CALL FOR ACTION

Dear members of the MCDB community,

The recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery have brought to light the inescapable reality of abuse and mistreatment that Black people constantly endure in our society. The discrimination, denial of opportunity, and suffering that Black individuals experience daily takes place in our own backyard, calling on us to take action to fight racism and promote real change.

Our department is committed to creating a diverse and welcoming community of scientists that empowers all, regardless of race, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation. In the past, we have taken actions to raise awareness about inequality and to increase diversity among us. Some aspects have improved, but others have not. Maybe we did not try enough, failed to follow through on recommendations, or were too busy to pay attention.

As employees of MCDB and Yale University we enjoy many privileges, making it difficult to genuinely comprehend the hardships of others. On the other hand such a position provides leverage to bring about an end to these disparities. Among our staff, trainees and faculty are community leaders, educators, and scientists, bringing many unique perspectives and abilities to the table. Using these strengths as a united MCDB community we are uniquely positioned to change our society.

Next Wednesday, June 17th, we invite all faculty, staff and trainees of MCDB to join and contribute to the following MCDB online conversations. We want to hear your ideas. The goal is to come up with a set of actions we can immediately take to bring about change and racial equity in our department, at Yale, in New Haven, and beyond.

Zoom: https://yale.zoom.us/j/92085413109?pwd=NGRUTm9ydjZEajFTWkNqN0RNS3IZUT09
ID: 920 8541 3109, Pwd: MCDB; telephone: 203-432-9666 or 646 568 7788

3:00-3:40pm: What actions can we take as MCDB to increase hiring of Black, Latinx, and other underrepresented minority (URM) candidates for faculty, postdoc, graduate student and staff positions? Moderator: Shirin Bahmanyar and David Breslow

3:45-4:25pm: What actions can we take as MCDB to make our department more accessible and welcoming to prospective and current members who are people of color? How can we promote open and ongoing conversations about diversity, white privilege, and racism? Moderator: Valerie Horsley and Thierry Emonet

4:30-5:10pm: What actions can we take as MCDB to improve the scientific education of New Haven public school kids? Taken as a whole, MCDB concentrates an enormous amount of scientific knowledge. However, little of this is shared with New Haven kids (outside of East Rock), who are largely non-white and historically have less access to science and higher education. We want your ideas on how to set up a MCDB educational program that will bring MCDB scientists into the New Haven public schools and to children of color. Moderators: Craig Crews, Stavroula Hatzios and Josien van Wolfswinkel

Sincerely,

The MCDB committee on Diversity and Professional Climate

Adeline Bass          Jing Yan          Maia Baskerville          Shirin Bahmanyar
Dörthe Julich   Lauren Dickinson   Sam Dundon         Thierry Emonet (chair)