College of Education Antiracist Statement

**Context**

In the spring and fall semesters of 2018, the College of Education (COE) Diversity Committee conducted a study of the experiences of faculty of color in the COE. Data from that study matched what research across the country has found—that faculty of color continue to face daily cultural and institutional forms of racism. These experiences have included, among other things, daily racial microaggressions, the hyper-surveillance of Black and Brown bodies, and additional labor without compensation (e.g., the unofficial mentoring of students of color on top of official advising duties). A report of the findings and recommendations from that study were shared with the Dean’s office and then The Faculty Advisory Council (FAC) in the spring of 2019. The Dean’s office then presented that report with the COE faculty in the fall 2019 and winter of 2020. Based on that report and feedback from faculty, and ongoing collaboration with the Diversity Committee and FAC, the Dean’s office worked with the FAC to develop a set of action steps to address racial equity in the COE.

One action step related to the findings that was consistent across data from the Diversity Committee study: faculty felt the COE did not have a clear, consistent, and unified stance on racial equity. Participants did express that many of their colleagues had a sincere desire to be racially equitable in practice but that the lack of a clear and unified vision prevented the college community from attaining the goals of racial equity. Therefore, in the spring of 2020 the Dean met with the Diversity Committee and FAC to form an ad-hoc committee of faculty from every department to begin the work of developing such a vision.

The statement below is the result of that work. As a college, we understand that racial inequity is not the only issue of inequality that we face, and we recognize the intersectionality of white supremacy and antiblackness with other forms of systemic oppression, such as sexism, heterosexism, and nativism. However, as this is rooted in the experiences of our colleagues, experiences that clearly identify ongoing issues of racism, we believe it is necessary to center race here. With this statement, the COE 1) recognizes the systemic racism that impacts students, staff, and faculty of color; 2) expresses its intent to continue strengthening its understanding of the way such racism is maintained via policy and practice, and 3) makes a commitment to address, disrupt, and dismantle systemic racism in all its forms. This statement is in line with ECU strategic plan commitments 1.7 and 4.1, ECU’s Commitment to Equity and Diversity, and the goals of the COE Diversity Committee.

**COE Statement on Antiracism**

The College of Education’s main goal is to prepare educators, education related professionals and educational leaders. It is the COE’s responsibility to employ faculty and staff that embrace and model anti-racism in education curriculum, teaching practices, research, and service to our constituents. The following shall permeate all the work generated by COE community:

**Denounce White supremacy and Embrace Racial Equality**

We acknowledge there is a historical legacy of white supremacy that established and continues to foster the marginalization and exclusion of people of color in higher education. As a community, the College of Education is committed to disrupting the systems of privilege, inequality, and oppression that undergird higher education and working towards dismantling the policies, pedagogy, and practices of white supremacy in our college, classrooms, and professional practices. We commit to redesigning policies,
pedagogies and practices that are based on equality and provides opportunities to all faculty, especially our faculty of color.

**Acknowledge Antiblackness**
While racism in all its forms is abhorrent, racism affects Black people in significant ways, and we acknowledge the impact of antiblackness on our community. We believe in disrupting the pervasive ideology of antiblackness that subjects Black faculty, staff, and students to negative interactions. As a community the College of Education is committed to working towards actively breaking down the racist barriers of antiblackness within the college culture as peers, as faculty scholars in our fields, and as educators in our classrooms. We commit to continuous critical analysis and communication to develop a collegial community that supports our Black faculty, staff, and students through positive and nurturing interactions.

**Prioritizing the voices of our faculty and students of color**
We acknowledge that because of their unique experiences with racism, experiences where far too often race has been used to marginalize them from institutional culture or limit their rights and resources, people of color can often see and understand racism in ways white people cannot. Therefore, people of color have a unique voice with which to understand race and racism. We believe that placing the lives, experiences, and knowledge of our students, staff, and faculty of color at the center of our efforts leads to justice and equity for the greatest number of people. Therefore, we are committed to foregrounding the perspectives of students, staff, and faculty of color to lead our efforts to create a more inclusive, culturally responsive, and racially equitable college.

**Abandon Race neutral interpretation of professionalism, civility, merit, and rigor for a Race conscious interpretation**
We acknowledge that concepts such as professionalism, civility, merit, and rigor, rather than being neutral terms, are socially constructed and that their meanings and interpretations are influenced by race, whiteness, and interrelated systems of oppression. These interpretations can lead to assessments and evaluations that unintentionally favor white people and fail to adequately measure the accomplishments of people of color. Therefore, we are committed to identifying how race impacts our assessments of our colleagues and students, confronting colorblind interpretations, and employing a race-conscious lens when conducting assessments and evaluations.

**Solidarity in courageous conversations on race (accountability)**
We acknowledge the necessity of both allies and co-conspirators in antiracist work so that the work of combating systemic racism does not fall on the shoulders of those already experiencing marginalization. We believe in the power of courageous conversations to build a framework of understanding among the community within the College of Education, so that our antiracist work is embedded throughout scholarship, teaching, and service. In solidarity with colleagues who have and continue to experience institutional and systemic oppression, we commit to open dialogue that acknowledges historic and ongoing experiences of racial inequity. We further commit to courageously advocate for practices and policies that dismantle the ways in which white supremacy, antiblackness, and interrelated forms of inequity are perpetuated in the College of Education.