

Commitment to Action

Board Statement for Black Lives and Racial Equity in International Science, Scholarship, and Professional Practice

Communities across the nation have begun to confront systemic racism, and racial injustice and inequality, in response to the killing of George Floyd by police and the loss of other Black lives. We take this moment to reaffirm our commitment to the values and goals expressed in our Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We also recognize that a statement without a commitment to act is sorely inadequate to the times and the challenge. We therefore commit to bring about critical and long-overdue change through thoughtful introspection and sustained, purposeful action.

As an organization, our guiding principle has always been excellence in science, scholarship, and professional practice in support of transatlantic exchange and learning. The impact of Black Americans on science, scholarship, art, literature, music, and culture has been profound. Thus, the struggle of Black Americans to gain access to, advance in, and lead within the Academy and numerous professions is not due to a lack of distinguished achievement, creativity, and talent, in short—excellence.

As a first step, we therefore must examine how our own institutional policies and preferences may perpetuate racist practices and marginalize Black voices and talent in international exchange.

We must then move beyond introspection toward action.

- American Friends of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation will engage Humboldtians and other experts to identify the actions we must take to encourage and support Black Americans to apply to and take advantage of the Humboldt Foundation's international exchange and mobility programs, and to achieve our goal to be a more inclusive, equitable, and diverse organization and network. The following actions represent the first steps to be made by AFAvH. Future efforts will examine the perspectives, and barriers to inclusion and participation, of those of diverse races, ethnicities, identities, and beliefs.
- We will identify and reach out to talented Black scholars, scientists, and professionals and encourage them to see a future as a member of our worldwide network of excellence.
- Our Leadership Series of essays on critical issues for international science and higher education will present perspectives of racially diverse Humboldtians and guest commentators on racism in science and scholarship in the United States and worldwide, and what must change.
- Our Humboldt Digital Dialogue Series, to be launched later in 2020, will explore the historical legacy of Anti-Black racism in the scientific enterprise and higher education. This series will seek actions that Humboldtians, as individuals and a collective, can take to encourage and advance change in their respective institutions, scholarly fields, and communities.
- Our commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be integrated fully into the strategic planning process of American Friends. The results will be the inclusion in our comprehensive

three-year (2021-23) plan of a roadmap for sustained action and accountability in all aspects of our governance, operations, and programs.

We stand with all those who embrace and work toward a future of racial equity and just and equal access to opportunity in science, scholarship, and society. And we welcome the input and assistance of the Humboldt community.