

Sewanee Integrated Program in the Environment Supports #BlackLivesMatter

As we remember the momentous month of June 2020 when protests throughout our country rightly focused the world's attention on the imperative for racial justice and equality, Sewanee's Environmental Studies Program seeks to sustain this crucial momentum by declaring that #BlackLivesMatter. In particular, we call for environmental justice, recognizing that climate change, pollution, resource extraction, biodiversity loss and other such exploitation disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous and People of Color in this country and around the world.

The Environmental Studies Program aims to eliminate barriers preventing Black, Indigenous and People of Color from engaging in environmental careers and participating in decision-making regarding environmental issues. We recognize and seek to address barriers preventing Black, Indigenous and People of Color from living in healthy environments and accessing and enjoying outdoor spaces and experiences. We acknowledge that some of the past and present rhetoric and practices of the environmental movement have included colonial and white supremacist ideas, and we commit to a future where previously marginalized or suppressed voices and lives are heard and honored.

Looking forward, we know we can do more and be better. Therefore, as environmental studies faculty, we make the following commitments:

- We commit to centering environmental justice in the vision of sustainability that we promote in our teaching, scholarship, and service to the university.
- We recognize that we can do more to support students of color in the environmental studies program and across campus
- We will actively seek to diversify our environmental studies faculty when opportunities for new hires arise
- We commit to diversifying our syllabi and programming to elevate the voices of Black, Indigenous and People of Color scholars, activists, and artists in our field and centering concerns around environmental justice.
- We will critically reflect on the environment we create within the classroom and on campus to better support the environmental scholarship and activism of students of color
- We will interrogate the past and present imbrication of environmental, colonial, and white supremacist thought and policies to question practices that promote racial marginalization in the name of sustainability

Together we raise up and celebrate the committed [engagement and advocacy by Black, Indigenous and People of Color](#) to support the health of our planet and the well-being of its inhabitants. This can only happen when we all act to end racism and oppression and proclaim #BlackLivesMatter.