summer Scholars intends to be responsive to this finding by creating a space for a cohort of undergraduate and graduate students from racially minoritized backgrounds to build community, receive structured mentorship, and focus on research during the summer. Cohort participants will meet weekly during June and July to explore their scholarly interests as well as collaborate on faculty projects. Guest speakers will join weekly seminars to share their expertise and insights related to navigating graduate school and career, as well as offering training on research epistemologies and methods that do not center whiteness. Summer Scholars endeavors to promote inclusivity, community and collaboration. The intended outcomes include fostering students’ feelings of connectedness to the college, increase exposure to collaborative research, and produce meaningful dissemination products that reflect students’ interests.

Lindsay Fallon, Kristin Murphy, Amy Cook, and Brian Daniels

SEEDing Equity-Based Work | $3,500

This project supports the participation of four representatives across CEHD to engage in intensive summer training with Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED). SEED’s methodology involves: 1) listening to others’ voices, 2) learning experientially and collectively from each participant’s intersecting identities, and 3) personal reflection and testimony. SEED trains leaders to facilitate conversational communities with peers to drive personal, organizational, and societal change toward social justice. SEED (institutionally and through internal processes with individuals) seeks to model just practices and examine the structure of its organization and whether SEED reflects aspirered justice-based practices and outcomes, processes we seek to incorporate within CEHD. The four SEED leaders who attend the summer training will co-facilitate year-long seminars in CEHD with approximately monthly meetings that draw on their own and participants’ experiences to make our communities and practices inclusive, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive.

Tara Parker, Sheila Fesko, Amy Cook, Christopher Denning, and Mona Abo-Zena

Children’s Storybook Project | $3,500

Our project brings together artists, teachers, students and scholars affiliated with CEHD’s Asian American Studies Program, C&I Department, and SGISD to produce a high-quality, original children’s storybook in hard-copy and digital with audio formats. Content will address the double pandemic of COVID-19 and racial violence experienced locally and nationally by Asian American communities, particularly for immigrant/refugee children and elders who are most vulnerable to harassment. Our multilingual team will directly gather relevant stories and conduct specific oral histories with Asians (Khmer, Nepali, Vietnamese, Chinese) in Boston, including women, front-line wage-earners and elders. Using the story product – which will be multilingual and intergenerational in its message – we will facilitate reading/sharing activities with children and teachers in two elementary schools where our alumni work. We will also present at a culminating public activity, and provide a storybook hard-copy and discussion guide for each elementary school library, CEHD, and the Healey Library for continued discussion.

Kim Soun Ty, Ammany Ty, Nia Duong, and Parmita Gurung

Determining Strategies for Managing Resistance in Academia | $3,000

Active and sustained anti-racism efforts are integral to the fight against anti-Blackness and systemic oppression in higher education. Yet, many within academia remain resistant to addressing structural inequities. This pervasive opposition to eradicating anti-racism can take a significant toll on Faculty of Color. Consequently, the purpose of this project is to understand how Faculty of Color engaged in racial justice work at urban serving institutions navigate institutional- and individual-level resistance to anti-racism efforts. Through a series of 60-minute interviews we aim to identify key strategies that Faculty of Color in psychology employ to combat such resistance. To complement this research undertaking, Faculty of Color participants will also be invited to present their justice-focused work as part of the CSP Racial Justice Series. Integral to this effort is engaging CSP, and broadly CEHD, students and faculty in taking an active and engaged stance in dismantling systemic oppression.

Stacy L. Bender, Lindsay Fallon, and Kerrie Wilkins-Yel

Development of a Self-Assessment Process and Tool | $3,000

The Institute for Community Inclusion’s Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice (EIRJ) Steering Committee will work with an external consultant to develop a self-assessment process and tool. The self-assessment will be administered to all ICI staff and provide a snapshot of current attitudes, behaviors, practices and structures. An additional tool will also be developed for project teams to assess their work through a racial equity lens and inform the development of future action plans for their projects. The results of the self-assessment will provide the foundation to develop goals and action plans for ICI and help guide the work of the EIRJ Steering Committee as we embed equity, diversity and racial justice principles in all aspects of the organization.

Quinn Barbour, Deborah Dauda, Jill Eastman, Juan Gaspar, Rebecca Lazo, Oliver Lyons, DeBrittany Mitchell, Joy Solon, Allison Taylor, Cindy Thomas, and Nick Johnson
Racial Justice Resources for Asian International Students | $1,550

The recent escalating violence and ongoing harassment directed at Asians in the United States, is creating a fear and distress in international Asian students. They are feeling particularly insecure because they have no prior knowledge about racism and racial discrimination, they have limited access to resources and networking, and they live away from their families and communities who can provide immediate support and nurturing. The goal of this racial justice project is to contribute to the prevention of anti-Asian discrimination and violence by creating a safe and supportive network and resources for UMass international students and their families coming from Asian and the Pacific Islander (APAC) countries. We need to stand in solidarity with our general student body and international Asian students in particular to actively engage in anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts. None of our international students should live in fear because of their race or ethnicity.

Odgerel Dashzeveg

Antiracist Pedagogy Across the Curriculum Institute | $1,500

A small group of faculty will be attending the Antiracist Pedagogy Across the Curriculum (ARPAC) Institute hosted by St. Cloud University in early summer 2021. The institute, involving multiple day-long seminars spread over a few weeks, supports higher education faculty to apply an antiracist pedagogy framework to both the classroom and across campus. Participants will explore issues such as systemic racism in higher education and personal position and identity, and by the end of the seminars, they will also have developed practical plans for curriculum and syllabus design, teaching practice, and strategies for extending antiracism work to the wider university and helping to transform institutions. Learning from the Institute will be shared with the CEHD community as the participants implement these plans in their courses through the fall term.

Jeremy Szteiter, Michele Dow, and Chris Denning

Starting Young: Promoting and Sustaining Anti-Bias Education | $1,250

This project engages educators and the public in promoting anti-bias conversation and action within early childhood education and care. We will host a public (virtual) film showing of the recently released Reflecting on Anti-bias Education in Action: The Early Years followed by a panel discussion with featured educators and film producers Debbie LeeKenan and John Nimmo. Shifting the focus away from the talking heads of experts, the film centers the perspectives of teachers committed to equity on a daily basis as they reflect on their practice. In addition, it features classroom vignettes of strategies that contribute to the interrelated goals of anti-bias education (i.e., identity, diversity, justice, and action), which are relevant to both children and adults (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2020). Through the screening and discussion, we join a campaign to build community and action around anti-bias education in and beyond the early years.

Mona Abo-Zena, Isabela Garcia Senent, Lindsay Beatty, and Lianna Pizzo

Addressing the Intersections of Race and Disability | $1,000

The Racial Equity Discussion Group will use these funds to help the ICI build a better understanding of the pervasiveness of whiteness and white supremacy in disability research, advocacy, and practice. There is a need for deeper understanding of the role of whiteness and greater attention to issues of racism in our work. We will use the funds to hire a subject matter expert regarding the intersections of disability and race. We will consult with the expert to identify key areas specific to the work of the ICI and offer training on these areas to the entire staff. This will act as a catalyst for a learning collaborative that will address the intersections of race and disability at the ICI going forward.

Oliver Lyons and Members of the Institute for Community Inclusion’s Racial Equity Discussion Group

Anti-Racist Early Childhood Practices Speaker Series | $1,000

The Institute for Early Education Leadership and Innovation (the Leadership Institute) proposes to use the funds allotted by the RJC to host an educational speaker focused on anti-racist practices and policies in early care and education. The speaker event will be open to Leadership Institute staff, affiliated faculty, graduate research assistants, and faculty and students in CEHD early childhood academic programs; and the Institute’s community partners in Boston and across the state. The intended outcomes of this speaker event are to 1) build the Leadership Institute’s community of engaged faculty, staff, students and community partners with a shared commitment to anti-racism in all aspects of its work in ECE practice, systems, research, and policy, 2) increase participants’ knowledge and skills for leading anti-racist work in their own practice, 3) enable participants to identify at least one actionable step or goal to advance racial equity in their work, and 4) inform the Leadership Institute’s racial equity action plan.

Anne Douglass, Lynne Mendes, Grace Cruz, Debra Johnston-Malden, Amanda Lopes, Tim Zeng, Erin Pelton, and Kori Lantas

Developing Recruitment Materials to Diversify Student Populations | $500

This project aims to develop professional recruitment materials to diversify the student population in the PhD Program in Early Childhood Education and Care. The field of early childhood education, including early childhood special education, needs scholars who represent a range of backgrounds (e.g., age, gender, sexuality, ability/disability, ethnicity, race, language, country of origin, & socioeconomic status) to ensure diversity in our field. Funding from the Racial Justice Committee would help us develop professional recruitment flyers that can be used throughout the U.S., as well as at international venues. Targeted advertisement could impact student enrollment in the long run.

Serra Acar and Mona Abo-Zena