**From:**"SCHOOL OF MED, DEANS OFFICE" <[domsom@uw.edu](mailto:domsom@uw.edu)>  
**Subject: School of Medicine EHM Course**  
**Date: July 21, 2020** at 9:58:14 AM PDT  
**To:**"[somitofa@uw.edu](mailto:somitofa@uw.edu)" <[somitofa@uw.edu](mailto:somitofa@uw.edu)>

Dear UW School of Medicine Community,

Over the last few months, there has been significant discussion about events during the School of Medicine’s Ecology Health and Medicine (EHM) course in Seattle on March 20th including a Town Hall on the subject on June 24th.  Much of this conversation has focused on specific faculty who teach EHM as well as the School of Medicine’s response to concerns raised. While a short summary will not include all the nuances of these events, we feel it is important to briefly describe the context.  During one portion of the EHM class on March 20th, the topic of violence against transgender people was discussed.  Students asked for further discussion on the specific impact on Black transgender women.  Both “transgender women of color” and “Black transgender women” were referred to in subsequent discussion.  Students raised the concern that emphasis should be placed fully on Black transgender women as they have experienced the greatest discrimination and violence.  The guest lecturer affirmed this distinction when asked by faculty to address it.

Ongoing chat discussion focused on this topic.  During a subsequent lecture, the chat was momentarily suspended by an EHM faculty member.  The faculty have shared that the intent of this action was to invoke the “PAUSE” practice, a structured intervention previously used in the EHM course to facilitate difficult conversations.  Students have shared that the impact of this suspension was that some students, particularly Black students, felt silenced and perpetuated their experiences of anti-Black racism.  Concerns around their experiences continued to be discussed in the chat and in subsequent small groups.

Since this time, several faculty including Drs. Dan Cabrera, Amanda Kost, and Roberto Montenegro resigned from teaching the EHM course.  This happened at different times over the ensuing weeks; each with personal reasons for making this decision.  They were not “fired” from the course or asked to step down. The course will be restructured, and we are working to find new leadership.  This process will include the voice of the students and will be guided by Dr. Paula Houston, Chief Equity Officer, and others from the Office of Healthcare Equity for the portion of the course related to race, social and health justice.  We are committed to re-examining all aspects of this course including faculty teachers, course content and structure.

Concerns were raised about the course leaders also being college mentors, mixing evaluation of students with mentoring and support.  We are committed to separating these roles moving forward.  As Drs. Cabrera and Kost will no longer be leaders of EHM, they will continue in their roles as college mentors.  While still available to support all students, they will not continue with the E19 class as the experiences of this spring have significantly disrupted those group’s dynamics.

Over the past several weeks, faculty leaders have listened to student concerns about these events and the racism experienced by Black students across UW School of Medicine.  We apologize for not communicating clearly to everyone about this situation earlier.  The delay occurred because of our intent of hearing multiple perspectives on these events to ensure that all voices were heard.  We are now concerned, however, that with the lack of formal communication and formal investigation, there has been ongoing misinformation shared through informal channels.  Work is underway to have a more structured process to both communicate about and investigate events in the future.

We are committed to growing and learning together; becoming an organization that treats all members of our community with compassion and respect.  This includes patients, students, trainees, faculty and staff.  We are committed to dismantling institutional racism, mistreatment and other oppressive structures that hinder the ability for all members of our community to thrive.  We are convening a new Learning Environment Steering Committee, with representation from multiple organizations within UW Medicine.  Across our community, we need to continue to talk with each other, listen to each other and learn from each other.

As noted earlier, this is not a comprehensive response to concerns raised by both students and faculty related to the EHM course, but we felt we needed to update everyone now.  We have more work to do.  We are committed to ongoing transparent communication, partnership and collaboration, and creating a culture of respect where all voices are heard.  We look forward to partnering with all of you as we move forward.  
Sincerely,  
Paul G. Ramsey, M.D.  
CEO, UW Medicine  
   
Timothy H. Dellit, M.D.  
Chief Medical Officer, UW Medicine  
   
Paula L Houston, Ed.D.  
Chief Equity Officer, UW Medicine  
   
Suzanne M. Allen, M.D.  
Vice Dean for Academic, Rural and Regional Affairs, School of Medicine  
   
Trish A. Kritek, M.D.  
Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, School of Medicine

On **Jul 21, 2020**, at 3:50 PM, Amanda Kost <[akost@uw.edu](mailto:akost@uw.edu)> wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

Again to keep us all the loop I am copying you all on this email sent to UWSOM by one of the MS2 students.

Best,

Amanda

Dear UW School of Medicine community,

This reply is meant to combat this **revisionist narrative** sent by Julie Monteith and cosigned by Drs. Paul Ramsey, Timothy Dellit, Paula Houston, Suzanne Allen and Trish Kritek.

While I will begin this email by describing the recent events of March 20th 2020, it is important to emphasize that the Ecology of Health and Medicine course (EHM) has been deeply **racist, anti-Black, transphobic**among many other -isms since its inception into the class of 2017. In fact while Monteith describes the problems plaguing EHM as “one portion of the EHM” class—it is important to note that many students in many years have complained about not only the content but also the Faculty. And that complaints and critiques about EHM in the E-19 class began in our first term. When it comes to both [Drs. Cabrera and Kost](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__seedsofbamm.wordpress.com_0607-2D2020_&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=evnIHCpY2kzjibIsi8CG2uW0mA19BCZ6oTfKTJ77PaY&e=) their reputations of anti-Blackness and projections of -isms on to students (especially marginalized) precedes them. It is a problematic and erasive narrative for Dr. Monteith and cosigners to erase this history, as it an erasure as well of what has been a budding history of student activism around these issues prior to many of our arrivals into UWSOM. And additionally, this email **fails to highlight** that while the administration has for years told students that they welcome “change”, they have for years instead **retaliated on student advocates** and used **“professionalism**” to specifically target marginalized students (especially when Black) who speak out against the racial inequality at the medical school. These issues are so dire that in 2016, hundreds of students marched in the hallways of the health and sciences building on the 4th floor serving this [administration demands](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__seedsofbamm.wordpress.com_2016-2D2_&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=uGoVyD5Qb7D-L4zBHL8mzcPOnLwxyeyFPYNcjDZYeG4&e=) during a “Walk-out” and in 2018 a BlackTransQueer student launched a [week-long sit](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__southseattleemerald.com_2017_12_13_the-2Dsilence-2Dhere-2Dis-2Ddeafening-2Dand-2Dit-2Dkills_&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=GzFqxmOPDcBMQmukT7Eqv6NCCNmlSppR_jZSE5FN9pU&e=)-in in A-300. Yet in my experience as an MS2 and especially so since the events of March is that this administration continues--as it has-- to gaslight, deny and enact “short-term” amnesia over racial issues (EHM inclusive) we as students know are deeply extensive. Please recognize that isolation of these issues in to “the last few months” and the erasure and revisionism in this email is **a function of white supremacy**.

Alas! We begin…

**Monteith:** During one portion of the EHM class on March 20th, the topic of violence against transgender people was discussed.  Students asked for further discussion on the specific impact on Black transgender women.  Both “transgender women of color” and “Black transgender women” were referred to in subsequent discussion.  Students raised the concern that emphasis should be placed fully on Black transgender women as they have experienced the greatest discrimination and violence.  The guest lecturer affirmed this distinction when asked by faculty to address it.”

**Reality:** On March 20th during EHM  Genya Shimkin was giving a very white-washed presentation of gender-based violence during a zoom presentation. And while the white-washing of this presentation wasn’t the primary issue brought up, when Genya was specifically recounting experiences/violence’s that are [dominated by BlackTransWomxn](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__assets2.hrc.org_files_assets_resources_Anti-2DTransViolenceReport2019.pdf-3F-5Fga-3D2.40493794.1981881494.1595354022-2D1066857769.1590810190&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=Su_VBldjVjYbWGN13-SYUEBI61vDwq8Sswsz7IIUe7g&e=) she would consistently use the term “Trans women of color” as a substitute for “BlackTransWomxn”. Even when we know from 2019 data that 91% of Trans women murdered were Black.

I, a student watching this zoom presentation went into the chat and corrected her. I specifically said, that it is important to attribute these statistics to Black Trans womxn —knowing very well that the term [“poc” erases Blackness](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__level.medium.com_we-2Dshould-2Dstop-2Dsaying-2Dpeople-2Dof-2Dcolor-2Dwhen-2Dwe-2Dmean-2Dblack-2Dpeople-2D29c2b18e6267&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=tvBxyJ7klQ11W6fGzGsHt5nH-BpINRI3qIqfprY2Q8g&e=). But this correction was also made under a known history, where faculty have had no problem specifying ethnicity/race/religion to other groups but stutter when it comes to Black issues. They fall short and attribute issues faced by Black communities to all people of color. Just the day before on March 19th, [Dr. Montenegro](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__seedsofbamm.wordpress.com_0607-2D2020_&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=evnIHCpY2kzjibIsi8CG2uW0mA19BCZ6oTfKTJ77PaY&e=) when speaking on the civil rights issues facing Black Americans in the 60s made a statement that people of color (instead of Black) were being treated for injuries from police brutality and police dogs even when we know that this is an experience specific to Black American history.

This correction **should have** been met by affirmation. It should have been the **end all be all**, as it is such a simple correction. But it was instead met by an “All lives Mattering” type of fragility by **an anti-Black colleague** whom was swiftly corrected by several students in my cohort. But the response from faculty was even more jarring. Dr. Montenegro said in defensiveness “this student (Me) have must missed something” in response to my correction and while a lot of students were now engaging with the anti-Blackness now full blown from this student in the zoom chat, Dr. Cabrera took it upon himself **not to address but to silence the chat**. Specifically when we were calling for Black Trans womxn to be centered and not buried under the umbrella of trans women of color.

**Monteith:** Ongoing chat discussion focused on this topic.  During a subsequent lecture, the chat was momentarily suspended by an EHM faculty member.  The faculty have shared that the intent of this action was to invoke the “PAUSE” practice, a structured intervention previously used in the EHM course to facilitate difficult conversations.  Students have shared that the impact of this suspension was that some students, particularly Black students, felt silenced and perpetuated their experiences of anti-Black racism.  Concerns around their experiences continued to be discussed in the chat and in subsequent small groups

**Reality**: A white student was the first to inquire as to why the chat was shut down , I and several other students joined in this inquiry and gave Cabrera very poignant analysees of silencing especially of Black voices and Black issues and how **it is problematic to tone police in this way**. None of the faculty members **who we are told are experts** took it upon themselves to correct the antiBlack student and none of them took it upon themselves to listen to **many student voices** that were speaking out against what was racialized silencing by Dr.Cabrera. It is only now, months later and in this email that we are hearing this excuse for the **first time** of “**pausing practice” that Monteith is using to escape valid critiques of racialized silencing.**

In small groups, the **anti-Black racism intensified**. And it is ironic that Dr. Monteith has rewritten this as “**concerns that were discussed**”. Black students who were in the small group led by Drs. Cabrera and  Montenegro were **bullied**regardless of the fact that white and nonblack students were also very active in calling out the racism of our colleague and faculty.

Dr. Montenegro went as far as telling a Black student that she must have a vendetta against said colleague. Cabrera—whom I was in a small group with—went as far as insinuating that intentions can’t be determined from the chat but that our colleagues intentions were good whereas mine were bad. He consistently demonized Black voices while uplifting antiBlackness in the same breath. These small group devolved essentially into a shouting match where **Cabrera vehemently defended antiblackness by also being antiBlack.**And it was riddled with **very many comments/stances and remarks from both faculty that were specifically targeted against Black students**. This created an environment where Black students were **targeted**in their different small groups by these **two white Latinx faculty** whom were defending anti-Blackness from our colleague who is **also part of their community.**

**I want to emphasize that this type of racism from these faculty is not the first time and not the only events of -isms they can be tied to.**It just so happened that this racism was very public. Four of us Black students from E-19 then created a list of [demands](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__seedsofbamm.wordpress.com_03-2D2020_&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=r4IJYrNaMPUY1W6lUrsJnvmt3B1fzTN6weBh23M-fn8&e=) with support from over half the class that were then emailed to the deans.

In response, [Dr. Amanda Kost](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__seedsofbamm.wordpress.com_0607-2D2020_&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=evnIHCpY2kzjibIsi8CG2uW0mA19BCZ6oTfKTJ77PaY&e=)—previously director of EHM called it “a letter writing campaign” and remarked how she did not have time to deal with anti-Blackness because of COVID—even when we are seeing Black patients die disproportionately from COVID because of said Anti-Blackness. She harassed a white colleague who reported her twice to the deans as she had wanted her to be an agent that dispels to classmates that what students were doing is wrong. She even went as far as trying to force said white colleague in to engaging and speak with her on the subject even after her refusal. Kost broke all rules of conduct and attempted to use her **power and position to force** a white student to do her bidding which was a bidding that was in itself seeped in anti-Black racism.

**I want to emphasize that this is also not the first time and that Dr.Amanda Kost is implicated in many racialized events just from our year and it compounds when other years are considered.**

We, five Black students from E-19 then created Seeds of BAMM  ([Instagram](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.instagram.com_seedsofbamm_&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=zOoTveqot5kaieJoGfssaimbmY1iCqHWL4NaN2fbOHw&e=) [Facebook](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.facebook.com_seedsofBAMM&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=bqsgLqdS11auPhKnVSA5bVmt6PkFwbZfQqwpFG56J88&e=) [Twitter](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__twitter.com_SeedsofB&d=DwMF-g&c=aBkXpkKi7gN5fe5MqrMaN-VmRugaRb1IDRfSv2xVRy0&r=dcYsxjz6hurD98PL9COSwJ5NB7p1W_UCRIW3Chu9or9MN7rzdqZP5_ga2pdo6Dr-&m=KXtZ9SteI7i0zEILxIknZevuI4Y3A0yCkxtsU06HUZ0&s=N-L1jeW35Aqt08n6_s27sNONU9Ni8wSRDvixwpdFNBQ&e=) ) to hold this administration accountable and have been calling for these faculty to be **removed from their positions** for months. This is a mission **that we are coordinating with our colleagues in Spokane and as well many students who are upperclassmen and others whom are previous students that have graduated. The coalition is multi-year.**

While Monteith states: As Drs. Cabrera and Kost will no longer be leaders of EHM, **they will continue in their roles as college mentors**.  While still available to support all students, they will not continue with the E19 class as the experiences of this spring have significantly disrupted those group’s dynamics.

**There is a reality where this does not happen**. There are mentors who exist that are intersectional and are invested in the well-being of their students and their populations. We will continue to push for these **racist mentors** to be removed, they don’t need yet another new class. **They do not need more access to students.**

We would like any E-20 Seattle students to **contact us**([seedsofbamm@gmail.com](mailto:seedsofbamm@gmail.com))**with the immediacy** if you are assigned either **Drs. Cabrera or Kost as mentors in your entering year**

We urge you to **resist being assigned these two faculty members for your own sake** and as new incoming students, **join** your upper-class colleagues in the ways we are attempting to restructure our medical curriculum **for equity not just for us but for our marginalized patients**.

It does not make **any sense** whatsoever for these faculty **whom have long rap-sheets of violence** that can be recounted by classmates that are in our class and senior to us to continue to mentor medical students **in any year** and this segregation Monteith and colleagues are attempting is another indicator once again that instead of protecting students and heeding the many voices that have come forward in support and to demand that Cabrera and Kost be removed that these administrators are **folding to protect white supremacy and at the expense of your most marginalized.**

If this wasn’t so violent, I would express sadness. But for incoming students, **there is room for you to refuse** and the **resistance against these two racist faculty is already alive**.

Use your **non-UW** email if you want to contact us [seedsofbamm@gmail.com](mailto:seedsofbamm@gmail.com) and follow our socials linked above.

**Palcah Shibale |***Pronouns: She/her/hers*

E-19 Seattle Foundations Site

*Arrest the Cops that Killed Breonna Taylor*

To sign on to this letter as an individual, please go to: :

https://forms.gle/ZRAGX2ksCbEy8xTM6

To sign on to this statement on behalf of an organization , please go to:

https://forms.gle/9x5pZNMGg83DHDCU6

UW School of Medicine Students and More: We support demands from Seeds of BAMM.

Sign Petition for Anti-Black Faculty to be removed!

As members of the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) student body, the

greater University of Washington, the medical and healthcare communities in Seattle and

beyond, as well as the general public, we vehemently condemn the anti-Black, racist actions of

Drs. Daniel Cabrera , Amanda Kost , and Roberto Montenegro displayed on March 20th, 2020 .

We demand that the UWSOM student body be trained by faculty deeply committed to

decolonization.This commitment starts by heeding demands from various students that calls for

the anti-Black faculty listed above be removed from continual mentorship and teaching of

courses and clinical clerkships for racialized violences against Black students.

This starts with the UWSOM Administration, including Drs. Paul Ramsey , Timothy Dellit , Paula

Houston , Suzanne Allen and Trish Kritek , meeting the June/July 2020 Demands put forth by the

Seeds of BAMM.

The following is a brief account of the events on March 20th 2020 that led students to demand

for the removal of these faculty from UWSOM. Notably, the events of March 20th do not

reflect the extent of which these faculty members exhibited anti-Black behavior but were

specifically referenced in the administration's email and outreach to all medical students. Follow

seedsofBamm for further accounts and documentations of racial aggressions from these faculty

Friday, March 20th:

Lecture on Gender Based Violence. A Black student called for Black Trans Womxn to be

centered and not buried under the umbrella of “trans womxn of color”. This was met by

resistance by an anti-Black colleague. Black students engaging in this form of advocacy

for Black trans womxn were then silenced without warning via deactivating the Zoom

chat. Admin and faculty have continuously portrayed this deactivation of the Zoom chat

as NOT a mode of silencing, but rather an employment of the “PAUSE” technique. It is

worth emphasizing that E-18 Black students have pointed out the “PAUSE” technique

has been criticized by UWSOM students before in its “protect[ion] of the white fragility of

the people who teach the course and prevent[ion] of students from bringing up

complaints that make the course leaders uncomfortable.”

After the deactivation of the Zoom chat, the same Black students were called aggressive

and publicly bullied by faculty members Drs. Cabrera and Montenegro in the

subsequent, separate Zoom breakout sessions that were meant to “unpack” what had

transpired in the Gender Based Violence lecture earlier. Interestingly, non-Black

students of color and white students also engaging in the same type of defense of Black

Trans womxn during the Gender Based Violence lecture were not characterized as

aggressors or put on the spot in similar manners by Drs. Cabrera and Montenegro

during these breakout sessions.

Dr. Montenegro

In Dr. Montenegro’s session, a Black student explained why what had transpired

in the larger Zoom session was anti-Black. Dr. Montenegro then began tone

policing and dismissing the concerns of Black trans erasure in the Gender

Based Violence Lecture.

Dr. Montenegro escalated by then bullying Black students under his authority.

One of his remarks to Black students defending Black trans womxn included

stating that the former must have a vendetta against their anti-Black colleague.

Such a statement is an act of transphobia in addition to anti-Blackness. During

this session, he also miscalled a Black student by the name of an African country

instead. When a non-Black student corrected Dr. Montenegro on this, he became

flustered and said that he has dyslexia. It is worth noting that Dr. Montenegro

had called said Black student by their name correctly throughout the week

leading up to this.

It is important to note that even prior to March 20th, Dr. Montenegro had been

defensive when called out by students to make a distinction between POC and

Black. Earlier in the week during Dr. Montenegro’s smaller Zoom breakout

sessions, when a non-Black student of color would advocate for why it is

important to name Black people specifically instead of calling them “POC” when

talking about issues that disproportionately affect Black folks (police brutality,

mass incarceration, etc.), Dr. Montenegro replied that “it is important to

remember that not all POC feel that way.”

**Dr. Cabrera**

Dr. Cabrera targeted and bullied a dark-skin Black student under his

mentorship and demonized their stances to protect Black trans womxn, while at

the same time protecting and uplifting the anti-Blackness and transphobia of an

anti-Black colleague.

Dr. Cabrera used respectability politics to paint the Black students under his

authority who were advocating against his mistreatment and opposition of

Black trans experiences as hostile, which we know are racially charged stances.

**Dr. Kost**

During lecture and small groups, Dr. Kost (the director of the Ecology of Health

and Medicine course) was complacent in the bullying and demonization of Black

students. She called the demands sent by Black and non-Black students with

regards to Drs. Cabrera and Montenegro’s anti-Blackness a “letter writing

campaign” and remarked how she did not have time to deal with

anti-Blackness because of COVID-19 -- despite the fact that Black patients are

dying disproportionately from COVID-19 compared to other racial groups

specifically due to anti-Blackness.

Dr. Amanda Kost attempted to misuse her power and authority to coerce and

harass a white student into spreading fear amongst advocates, with the effect of

creating an environment that was hostile to the advocacies occurring around

Black trans experiences. This misuse of power led to said white student seeking

help from UWSOM deans by reporting Dr. Kost’s troubling behavior on two

occasions before Dr. Kost stopped completely.

We want to emphasize that while this petition only addresses acts of anti-Blackness committed

by Drs. Montenegro, Kost, and Cabrera, these faculty members have also documented

instances of problematic behavior upholding various “isms,” including, but not limited to,

anti-Asian racism, xenophobia, transphobia, homophobia, etc. This needs to be stressed

because Blackness does not exist in a vacuum. There are Black Asians, Black immigrants,

Black trans folks, Black queer folks, etc. Each time faculty uphold different isms, they are also

upholding the systemic oppression of all Black folks.

Given the information above, we are thus affirming our support of the demands made by

SeedsofBAMM ( Instagram , Twitter , FB ).

● That Drs. Amanda Kost, Roberto Montenegro, and Daniel Cabrera are removed from all

faculty positions in UWSOM completely, including as (in Drs. Kost and Cabrera’s

case) student mentors .

● That a visibly Black director is hired for the position of EHM director.

○ That all incoming faculty hired for EHM will not have identities intersecting with

whiteness. Faculty will be visibly Black and/or Brown, and will embody and pract

ice anti-racist and intersectional politics. These new hires must be vetted by

students within BAMM.

● That UWSOM compensate BAMM students, as requested on July 1st, 2020, for the

heavy labor they have undertaken in dismantling anti-Blackness at UWSOM.

Compensation should be issued no later than July 11th, 2020. ( Students have yet to be

compensated, nor are there any current conversations with students on compensation

yet labor is still being requested)

Signed,

Individuals:

Kia Gianni Thigpen; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Georgia Sleeth; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Abraham Lopez; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Albert Ng; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Ezie Nguyen; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Olesya Trakhimets; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Arian El-Taher; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Harsimrat Gill; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Vicky Le; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Dominic Min-Tran; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Victoria Lo; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Shannon Gordon; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Sudiptho Paul; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Sarah Byron; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Samantha May; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Pearl Nguyen; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS3

Christine Lai Chen; University of Washington, Seattle

Hannah Carr; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS3

Ruweida Ahmed; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Aleksandr Robbins; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

Shatreen Masshoor; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS3

Cassandra Sweetman; WWAMI Community Member

Harveen Sandhu; University of Washington, Seattle

Palcah Shibale; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

Katherine Dyer; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

Ayan Mohamed; University of Washington School of Public Health

Sonja France; University of Washington School of Medicine, Montana

Nhu Y Thi Doan; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Jordan Ferreira; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

Kelly Anne Hennessey; University of Washington, Seattle

Allison Hourigan; University of Washington School of Medicine, Alaska; MS3

Parirash Abdolhosseini; University of Washington

Lanny McCanta; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Jasmine Gault; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

Demi Galindo; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Oliver Newsom; University of Washington, Seattle

Sadie Gault; WWAMI Community Member

Lauren Ancheta; WWAMI Community Member

Quinn Briceno; WWAMI Community Member

Kim Nguyen; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Jordan Adams; University of Phoenix; Business

Marley Realing; WWAMI Community Member

Olivia Yarbrough; WWAMI Community Member

Arani Yogendran; University of Washington; Biology; Class of 2018

Lindsey Gonzalez; Non-WWAMI Community Member

Alan Shu; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

Amanda Nguyen; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

James Dugan; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle

Cailin Dahlin; WWAMI Community Member

Kiana Reynolds; University of Washington; Undergraduate Biology

Megan Tran; University of Washington; Biochemistry

Marjorie Barker; University of Washington; American Indian Studies and Psychology

Monisha Gonzales; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Priscilla; University of Washington, Seattle Student

Chiamaka Okafor; Washington State University; College of Arts and Sciences

Sarah Doe-Williams; University of Washington School of Medicine

Aliyah Musaliar; University of Washington; LSJ and Philosophy

Beth; University of Washington Student

Sadie Van den Bogaerde; University of Washington; Marine Biology

Melissa Guadarrama; University of Washington; Law, Societies & Justice

Jennifer Arellano; University of Washington; Political Science; 2018

Fatemeh Athari; University of Washington; Bioengineering

Nathan Cruz; University of Washington; American Ethnic Studies; 2014

Aliah Fonteh, Meharry Medical College Student

Delaney Scott; WWAMI Community Member

Kayla Hogan; University of Washington Student

Madison Moreno; University of Washington; Communications; 2019

Annie Wong-On-Wing; University of Washington School of Medicine

Kimberly Yee; University of Washington College of Arts and Sciences; French

Eileen Li; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS2

Yasmine Johnson; University of Washington Student

Jung Yoon; University of Washington School of Medicine, Spokane

Crystal Watson; University of Washington Student

Kathryn Franke; University of Washington School of Medicine

Sonja Danon; University of Washington; Staff member

Fred Hutch; University of Washington; Staff member

Alyssa Hutchinson; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS3

Sana Ali; Meharry Medical College Student

Taryn Meacham; University of Washington School of Medicine

Jennifer Jensen; WWAMI Community Member

May Menard; Meharry Medical College Student

Samuel VanderGriend; University of Washington School of Medicine

Emily Walker; University of Washington; Political Science and LSJ

Melody Tran; University of Washington; School of Public Health; 2016

Ryan Apathy; University of Washington School of Medicine

Kate Armstrong; Non-WWAMI Community Member

Laurel Kelnhofer-Millevolte; University of Washington School of Medicine

Samra Gebrehiwot; University of Washington Student

Sarina Tran; University of Washington, Seattle; Biology; 2019

Samantha Schroff; University of Washington; Sociology

Maryam Bahadori; University of Washington Student

Emily Huebner; University of Washington Student

Rachel Lakey; University of Washington; Political Science

Rickisha Taylor; Non-WWAMI Community Member

Sarah Marsh; Health Professional in WWAMI region

Lily Krolopp; WWAMI Community Member

Isla Elkins; University of Washington; Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies

Desiree Silapaxay; WWAMI Community Member

Karen Chung; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS4

Lexus Edwards; University of Washington School of Social Work

Epiphany Nick Johnson; WWAMI Community Member

Charlotte Houston; University of Washington; Psychology

Ashveen Matharu; Seattle Pacific; Physiology

Kiki Jones; WWAMI Community Member

Tehya Widmann; University of Washington; College of Education; 2018

Chanmee Chung; WWAMI Community Member

Kira Evitts; University of Washington, Seattle; Department of Bioengineering

Rory Murphy; University of Washington; College of Arts and Sciences; Political Science

Varsha Ganapathy; University of Washington; College of Engineering: Aeronautics & Astronautics

Malachi Skiby; University of Washington; School of Public Health; Public Health-Global Health;

College of Arts and Sciences; Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies

Andrew Olander; University of Washington Student

Allyson McDonough; University of Washington; School of Social Work

Broderick Phillips Jr; University of Washington Student

Brian Cedeno; University of Washington, Seattle; School of Medicine; MS1

Michael Eseigbe; University of California, San Francisco; School of Medicine

Quinn Rector; University of Washington; College of The Environment

Pooja Kumar; University of Washington; Bachelors of Arts in Environmental Studies; 2020

Emily Verran; University of Washington, Seattle Student

Michael Dinh; University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle; MS1

Sophie Noyers; University of Washington Seattle; Public Health

Rikki Hinz; University of Washington, Seattle; MA Child & Adolescent Psychology; 2019

Yasmeen Mansour; University of Washington; Engineering

Andee Ott; University of Washington; Bioengineering; 2019

Kai-Bin Ooi; School of Medicine; DoS Staff member

Naomi Nkinsi; University of Washington School of Medicine

Iris Silan; University of Washington; Psychology

Yaamini Venkataraman; University of Washington; School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences

Aliah Fonteh; Meharry Medical College; School of Medicine

Lena Nguyen; University of Washington; Social Work

Annamarie Myers; University of Washington; College of Education

Andrea Malagón; University of Washington Student

Claudia Nguyen; University of Washington; Biology; 2020

Leon Liang; WWAMI Community Member

Ginger White; University of Washington; Drama

Michael Dinh; University of Washington; Chemistry

Lana Pham; WWAMI Community Member

Chiara Procaccio; Loyola University New Orleans; College of Arts and Sciences

Tiffany Palomino; University of Washington; Math

Hannah McKenna; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS3

Nicole Braccio; Non-WWAMI Community Member

Kaitlin Sanders; WWAMI Community Member

Valerie Fuchs; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS1

Isabel Wilson; WWAMI Community Member

Rob Nguyen; WWAMI Community Member

Jonas Dodge; WWAMI Community Member

Madelyn Barnes; University of Washington, Anthropology

Levi Koenig; WWAMI Community Member

Cecilia Carroll; WWAMI Community Member

Mary Mathison; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS2

Hanna Sendekie; University of California Berkeley Student

Kevin Pu; University of Washington School of Medicine

Diana Jimenez Sahagun; WWAMI Community Member

Grace Gordon; University of Washington; School of Public Health

Erika Larsen; University of Washington; College of Arts and Sciences; LSJ

Kenneth Galo Mejia; University of Washington Student

Harlette Tanduyan; University of Washington Student

Aurora Cato; University of Washington, Seattle

Vivian Giang; University of Washington Student

Rebecca LeVeque; University of Washington Student

Gillian Larsen; University of Washington; Biology Department

Jennifer Stern; University of Washington; Aquatic & Fishery Sciences

Tiffany Huynh; University of Washington Student

Berhan Meku; Non-WWAMI Community Member

Romelie Dela Cruz; Health Professional in WWAMI region

Vivian Sieger, University of Washington; Public Health

Dahlia Xie; WWAMI Community Member

Kayla Hogan; University of Washington; School of Medicine

Umi Terukina; Health Professional in WWAMI region

Hailey Brewer; University of Washington Student

Nicole Lobkov; University of Washington, Seattle; Comparative History of Ideas and Dance

Favian Mares; University of Washington; Education

Thanh Nguyen; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS1

Alexandra Willcox; University of Washington; School of Medicine

Meredith Ruff; University of Washington; School of Law; J.D. 2020

Laura Valenzuela; University of Washington Student

Nicole Brennick; University of Washington; Biochemistry; 2020

Erin Sonntag; University of Washington; Former Medicine Advancement Staff; BArch; 2004

Cecelia Watson; University of Washington; Bioengineering

Katherine Luken Raz; University of Washington; Psychology; 2018

Angelina Janeway; University of Washington; Philosophy

Michelle Bulterys; University of Washington Student

Olivia Cavalluzzi; University of Washington Student

Helena McMonagle; University of Washington; School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences

Faye Alarcon; University of Washington; School of Public Health

Riley Messinger; University of Washington Student

Ryan Fang; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS4

Ishu Poudyal; University of Washington Student

Gabrielle Garcia; University of Washington, Seattle; American Ethnic Studies

Abbegail Louie; University of Washington, Seattle Student

Julie Dinh; University of Washington; College of Education

Lia Boyd; University of Washington Student

Wilson Ta; University of Washington; Public Health and American Ethnic Studies

Quinn Rundell; University of Washington, Seattle; Political Science

Carl Capili; University of Washington Student

Jonah Silverstein; University of Washington; Psychology

Cheljoy Sumilhig; University of Washington; Biology

Eden Au Nguyen; University of Washington, Seattle; Communication and American Ethnic Studies

Grace Vowels; University of Washington Student

Rachel Anderson; Health Professional in WWAMI region

Laura Hernandez; University of Washington; B.S. Microbiology; 2015

Dana Paine; University of Washington Student

Mimi To; University of Washington; Education and Psychology Departments

Oron Estes; University of Washington Student

Souren Fay; WWAMI Community Member

Ami Nanavaty; University of Washington; History MA; 2020

Aubrey Gower; University of Washington School of Medicine; MS2

Jessica Duong; University of Washington Foster School of Business; Business Administration

Christine Nguyen; University of Washington; School of Public Health

Ruby Nugent; University of Washington, Tacoma; Environmental Sciences

Cas Haddad; University of Washington, Seattle; School of Art; Art History and Design

Janice Ton; University of Washington, Seattle

Jamie Lan; University of Washington; School of Public Health

Amy Balala; University of Washington Student

Mary Nguyen; University of Washington; Public Health-Global Health

Cassandra Coronel; University of Washington, Bothell Student

Maggie Lai; University of Washington; Allen School

Matthew Milleman; University of Washington School of Medicine Student

Mariam Alkorashy; WWAMI Community Member

Avery Larson; WWAMI Community Member

Kathleen Nguyen; Harborview Medical Center Staff; 8E

Kai Lee; WWAMI Community Member

Andrea Zuniga; University of Washington Student

Kseniya Shin; University of Washington Student

Jessica Some; Health Professional in Non-WWAMI region

Hannah Lessing; University of Washington; Social Work

Lisa Chung; University of Washington, Bothell; Environmental Studies

Hanna Moss; University of Washington Student

Hazel Borden; University of California, Santa Cruz; Sociology

Han Pham; University of Washington; Biology

Melanie Ochoa; University of Washington Student

Tien Hoang; Seattle University Student

Lauren Nguyen; University of Washington School of Medicine

Lily Yan; University of Washington; Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies

Hikaru Abe; University of Washington; Public Health

Lynnette Attar; WWAMI Community Member

Emily Nguyen; Non-WWAMI Community Member

Mailee Bui; WWAMI Community Member

Arianna Lee; WWAMI Community Member

Lynn Lieu; University of Washington, Seattle; Biology

Saron Tekle; University of Washington Student

Deker Vasquez; University of Washington Student

María Raygoza Cano de Márquez; University of Washington; Anthropology

Michelle J; University of Washington; MA School of Social Work; 2016

Nadia Khan; University of Washington Student

Daniela Leon; University of Washington Student

Maricar Panlasigui; WWAMI Community Member

Organizations:

Seeds of Baldwin, Assata, Malcolm and Marsha (Seeds of BAMM)

Decolonize UW

Queer Medical Group at UW (QMed)

Doctor For A Day (DFAD)

Radical Justice UW

Alliance For Equal Representation in Medicine (AFERM)

Students For Ethical Admissions

Queer Trans Students of Color (QTSOC)

Student National Medical Association (SNMA)

Asian Pacific Medical Student Association (APAMSA)

Vietnamese + Queer + Questioning (VietQ)

Students of Color for Public Health

Health Equity Circle (HEC)

On **Aug 17, 2020**, at 12:36 PM, \_ [ec22@uw.edu](mailto:ec22@uw.edu) <[ec22@uw.edu](mailto:ec22@uw.edu)> wrote:

To:       President Ana Mari Cauce

Provost Mark Richards

Dean/CEO Paul Ramsey

From: UW-AAUP Executive Board

Date:  August 17, 2020

Dear UW Leadership,

The board of the University of Washington chapter of the American Association of University Professors has become aware of a situation concerning climate, student/faculty/administration relations, due process, and ongoing issues of anti-Black racism in the School of Medicine (SOM). The situation that has unfolded in the SOM highlights the dearth of resources for managing conflicts between students and professors (among colleagues, or with administration), especially when the underlying driver is racism. We write this letter to support the people at the heart of this struggle who are working to uphold the values of racial justice, shared faculty governance, and academic freedom.

More broadly, our goal is to highlight an urgent opportunity to establish and strengthen processes for restorative justice, designed specifically for managing conflicts of this nature.  Such processes in no way preempt or replace the formal provisions in matters of grievance and disciplinary actions established by the Faculty Code, nor do they in any way abridge established faculty rights.  Rather, restorative justice is a valuable tool for parties in conflict to hear each other, and perhaps achieve mutually acceptable resolutions that can contribute to better institutional cultures and a more robust community.

***Background***

On July 21, 2020, five members of the UW School of Medicine leadership signed a widely-distributed letter describing a controversy that erupted during the School of Medicine’s Ecology Health and Medicine (EHM) course in Seattle on March 20. This letter reported that three EHM course leaders had voluntarily resigned from teaching the course.

UWSOM leadership acknowledged “racism experienced by Black students across UW School of Medicine.” Their letter promised, “We are committed to dismantling institutional racism, mistreatment and other oppressive structures that hinder the ability for all members of our community to thrive,” and announced a new Learning Environment Steering Committee, “with representation from multiple organizations within UW Medicine,” without naming these or describing further detail. No further detail was available on the website regarding this new structure.

In response to the letter, UWSOM students published a [response](https://seedsofbamm.wordpress.com/0607-2020-update/) contesting key elements of the UWSOM leadership’s account and calling for further actions. These [BAMM](https://seedsofbamm.wordpress.com/) students called for dismantling systems of anti-Blackness at UWSOM.

As faculty in AAUP, we support student activism as a right, and the rights of Black students in particular, especially in these unprecedented historical times, to resist anti-Blackness at their university.

***Important matters of faculty shared governance, academic freedom, and racial justice***

We note that no faculty have been dismissed from their positions in SOM; this would have been inappropriate without due process. The students involved have recognized this, as reflected in a revised statement they have [posted](https://seedsofbamm.wordpress.com/0607-2020-update/). AAUP stands with faculty (and all workers) to ensure their due process within fair and just models when conflict arises.  Faculty, staff, and students are owed labor protections and protections from the harm caused by all forms of racism, and all are owed a meaningful, well-designed process for resolving conflicts in a way that serves all workers and preserves the integrity of our missions in teaching, mentoring, learning, and service.

Such a process would uphold long-established faculty rights critical to academic freedom, while also affirming the rights of students to push back against injustices they experience and ensure that their voices and perspectives will not be dismissed. Students are also workers, and their struggles for justice are often sites of unpaid labor without protections.  As teachers, we faculty have a particular inherent obligation to teach and mentor our students, and to honor with humility the insights and wisdom that they -- the scholars, teachers and mentors of the future -- bring to the collective enterprise that is the university.  In faculty evaluations, we formally recognize the value of service; students have no such formal mandate or recognition for service, and we are indebted to those who contribute this work, on top of a demanding academic load.  This social justice work is labor, and should be acknowledged and taken seriously as such.

***Ongoing concern about the lack of action to address racism in the School of Medicine***

It may appear to a casual or new observer that these concerns are about this single classroom incident, but these concerns have a long and troubling history in the SOM. Anti-Black racism can be traced back through all of [U.S. medical history](https://www.worldcat.org/title/until-the-well-runs-dry-medicine-and-the-exploitation-of-black-bodies/oclc/1078475228), including to the origins of our own university (see abbreviated bibliography below).

In recent years, anti-racism advocacy in the School of Medicine has been persistent and clear, including a student-led call-to-action in May 2016, and a [petition](https://www.change.org/p/students-for-an-anti-racist-uwsom-demands-for-an-anti-racist-university-of-washington-school-of-medicine) from the Students for an Anti-Racist UWSOM, which “[a]sks for an Anti-Racist University of Washington School of Medicine,” signed by 269 supporters. We acknowledge the activism work of former UWSOM student [Ohenewaa Nkrumah in 2017](https://seattlepeoplesparty.com/2018/02/23/must-occupy-uw-school-medicine/" \t "_blank), who attempted to draw attention to [deep problems](https://southseattleemerald.com/2017/12/13/the-silence-here-is-deafening-and-it-kills/) in the school.  Racist police-involved[incidents](https://www.thecollegefix.com/students-faculty-call-university-washington-police-racist-demand-disarmed/) in the UWSOM’s Department of Global Health in 2016 also still linger unresolved, and serve as a background to the current events.

In response, Dean Ramsey created a UWSOM Anti-Racism Action Committee (ARAC); however, this committee may have become inactive, as the most recent (very brief) meeting minutes are from November, 2019. In June, 2020, UWSOM leaders posted a “[Pledge Against Racism](https://www.uwmedicine.org/pledge-against-racism)” in response to recent killings of Black people at the hands of police; statements of this nature were being issued by many organizations in June, and there is now a developing critique of the limits of such statements (see entry six in the bibliography below).

This year, we understand that nine of the 140 Seattle-based e-2019 students are Black. These nine represent the largest incoming class of Seattle-based Black students in the school’s history. The collective goal of all UW faculty is for all of them to become proud and successful graduates of our School of Medicine in three years -- a goal worthy of all our commitment.

***Importance of establishing restorative justice processes for managing conflicts of this nature***

All claims of racism and anti-blackness must be taken seriously, and a space created for restorative justice that affirms its harm and invests in its redress.  Restorative justice would be a potentially transformative precursor to formal (disciplinary or adjudication) processes that might avert the need for such processes. (Relatedly, a Faculty Senate team has been trying to redesign the discipline and grievance sections of the UW Faculty Code to make it more humane and effective, see details here [https://www.washington.edu/faculty/senate/faculty-disciplinary-task-force/.)](https://www.washington.edu/faculty/senate/faculty-disciplinary-task-force/). At the center of restorative justice is an acknowledgment that offensive behaviors cause harm to people, relationships, and the community.  People who view themselves as victims of harm feel vulnerable and want to close that wound. Each person wounded has to be able to talk about the meaning to them of their wounding. If the parties are willing, the best way to do this is to help them meet to discuss those harms and processes for resolution. Sometimes those meetings lead to transformational changes in the lives of all involved. There are three big ideas here: (1) repair: offenses cause harm and justice requires repairing that harm; (2) encounter: the best way to determine how to do that is to have the parties decide together; and (3) transformation: this can cause fundamental changes in people, relationships and communities. [Source: <http://restorativejustice.org/>].  There is expertise on restorative justice in our own School of Law.

Since the UWSOM has struggled with racism (especially anti-Black racism) from its inception, and since students have been calling attention to this problem for many years, we support UWSOM committing resources and implementing permanent institutional changes that support restorative justice processes that meaningfully process classroom incidents, conflicts in clinical settings, concerns about leadership, and other situations. The lack of pre-existing mechanisms clearly has hurt both faculty and students attempting to solve problems this spring.

***This work is not easy***

We acknowledge and affirm everyone who is doing the hard work of dismantling racism in ourselves, in our classrooms, in our institutions, especially those in the SOM at this difficult juncture. We especially acknowledge the hard work of Black and Indigenous students, faculty, staff, alumnae, and administrators who are continually called and unfairly held accountable to do this work to challenge, educate and change the majority white institutions in which the rest of us have greater privileges.  Non-Black faculty and administrators need to harness themselves to the non-optional work of building institutional policies and practices aimed at ending racism and anti-Blackness through restorative justice. Developing these processes in SOM will serve the entire University.

Respectfully,

The UW-AAUP Executive Board

*Eva Cherniavsky (president), Amy Hagopian (secretary), Bert Stover (treasurer), Duane Storti, Ann Mescher, Nora Kenworthy, Diane Morrison, James Gregory, Abraham Flaxman, Jay Johnson, Charles Collins, Rob Wood*

Cc:

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**Helpful abbreviated bibliography:**

Byrd WM, Clayton LA. ***Race, medicine, and health care in the United States: a historical survey.***J Natl Med Assoc. 2001 Mar;93(3 Suppl):11S-34S. PMID: 12653395; PMCID: PMC2593958. (This important review paper summarizes issues associated with racism in medical care settings: “Racism is, at least in part, responsible for the fact African Americans, since arriving as slaves, have had the worst health care, the worst health status, and the worst health outcome of any racial or ethnic group in the U.S. Many famous doctors, philosophers, and scientists of each historical era were involved in creating and perpetuating racial inferiority mythology and stereotypes. Such theories were routinely taught in U.S. medical schools in the 18th, 19th, and first half of the 20th centuries.”)

Schulman KA, et al. ***The Effect of Race and Sex on Physicians' Recommendations for Cardiac Catheterization.*** N Engl J Med 1999; 340:618-626 DOI: 10.1056/NEJM199902253400806. (This paper has been cited more than 1100 times and was a seminal contribution to the field because it demonstrated through unique methods how racism operates in clinical settings.)

Shea S, Fullilove MT.***Entry of black and other minority students into U.S. medical schools. Historical perspective and recent trends***. N Engl J Med. 1985 Oct 10;313(15):933–940. (“In 1980, 11.7% of the population was classified as black, but blacks accounted for only 6.6% of the total entering medical-school class, 2.6% of practicing physicians, and 1.7% of medical-school faculty. The problem of underrepresentation is in fact more severe than these national statistics indicate, since a third of the black students and a quarter of the black faculty members were concentrated in three predominantly black medical schools.”)

[Shawn O Utsey](https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3AUtsey%2C+Shawn+O.%2C&qt=hot_author);[Iman Shabazz](https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3AShabazz%2C+Iman%2C&qt=hot_author) ([Burn Baby Burn Production).](https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3ABurn+Baby+Burn+Production%2C&qt=hot_author)***Until the well runs dry: medicine and the exploitation of black bodies*.**[Virginia Commonwealth University. Department of African American Studies,](https://www.worldcat.org/search?q=au%3AVirginia+Commonwealth+University.+Department+of+African+American+Studies%2C&qt=hot_author) United States : Privately Published, 2011.          eVideo access here: <https://www.worldcat.org/title/until-the-well-runs-dry-medicine-and-the-exploitation-of-black-bodies/oclc/1078475228/editions?referer=di&editionsView=true>

Hagopian A, West KM, Ornelas IJ, Art AN, Hagedorn J and Spigner C. ***Adopting an Anti-Racism Public Health Curriculum Competency: The University of Washington Experience***. Public Health Reports, 2018, Vol. 133(4) 507-513 (published by Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health)

Monique, D.***Cultural institutions need to stop the empty gestures and performative activism — it's time to do the real work of anti-racism***. [Insider](https://www.insider.com/cultural-institutions-need-to-stop-the-performative-activism-2020-6) Jun 18, 2020.

Ahmed, Sara. ***The Nonperformativity of Antiracism***. Meridians, vol. 7, no. 1, 2006, pp. 104–126. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/40338719](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40338719). Accessed 8 Aug. 2020.

Useful conceptual model from the [RYSE Center](https://rysecenter.org/) in Oakland, CA

<image.png>

On **Tue, Aug 18, 2020** at 10:18 AM Ana Mari Cauce <[president@uw.edu](mailto:president@uw.edu)> wrote:

Dear Eva,

I’ll let Dean Ramsey respond, but I’m surprised that you’re not already aware that they are doing exactly this (e.g. restorative justice) and that, as I understand it, the process has already begun. I know we’re all hoping it goes well as it could be a model to follow as Faculty Senate looks at changes in the disciplinary process.

There was a restorative justice project - a Truth and Reconciliation Commission , the first in the US- put together on the 25th anniversary of the Greensboro Massacre, where my brother was murdered. My participation was glancing, as I was in New Haven in grad school at the time, buy my sister-in-law - now a city planner in DC - participated and thought it was a positive experience. Although it took a couple of years, it was especially meaningful when the City of Greensboro formally apologized for their (in)action at the time.

I really do believe that this can be a very positive approach, and I’m certainly hoping that it goes well.  Below are a couple of links to academic articles written about the Truth and Reconciliation process as it played out in Greensboro.

Ana Mari

<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3700&context=jssw>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1468017316654361>

<https://triad-city-beat.com/greensboro-city-council-apologizes-citys-role/>

**From:** Clarence Spigner <[cspigner@uw.edu](mailto:cspigner@uw.edu)>   
**Sent:** **Sunday, August 23, 2020** 3:28 PM  
**To:** Ahoua Kone <[konea@uw.edu](mailto:konea@uw.edu)>; Amy Hagopian <[hagopian@uw.edu](mailto:hagopian@uw.edu)>  
**Cc:** India J. Ornelas <[iornelas@uw.edu](mailto:iornelas@uw.edu)>; Victoria Gardner <[vg@uw.edu](mailto:vg@uw.edu)>; rukie hartman <[mrht@uw.edu](mailto:mrht@uw.edu)>; Clarence Spigner <[cspigner@uw.edu](mailto:cspigner@uw.edu)>  
**Subject:** RE: UW Daily story on UW School of Medicine controversy

              I see this is an excellent opportunity. I wish it could be fashion into a Problem Based Learning format for faculty and even for the new ARCH hire. Are there any “easy” answers? No. I have been caught between a rock and a hard place, with dissatisfied students of color (if I can use than concept) on one end and status-quo white faculty expecting an automatic solution on the other.

              I believed the AAUP danced on a tightrope. But don’t get me started. These are the same people, along with their buddies in the Faculty Senate, who collectively look the other way from the ongoing exploitation of student-athletes of color. There is now a raging and fascinating debate about UW professor Cliff Mass comparing the George Floyd protests and riots to Kristallnacht. I like Cliff. He is probably having a ball reading all the waxing and waning of his faculty colleagues about being so out-spoken. Yet when I challenged president Cauce about the UW’s athletic enterprise, I was practically  censured for “not being civil.” But this is not about me.

              The events the students in BAMM are echoes of what many pre-med students expressed to me in my Black Lives and Police Violence class. A review of those named faculty feature them as staunch proponents of diversity. They are presented as being on the front line of change. Well, so is Robin DiAngelo, the  prima-donna white female author of the best-seller, WHITE FRAGILITY. Yet DiAngelo has been called out by African American scholar John McWhorter as simply making money in the “race business.” Other reports reveal how DiAngelo actually knows very few “people of color,” which strikes at the heart of what students in BAMM are referring to.

              At the risk of alienating all the hard work and dedication of people who have dedicate themselves to working in diversity committees, those workshops don’t really work. They have unintended consequences. They attract the choir (the very people who don’t really need them). Worse, departmental administration will use these diversity workshops as punishment rather than as enlightenment.

              Given the incredible demands the CEPH is making on accreditation, imagine what Schools of Public Health and Medical Schools would be like if similar assessments had to be made for racial diversity. Our School of Public Health and the Medical School would failed.

              I agree with you. The AAUP letter could have been stronger in support of the students. But  AAUP could not afford to alienated the well-meaning faculty named by BAMM or of faculty in general. I would like to think if Cauce came after me, some AAUP members would be there to help me.

              Again, I wish this incident could be fashioned into a PBL and administered to faculty, especially white faculty, but to all faculty, just to see how they would handled it.

Stay Safe,

Clarence

**Date: September 3, 2020** at 10:45:06 AM PDT

**To:**"[aaup@uw.edu](mailto:aaup@uw.edu)" <[aaup@uw.edu](mailto:aaup@uw.edu)>

 Dear Roberta Gold, and by extension the AAUP community,

*This response was written before the intervention sent by Dr. Spigner. We mourn that a Black person has legitimized the anti-Black stances of Dr. Gold, but also write to acknowledge the****heterogeneity of Black communities and voices****. And to state that one of the most ubiquitous forms of anti-Blackness is to assume that we speak with one voice.*

*We almost decided this email was not worth our effort because trolling has always been meant to waste time. But given the narratives of harm by Gold, it is important as Black student activists within the School of Medicine, to undo and unclaw the whiteness from narratives****we own***. *We send this statement to Gold, to be witnessed also by the AAUP community, despite the attempt of legitimacy that has taken place.*

We are writing as Black student activists currently at the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) in response to [Roberta Gold](http://www.lawcha.org/author/robertagold/), a white woman previously employed by the [history department of Fordham University Rosehill campus in New York City](https://www.ratemyprofessors.com/ShowRatings.jsp?tid=1232204), whose current faculty affiliations are otherwise unfindable. We are also writing as students who have **inherited the violences** of the legacy of anti-Blackness and many other isms that have a comfortable home in this predominantly white institution. We are yet another wave of student activists fighting for racial justice at the University of Washington, just like our predecessors always have, and with the deep awareness that violences enacted by institutions like the University of Washington land first and foremost at the feet of Black students, especially queer Black students, and especially trans Black students.

First, it will be helpful to address any historical misdirection or misfocusing on the events at hand. The controversy referred to at the school of medicine does not center around highlighting ***the fact*** that Black trans women have suffered disproportionate levels of violence (see Figure 1 of [this AJPH article](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5551594/), or check out the Human Rights Coalition’s [2019](https://www.hrc.org/resources/a-national-epidemic-fatal-anti-trans-violence-in-the-united-states-in-2019), [2018](https://www.hrc.org/resources/a-national-epidemic-fatal-anti-transgender-violence-in-america-in-2018), or [2017](http://assets2.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/A_Time_To_Act_2017_REV3.pdf?_ga=2.139644083.1861674278.1598911765-151539236.1598911765) editions of the Fatal Anti-Transgender Violence in America report). Here’s a quote from the **2017** edition:

“At least 87 were transgender people of color Fatal violence disproportionately impacts transgender people of color. **Seventy-five victims tracked in the past five years of reporting have been Black or African American**, while 10 have identified as Hispanic or Latinx.”

Since Dr. Gold conditionally agrees with centering Black folx in this situation now that the facts from a cursory google search are laid bare, it calls into question the origin of the controversy. While tone policing has been centered, a key incident is the ensuing blaming of Black students, including, *but* *not limited to*, ***a faculty-proffered, public accusation of a vendetta aimed at a Black student*** in response to correcting a fellow student. Unfortunately, below we must now spend time here recentering and addressing tone policing and academic politics, a mere symptom of a larger problem that has been deftly avoided in the name of some misdirected “race discourse.”

***On Academia and Politik’s Relationship to (not with) Black Persons:***

We would like to first begin with a critique of whiteness, as exemplified by Roberta Gold in her lengthy e-mail. To Roberta Gold directly: **Your identity and lived experiences of whiteness** do not give you social credence to speak on matters of Blackness. Previous involvement teaching African American history as a white woman does not give you social credence to redefine anti-Blackness or to dispose of intersectionality. As a white non-student who taught history **across the country,** we are utterly shocked by your misuse of Black radicals such as Fred Hampton in order to maintain your fragility, as well as your **inability to imagine nonbinary constructs** and especially ones that are beyond whatever the white left has to offer Blackness and Black people.

We begin our critique of Gold, with the title of her email: “T*he wages of wokeness or what the left has to lose as campus race discourse jettisons [B]lack history*.” First and foremost, we would like to remind Gold, that you, as a non-Black person, should always capitalize the B in Black. Additionally, we would like to draw a hard and fast stop to the [White] left’s entitlement to Black radical history.

We reject the notion that racial discourse exists within the confines of what is the “left”, or what Gold has synonymously named as *“identitarian leftism, liberalized leftism* a*nd other names*.” We are students who are actively imagining new realities that transcend the limitations held in the language that you used. **We are not “the left”.** Black radicality **exists despite the [white] left**. Black radicality is not the [white] left’s to claim, and the wages of “wokeness” are borne not by them, but by those who hold identities most marginalized within discourses of systemic oppression. This is most clearly seen in the lived realities of Black trans women. Therefore, even your title Dr.Gold, **is eating itself**.

Black movements are often started by the poorest and most marginalized of Black communities in order to sustain ourselves and fight for what we are owed by a country that has robbed so much from us and our ancestors. However, the white left we know today has been disfigured by neoliberal renditions of identity politics; ultimately, white leftism today **cannot lay claim to, or as you have put it, assign a “wage” to a population to which this country owes reparations**. Your own white fragility, or, to use your own presumably more accurate and specific language, inability to engage in *omphaloskepsis*, begins with your own title of the e-mail, a title that does not even acknowledge the anti-Blackness integral to today’s conceptualization of the left, **especially in the ways non-Black leftists practice their leftism**.

Moreover, it is important to emphasize that racism in the medical school is not an “accusation” but a fact. This comes from the lived experiences of actual Black medical students. Even our own administration has admitted that anti-Blackness is a legacy entrenched within this school, and all institutions of higher education.

Gold’s claim that [white] leftism (a construct that we have rejected to be claimed by and even further have rejected its entitlement to Black radicality) *“threatens to erase from our minds the very awareness of an older anti-imperialist left tradition of struggle against racial injustice”*is only possible if life were an episode of the [Matrix](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Matrix) where taking the blue or red pill is the choice you are forced to make in order to a) remain in blissful ignorance or b) reveal an unpleasantry.

This “x is attempting to force people to forget y” narrative is reminiscent of right wing arguments like that of [Ben Shapiro](https://twitter.com/benshapiro) that even music from some of our favorite artists, like Meg Thee Stallion, is in itself an attack on so-called American values. [He claims that Black women being unafraid of their sexuality in the music industry](https://twitter.com/benshapiro/status/1292926867599581184?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1292927011724304384%7Ctwgr%5E&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.themarysue.com%2Fben-shapiro-spectacularly-self-owns-on-wap%2F) is an attempted erasure and tarnishing of an older, allegedly more respectable history of (white) feminism.

Let us be clear: this opinion is not and will never be original. In fact, it’s so unoriginal, that it’s the type of opinion that protects and maintains white structures of power. Why is that, you may ask? **Because this narrative is a part of how white fragility unfolds in spaces where whiteness, its descendants, and its beneficiary structures are being challenged.**

Gold has extended her own fragility to include the assertion that the “medical school controversy” not only erases previous anti-imperialist histories, but is also a *conflict within two camps claiming the left mantle*. This assertion has been made without **any analysis** on who claims whom; who can consent and who cannot; who has historically benefited from becoming experts in racial discourse while completely disregarding the power politics that exist within white systems and the Black people these systems subjugate.

As a professor of history, it should not come as a surprise to you that us Black students are asking you to be mindful of the statements you are making, statements which are **not backed by any historical nor lived reality of Black people and their histories, past and modern day.**Black people do not possess social power over our autonomy; rather, we are superimposed in-between white systems – even in death – in ways that have always benefited whiteness. This plays into the narrative that Blackness and its descendants are the real evil hiding underneath the beds of white homes. Further, it should be apparent at this juncture that concessions to accommodate rising tides of dissatisfaction with institutionalized anti-Blackness have only come at the convenience (or the mitigation of inconvenience) for this dominant white society.

Black students aren’t solely focusing discussions of anti-Blackness on the reactionary fragility of non-Black folks. We are using this term, however non-totally encompassing, to describe the behavior with which non-Black folks engage to not only protect themselves and their ego, but also **directly discredit and harm Black people**(and in our case, Black students)**as a form of retaliation.**

If you actually read our demands, or engaged with Seeds of BAMM, you would understand that Black students are leveraging this definition of fragility to examine how the fragility exhibited by non-Black folks is evident of a larger systemic and institutional problem that ultimately has **material consequences on Black students and patients** -- i.e: Poorer mental health, lack of compensation for work in racial justice, time taken away from studying (which for medical students is supposed to be a priority), and even the death of Black folks during hospital encounters.

We also find within Gold’s response an egregious amount of **racism** and **anti-Blackness**. It is deeply anti-Black for you, a white woman, to cite the works of radical Black scholars and individuals in attempt to leverage **your** definition of anti-Blackness, **your**categorization of the “bearers of Black radical tradition” and as well as **your accentuated binarism and rigid understandings of Black scholarly work. Your lack of fluidity emerges across all your arguments.**

No matter how much Black radical theory you’ve read or studied or taught, your analyses as a non-Black person, as a white woman whose entire career and scholarship owes its entire existence to actual Black people, **should not be used to speak over the work of Black students pushing for racial justice**.

As a concrete example of this, please refer below to your bastardization of the written history of anti-Black sentiment, and use this example to understand that your attempts at academization of Black history fall short of encapsulating centuries of ideas sharpened on the whetstone of shared Black experiences. It should come as no surprise that the wealth of Black knowledge shared among actual Black persons looms in greater richness and complexity over its distorted manifestations within academia. Even academia continues to face important reckonings on how to recognize Blackness in white spaces.

 For lack of more eloquent language, there are politics of staying in your lane that you should learn as a white academic who could never begin to understand, let alone embody the experiences of Black people. This is a reminder that **you do not have a home within our bodies or stories** and the keys of our writing and telling are not to be **stolen** from us and revised through what is a deeply broken and deeply white lens.

You are **reframing the narrative of Black medical students at UWSOM** under Afro-Pessimism. **We are not your students**. **We are actually experiencing firsthand the consequences of anti-Blackness unfolding at our institution**. We see a gross misunderstanding and selective interpretations of our racial critique that us student activists are asking our academic institutions to further revise and reexamine.

To tackle your shortsighted characterization of the origins of anti-Blackness, it might be helpful to re-remember that the spirit and nature of the sentiment expressed by Wilderson and Sexton was not novel. In fact, anti-Blackness has been described by many terms, including the term Negrophobia, which predates your original source by over 100 years. As such, your “takedown” of Afro-pessimism is obsolete, because, as you almost said, the description of anti-Blackness cannot be monolithicized and mono-derived to two authors whom the idea predates. To parrot the concept of monolithicization as you did is expected; to understand that generations of cooperative and conflicting Black thought contribute to contemporary ideas is apparent to Black people, and apparently, obscure to the white academic eye.

Who told you we are Afro-pessimists?  Who told you we are not?  **Who told you to carve those definitions based on an incredibly jaded understanding of matters of which you cannot even begin to comprehend owing to your identity as a white academic?** **Who gave your whiteness breadth to structure an environment in which you are using Blackface** (read: incompletely citing Black work to legitimize yourself) **against Black people?** **Who told you Blackness is a monolith, and who gave you space to deny our people fluidity in the ways in which we digest Black racial violence, ways from which your entire career has benefited?**

Your audacious self-righteousness to claim Black radical thought, and Black people as a whole, lands squarely within the textbook of predictable white antics. **And it is not new**. We saw it when Kanye West said that slavery was a choice and masses of white people plastered his image on the Internet to discredit Black people. We saw it when masses of white people used Morgan Freeman to tell other Black people that there is no need for a Black history month and that its very existence is racist. **This is how modern-day Blackface operates**. It is white rigidity and white fragility and the simultaneous expectation of Black monolithism coming together to find the Black person, or in this case, the Black links to which your whiteness can give credence, because it legitimizes and strengthens **your white rage and bitterness against other groups of Black people**.

It is the argument of the “Good Negro vs Bad Negro”. It is the “We prefer MLK and not Malcolm X.” It shows up in about any and every instance of centering Blackness, and often it is **the hands of whiteness (Gold) inserting themselves into the complexities of Blackness.**

**This is way outside of your lane and way outside of your community.**

We also add that it is not your position to reinterpret our [Black] narratives or decide what languages suit our experiences. You don't get to decide for Black people what terms or definitions we want to use for ourselves.  As an occupant of whiteness, you don’t get to assign or measure or re-imagine Black violence.

*“It would be news to the African participants that they should have jettisoned their global anti-colonial consciousness in favor of Blackness” –***who are you speaking for? Because it surely cannot be Africans and African history. And it surely cannot be us, who have asked for the bearers of a specific colonial violence to be named specifically.**

We are further **disgusted**by your misuse of Fred Hampton who, even as an advocate for Black solidarity with other people of color, held **Blackness as his first tenet.** **It is a mischaracterization of African diaspora globally to twist our histories in ways that allow your privileged revisionist interpretations to remain unchallenged.** And it is telling that even as you reference the “Third World Women’s Alliance,” you have no grounding of the central and extended critiques that exist in that space of the Third World, let alone the nuances of the actual alliance, **which was founded directly upon the work of the Black Women’s Alliance.**

“*The AAUP should support teacher rights…..the center-Blackness camp does not speak for all Blacks*.” To begin with,**we are not Blacks, we are Black people**. Such a call to action is an incredible overstepping on your part into a community of which you are not a part, and from an academic institution at which you are no longer active, **without any firsthand experience of anti-Blackness at UWSOM.**Why are you taking it upon yourself to draw the lines of where Black people should exist within our fluidities? Why is that a control you feel the need to have? **Is the fact that Blackness isn’t a monolith, a realization you supposedly hold while the rest of us actual Black people do not?**

Your need to control Black narratives and dialogue, who we speak for or how we are moving in our own spaces about anti-Black racism, is reminiscent of white ancestral control patterns during slavery. And even as we live in the era of the New Jim Crow, we would like to remind you, **we do not belong to you**, and neither do any narratives of Blackness and its people. We urge you to be more concerned that you are an unwanted visitor strutting your whiteness in our halls and to not concern yourself with intra-community dialogue that will have no material consequences on you whatsoever.

**The AAUP should boldly stand against the white politics of those like Roberta Gold**. As the mission in all of our work (faculty and students alike) is also undoing white supremacy, especially for those holding **the most**marginalized identities across varying intersecting structures of oppression.  There is no reason why the AAUP cannot be involved in also acknowledging when faculty are in the wrong and when faculty are racist. The issues of racism and anti-Blackness are not meant to be immediately anti-faculty nor pro-student. Even as Black medical students, we hold our own colleagues responsible when they engage in behavior we know will be damaging to patients in the clinical setting.

We are not astonished that Gold lacks this analysis. And given the rest of the email, we are unmoved **that even intersectionality is a concept that grapples you**. That even in your reference of Latinx trans women’s experiences (*“I’ve seen that Latinx women endure similar levels of violence*”),**you have erased the existence and experiences of Black Latinx trans women and** given an assessment **not based in fact**. It takes only a simple Google search to verify the inaccuracy of your claim.

**The views you have parroted have been recycled by right, centrist, and left-wing racists long before you drafted this email.** Black violence is only spoken of **when it is measured up against the suffering of others**, but Black suffering is never validated as its own egregious, horrific machination on Black bodies only. We leave it to you to examine why that is also a tenet of the anti- Blackness that you harbor, and why your discomfort with Black hypervisibility – an actual function of oppression – is leading you**to erase the complex reality of anti-Blackness as experienced by actual Black people** in order toadhere to age old narratives that center white feelings.

**Your assessment that two of the charged faculty are Latino and not white also shows your misunderstanding of the definitions of ethnicity and race. White, Asian, Black and Indigenous Latinx people exist.**This is an **outright denial of anti- Blackness we know to exist in non-Black communities.**This is also an **erasure of the experiences of Black Latinx folks,**who often experience anti- Blackness from both white Latinx, non-Black, non-white Latinx communities.

**It is not your place to displace or define anti- Blackness. Your characterization of this as a moral grenade is, at best, racist**. Your lack of nuance around the politics of tone policing is too much of a labor for us to invest in undoing for you. It is hard to find reason within your whiteness when tone policing is a “twitter rule” that you credit “feminist twitter” for and “white fragility” is a cooked up grift. Robin D’ Angelo became **problematically** rich off of ideas that have always existed in Black thought and so perhaps as an unfindable history professor, you should do more due diligence in **challenging the whiteness tethering your sources of knowledge** before bending facts to fit in the rigidity of your framework.

Your **lack of fluidity** is the reason your digestion of events **you do not know about** seem like a [**zero sum game**](https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Publication%20Files/norton%20sommers%20whites%20see%20racism_ca92b4be-cab9-491d-8a87-cf1c6ff244ad.pdf). To you, tone policing is “twitter rule” that “shouldn’t be imported in the classroom”. Your characterization of events **you never were present for**are described as “judgement calls” with no nuance of how tone policing functions inside and outside academia on racial lenses. You have **an inability to analyze racism** even when the entire global world--economic and social principles function on it.

We  agree with only one thing you have said, in what has been a bamboozling of your white discomfort on display, and that is  “*I wasn’t at the lecture”.* You were not, and that is why this email that you drafted as if you are aware of our histories and as if you are aware of the anti-Black histories of those being accused of -isms, and as if you are aware **really of anything**, should have remained squarely in the drafts section of your email folder.

We as Black students you have never met, are looking forward to your reply, as we do not have classes to teach and have ample time to respond indefinitely. Please be sure to cc us in your response at [seedsofbamm@gmail.com](mailto:seedsofbamm@gmail.com) so we can continue our critique of your standings, all of which will continue to ask why you're incessantly obsessed about matters in an institution that you are detached from by identity, geography and activity.

Best,

--

BAMM,

Seeds of **B**aldwin, **A**ssata, **M**alcolm & **M**arsha

UW School of Medicine, Coalition of Black activism

They/Them/We/Us/Our/BAMM

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/seedsofBAMM/)  [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/seedsofbamm/)  [Twitter](https://twitter.com/SeedsofB)

"It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win......We have nothing to lose but our chains"- Assata Shakur

**From:**Roberta Gold <[rsgold@panix.com](mailto:rsgold@panix.com)>

**Subject: Re: [AAUP] In response to: The Wages of Wokeness, or, what the left stands to lose as campus race discourse jettisons black history**

**Date: September 4, 2020** at 2:29:31 PM PDT

**To:**Faculty Issues and Concerns <[aaup@u.washington.edu](mailto:aaup@u.washington.edu)>

**Cc:**"[aaup@uw.edu](mailto:aaup@uw.edu)" <[aaup@uw.edu](mailto:aaup@uw.edu)>

Dear all,  
  
The Seeds of BAMM letter is a great case study in the ways that identitarian ideology pushes important political topics off the table. The ostensible mission of the student group is to improve medical care for black patients.  A worthy goal.  Yet what sends them into high dudgeon?  A white person's having invoked the name of Fred Hampton.  
  
I have, in my own medical job, seen a lot of black people get crappy care in under-staffed, sometimes callously staffed, hospitals.  I have recently lost one of my black EMS brothers to Covid-19.  And I've witnessed the sorrow of many virus-bereaved neighbors in my predominantly African American and Dominican area of the city.  None of this death and suffering has stemmed from white people's study of, or teaching gigs in, black history.  Or from medical school lectures on violence against people of color.  Strangely enough, Covid's ravages seem rooted in crowded housing and labor conditions; inaccessible healthcare; criminal neglect of general public health measures; and criminal neglect of jails, shelters and subways.  So people who are serious about improving medical care for blacks will have to think about building the political power to defeat or at least rein in all those socioeconomic factors.  
  
Which, actually, leads us back to Fred Hampton.  
  
One reason I don't fall for the identitarian hustle is that I've been fortunate, for much of my adult life, to have great black mentors, intellectual examplars and comrades who squarely rejected the ascriptive lane-staying that Seeds of BAMM preaches. If you want to study black history, they said, go ahead; but study it seriously.  Don't just tick a "diversity" box on your syllabus.   These teachers and friends are the guiding lights I try to follow.  I can live with Seeds of BAMM's disapproval.  
  
I do believe that teachers should think about 1) the social privileges they enjoy and 2) the ways that students of many descriptions will feel invested in "their" history.  But that doesn't mean staying in a lane or running lessons by the identitarian Crimethink detectors .  It means presenting material and guiding discussion in a sensitive and respectful manner.  I surely have not done this well every time I've taught.  But I have occasionally gotten it right, according to student feedback. Teachers shouldn't get complacent; they should be on the lookout for their own blind spots, and open to good-faith constructive criticism.  But, again, that's not the same as staying in a lane.  
  
One of the best lectures I attended at the UW was by Holocaust historian Christopher Browning, a gentile as far as I know.  (Admittedly, I am just going by his given name.  I've never met him.)  I learned a lot and later read some of his published work.  It never entered my head that I held some authority on the subject that Browning lacked, by virtue of my being Jewish and having had relatives killed by the Nazis.  Browning is a master of his subject.  Any historically minded person of any background can learn from him.  
  
Not that I'm in his league as a scholar or teacher.  I simply recognize his work, along with the black materialist scholarship I cited in my last post, as a standard to shoot for.  
  
But enough about me.  The best thing I can do with the listserve prominence I've unexpectedly gained through SOM-gate is to call readers' attention to more of the terrific black Marxist thinking that identitarians would like to sweep off our intellectual radar.  I'll paste links at the end of this message.  
  
In closing, two thoughts.  First, this dispute reminds me of past exchanges on this list regarding Israel/Palestine.  Virtually all the posters were Jewish.  I was one of several who opposed the censorship of pro-Palestinian, anti-Zionist expression, while others insisted that anti-Zionism was beyond the pale.  Then I received several off-list messages from gentile faculty who said they shared my views, yet were afraid to say so publicly for fear of being smeared as anti-Semites.  I understand their fear.  Critics of Israel have indeed been blacklisted in academia.  But I didn't and don't accept the principle that only Jews are entitled to speak about Israel.  That's identitarian narishkeit.  
  
Second, regarding race and redistribution of power: Many believe that the reason Hampton topped the FBI's hit list was that he wasn't just an effective leader of a Black Panther chapter, but was successfully forging a coalition among blacks, Puerto Ricans and poor whites. This made him, in J. Edgar Hoover's estimation, a serious threat to the existing order.  
  
I have a feeling that Hoover's political heirs are not losing any sleep over Afro-Pessimism and other woke pieties.  
  
Roberta  
  
some black Marxist favorites:  
  
<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/02/black-lives-matter-power-politics-cedric-johnson>  
  
<http://smirkingchimp.com/thread/adolph-reed-jr/89867/disparity-ideology-coronavirus-and-the-danger-of-the-return-of-racial-medicine>  
  
<https://platypus1917.org/2015/09/01/marxism-back-door-interview-cedric-johnson/>  
  
<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs10624-017-9476-3.pdf>

On **Fri, 4 Sep 2020**, Anne Taufen wrote:

This is interesting, and two things about this email seem especially important.  
  
1.   Much of what is pointed out here - the whiteness of the institution, the way in which white or white-conditioned scholars appropriate the narratives and experiences of those with less power, the inheritance of harm, the relative blindness of those with access to institutionalized forms of privilege - is crucial for our university, and for all public universities to surface and engage. As someone who was trained during an era and in a field where privileged white people presuming to speak on behalf of people of color, under a lens or normative commitment to social justice, was something tacitly endorsed and even celebrated as enlightened, helpful, worthwhile, compassionate, etc - I have had to learn, sometimes painfully, that it is \*not\* my place to speak for other people. To infer what their experiences must have been, and to extract and appropriate selective evidences for this - it can be a form of institutionalized violence, a silencing and a perpetuation of existing harm, in many cases, and very much worth attending to and eradicating from our practices as scholars, analysts, health care providers, and human beings. People should speak for themselves, whenever and wherever possible.  
2.  I was conditioned to behave in these ways by a culture that is not only White, but I would argue, patriarchal. The vitriol expressed here against Roberta Gold personally, is striking. I am not able to assess the relative merit of Gold's claims about Fred Hampton, Black pessimism, the historical intricacies of Black liberation movements and responses. It's not my field, and I thought her post was interesting and provocative. The most significant "out of her lane" dynamic that we see in evidence here, is a woman posting a challenging and controversial perspective. It may be that Gold's take is flawed in all the ways that the BAMM author points out. What is on display here, however, is the fury that she would have the audacity to put forth such claims. This is framed in personal, hateful, and indicting language, that is absent from Gold's post, and that many women, myself included, have come to anticipate as normal when these lines of "niceness" and intellectual assertiveness, questioning are crossed. One way of understanding this, is that such provocation and inquiry can be tolerated from men, has been - but is utterly out of line from Roberta Gold.  I am not advocating for or against Gold's position, and as I said I find many of the BAMM author's points instructive, but it is interesting that we see this deeply gendered grenade-throwing on a topic that badly needs light, exploration, inquiry, and deeper understanding.  
  
Anne  
  
Just published in Journal of Planning Education and Research:  
  
"Pr<<https://journals.sagepub.com/eprint/8RGHYIFHZQM3PWFYFB8G/full>>actice-Based Politicization<<https://journals.sagepub.com/eprint/8RGHYIFHZQM3PWFYFB8G/full>>: Planning Reports as Actants in a University-Community Partnership"  
  
by Anne Taufen and Anneka Olson

**From:**Roberta Gold <[rsgold@panix.com](mailto:rsgold@panix.com)>

**Subject: Re: [AAUP] In response to: The Wages of Wokeness and gender**

**Date: September 8, 2020** at 1:59:07 PM PDT

**To:**Faculty Issues and Concerns <[aaup@u.washington.edu](mailto:aaup@u.washington.edu)>

I appreciate Anne Taufen's sympathetic impulse.  But I'm dubious about her suggestion that I was sprayed with vitriol for being an assertive woman. More plausibly, my crime was to challenge the petitioners' claim to be the The True Voice of Black Radicalism.  I pointed out that there are several stripes of black radicalism.  Worse, rather than presuming to speak for black radicals, I provided links to articles in which black people speak for themselves!  
  
This threatened Seeds of BAMM's credibilty, and, like most people who feel threatened, they reached for whatever weapon came to hand.  In this case, the charge of white presumption. They might well have done the same to a white man who wrote what I wrote.  
  
Put differently, if I'd said that the SOM petition was the ineluctable culmination of a century of black radical thinking, I would not have been charged with an illegal change of lane.  
  
But let's not dwell on that.  A little vitriol never hurt anyone. Ignorance of history and politics, on the other hand, are deadly!  If you want to get a handle on this dispute, please consider looking at the articles to which I linked in my first post.  Some are written for a general audience, and even the academic ones have abstracts (the greatest invention since sliced bread).  
  
Let me also empasize that inflated claims to represent a collectivity are by no means unique to black politics.  They can be found wherever fine politics are sold.  The NRA claims to speak for gun owners even though its position on background checks clashes with that of most gun owners.   The Human Rights Campaign in the early 2000s put marriage equality at the top of its agenda, even though many of the gays it purported to represent rated other concerns as more urgent.  Benjamin Netanyahu claims to represent world Jewry....fregt mir nisht.\*\*  I've been posting about the black instance of this phenomenon only because it seems to have gained traction in a call summarily to fire faculty members.  
  
Let me close with an extended quote from Cedric Johnson, one of those unflappably non-identitarian black leftists whose work I linked the other day.  (This is from his Jacobin essay on "Black Political Life.")  
  
"Many left activists and academics continue to abide the notion of black exceptionalism, that there is something unique and incommensurable about the experiences of blacks that prohibits any substantive discussion of class position and interests whenever the black population is concerned. This posture is wrong and dangerous. It is not grounded in any close empirical sense of \_actually existing black life\_,  but retreats toward the most unidimensional sense of the black population  as noble, long-suffering victims of oppression and the moral conscience of a white-dominated nation, rather than a people possessing all the social contradictions, ideological diversity, foibles, heroism, and frailties \_found throughout the American populace\_.....Genuflecting before identitarian politics, whether under the guise of Black Power nostalgia or Black Lives Matter sloganeering, does little to help us understand... power alignments."  
  
(Emphases mine.)  
  
Roberta  
  
\*\* "don't ask."

On **Sep 8, 2020**, at 1:36 PM, Eva Cherniavsky <ec22@uw.edu> wrote:

Dear Colleagues,

Earlier this month, after the incident in the SOM EHM class was reported in The Daily, UW-AAUP called on UW leadership to develop and offer processes for restorative justice as a means to address conflicts of this nature (our original letter is re-posted, below) . In response, we have received (off-list) some thoughtful queries and comments, which prompt us now to offer this brief clarification.

As some of the more recent posts to this list have made amply clear, the SOM incident goes to difficult and substantive questions, not least the question of how to balance long-overlooked demands for accountability and redress for systemic institutional racism (on the one hand) with faculty rights to academic freedom and due process that are ever more imperiled as tenure becomes the privilege of the few (on the other).  In this context, it seems to us that there is an urgent need for a different kind of *process.*

Restorative justice assumes that there are no ready-made principles to apply to the conflict – or rather that the ready-made principles for which one might reach may not be adequate to producing a just resolution.  In other words, it assumes that there are complex and consequential issues at stake that require working through.  It further assumes that the people best positioned to engage in that labor are the parties to the conflict.

We have been asked whether instituting a process of restorative justice doesn’t (first) require a determination that an injustice was likely perpetrated (in other words, a prior determination as to the merit of the claim to injury).  On the contrary, however, restorative begins simply in the acknowledgement that an injury has been experienced, on one or on both sides, and the hope is that, in a process of facilitated dialogue, in which each side must hear the other, the parties to the conflict might arrive at a shared understanding of what occurred and a common vision for a just conclusion.   Clearly, such a process offers no guarantees.   But it does offer at least the potential for an outcome that is transformative, rather than (as all too often occurs) an aftermath in which both parties are left to reckon with their own trauma.

The UW-AAUP Executive Board

**From:**Seeds of BAMM <[seedsofbamm@gmail.com](mailto:seedsofbamm@gmail.com)>

**Subject: In response to: The Wages of Wokeness, or, what the left stands to lose as campus race discourse jettisons black history**

**Date:**September 3, 2020 at 10:45:06 AM PDT

On **Sep 9, 2020**, at 5:59 AM, Roberta Gold <rsgold@panix.com> wrote:

I appreciate Anne Taufen's sympathetic message.  But I'm dubious about her suggestion that I was sprayed with vitriol for being an outspoken woman. My offense, I think, was to throw into doubt the student petitioners' status as The One True Voice of Black Radicalism.  I did this by showing that no such unitary voice exists or has existed in history.  Worse, rather than presuming to speak for black radicals, I provided links to articles in which black people speak for themselves!  
  
This threatened Seeds of BAMM's credibilty, so they reached for whatever weapon came to hand.  In this case, the charge of white presumption. They might well have done the same to a white man who wrote what I wrote.  
  
Put differently, if I'd said that the SOM petition was the ineluctable culmination of a century of black radical thinking, I would not have been charged with an illegal change of lane.  
  
But let's not dwell on that.  A little vitriol never hurt anyone. Ignorance of history and politics, on the other hand, is deadly!  If you want to get a handle on this dispute, please consider looking at the articles to which I linked in my first post.  Some are written for a general audience, and even the academic ones have abstracts (the greatest invention since sliced bread).  
  
Let me also emphasize that inflated claims to represent a collectivity are by no means unique to black politics.  They can be found wherever fine politics are sold.  The NRA claims to speak for gun owners even though its position on background checks clashes with that of most gun owners.   The Human Rights Campaign in the early 2000s put marriage equality at the top of its agenda, even though many of the gays it purported to represent rated other concerns as more urgent.  Benjamin Netanyahu claims to represent world Jewry....fregt mir nisht.\*\*  I've been focusing on the black instance of this phenomenon only because it seems to have gained traction in the campaign against SOM faculty members.  
  
Anne devotes to some bytes to white privilege, a thing I believe exists and ought to recognized by conscientious teachers (as I wrote in my last post).  But I disagree with the implication (and apologies to Anne if I am misreading her here) that such recognition means treating the Seeds of BAMM's content -- not its tone -- as immune to critical assessment from white readers.  Engaged, critical reading is a form of respect.  Why would one see Seeds of BAMM's verbal flailing as interchangeable with the cogent, mature, learned writings of, say, Bruce Dixon or Adolph Reed, Jr., if one really took black intellectualism seriously?  
  
Let me close with a quote from Cedric Johnson, another one of those unflappably non-identitarian black leftists whose work I linked to the other day.  (This is from his Jacobin essay on "Black Political Life.")  
  
"Many left activists and academics continue to abide the notion of black exceptionalism, that there is something unique and incommensurable about the experiences of blacks that prohibits any substantive discussion of class position and interests whenever the black population is concerned. This posture is wrong and dangerous. It is not grounded in any close empirical sense of \_actually existing black life\_, but retreats toward the most unidimensional sense of the black population as noble, long-suffering victims of oppression and the moral conscience of a white-dominated nation, rather than a people possessing \_all the social contradictions, ideological diversity, foibles, heroism, and frailties found throughout the American populace\_.....Genuflecting before identitarian politics, whether under the guise of Black Power nostalgia or Black Lives Matter sloganeering, does little to help us understand... power alignments."  
  
(Emphases mine.)  
  
Roberta  
  
\*\* "don't ask."

**From:**Seeds of BAMM <[seedsofbamm@gmail.com](mailto:seedsofbamm@gmail.com)>

**Subject: In response to Roberta Gold and Anne Taufen**

**Date: September 10, 2020** at 7:02:17 AM PDT

**To:**AAUP <[aaup-bounces@mailman12.u.washington.edu](mailto:aaup-bounces@mailman12.u.washington.edu)>

Dear Gold, Taufen and, by extension, the AAUP community,

*This email was written in reply to Gold’s primary response to our original email, then altered to include critique of Taufen’s defense of Gold in these interactions. As previously accomplished;  our purpose with this email is meant to educate Gold and Taufen and also undermine their erroneous arguments. In a collective effort to reclaim our time from the trolling of these two individuals, this email is meant to serve as a****final response.***

*We encourage you all after reading, to follow and engage with us, actual Black students, through email:*[*seedsofbamm@gmail.com*](mailto:seedsofbamm@gmail.com)*and/or our social media platforms listed here :*[*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/home)[*Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/)[*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/seedsofBAMM)*for firsthand information regarding Black activism at UW School of Medicine. We also encourage white accomplices to step into the AAUP space -- especially white women -- with the intention of holding your colleagues accountable for these racist and harmful narratives that we have been dispelling. We remind you all, that there is violence in silence and as we vacate the AAUP space, we leave it to allies to continue the work of anti-racism, which does include a calling out or in of the many racist behaviors exhibited by Gold and Taufen. Thank you.*

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Before we begin this second critique, we would like to acknowledge the irony present in this space. An irony that, when contextualized within current social issues, implicates the ways in which **white women in academia practice and exert white supremacy**.

It is humorous, that as the nation watches Jessica Krug --a white Jewish professor at George Washington University -- reap the consequences of her **usage of whiteness to invade existing Black narratives and over Black people**; we are also watching two white women, Gold and Taufen, **differ only in methodology but not in principle** from Krug. This irony is only further exemplified when you realize that we are also in an age where we are watching masses of Black people rally around reclaiming our space and narratives from the strongholds of whiteness.

In fact, some of the central critiques facing Krug are the same ones that we used to critique Gold in her previous email. They are analyses of **Blackface**, of **identity theft**, of **lane swerving** into experiences that are **not** your own and above **actual Black people**.

If you are especially attuned to the politics of power, then it is not difficult to also realize that, what we now have are two white women, arguing with Black students about Blackness that they do not have and about racialized anti-Black narratives in a medical institution of which they are not a part.

Not only has Gold once again imposed herself over actual Black people whose Black experiences and theories serve the basis for her entire career, she has also attempted to**incompletely analyze identity politics** in a way that ignores how her self-insertion into our Black space **is possible precisely because whiteness itself is the biggest and most violent form of “*identitarian ideology.*”**In fact, the identity politics of every other racial group is simply a **response** (and sometimes one of survival i.e: “Stop killing**Black** people” or the existence of Black Panther Party) to the identity politics of whiteness.

Gold’s short-sighted analyses remind us of the delusional entitlement exemplified by Krug across various videos and articles, in which the latter accuses [white people of gentrifying “her neighbourhood](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n40wEIFtImU)” -- an act only all the more nauseating now that we know that this whole time, she has been actively denying that she too is part of that whiteness and gentrification.

Similarly, in order for Gold to practice her harm of whiteness, she too must also practice identitarianism while selectively critiquing its use by others. Gold forgets to critique her own practice of identitarianism, while she simultaneously uses her white identity to colonize Black experiences she can never embody. Black experiences which in our case, she can’t even accurately recite--as we have seen in her flawed recantation of the “medical school controversy”. Much like Krug, Gold really only uses identitarianism to point fingers at Black people, in hopes that it will deflect **the need to analyze herself as a walking self-contradiction.**

We see this same type of self-contradiction in Taufen’s response as well. On one hand, Taufen agrees that it is a form of violence for white scholars to *“appropriate the narratives and experiences of those with less power.”* She even agrees that she herself was *“conditioned to behave in these ways by a culture that is not only white but patriarchal*,” only to later make concessions for Gold’s appropriation. Bizarrely, Taufen has magically re-conditioned herself into the same ways of thinking she had only condemned just two paragraphs earlier.

To add to the theatrics, Taufen claims that “*the most significant out of [Gold’s] lane dynamic that we see in evidence here is a****woman****posting a challenging and controversial perspective*”...  **As if either Gold or Taufen are aware of the genders of BAMM members.** Or maybe it is that our genders do not matter, **because the take-home message is that Black women are constantly erased.** As once written by [Akasha Gloria Hull](https://www.encyclopedia.com/education/news-wires-white-papers-and-books/hull-akasha-gloria-1944) and [Patricia Bell-Scott](https://iws.uga.edu/directory/people/patricia-bell-scott), two Black feminist writers in the early 80s, ***“***[***All the women are white, all the Blacks are men, but some of us are brave***](https://www.feministpress.org/books-a-m/but-some)***”***. We have said before that not only are the antics of whiteness old, they are also predictable. **So there is nothing challenging nor controversial about Gold’s perspective**. In fact, even Taufen’s claim of us being sexist to Gold on the basis of Gold’s identity as a woman is so predictable that even Hull and Scott are able to encapsulate **Taufen’s entire email response in one sentence**-- “*All the women are white”*.

So which is it? Is it that Gold opposes identitarian ideology, or is it that this kind of opposition only arises when people like Gold are not **allowed to exercise their whiteness in spaces to which they do not belong?**The only identitarian ideologies that Gold is interested in critiquing **are those that are devoid of whiteness**, and thus she **excludes herself in her own practice of identity politics**.

Moreover, in an attempt to support Gold, Taufen **has failed to acknowledge Gold’s whiteness** in order to claim that we have harmed the latter. She claims that Gold is facing*“personal, hateful and indicting language*” because of her womanhood. **In this critique, why did Taufen neglect to name Gold’s whiteness, a whiteness that we had so heavily critiqued in our previous response?**Taufen’s politics are flawed because she treats race and gender as additive, where she conveniently practices identity mathematics; she subtracts whiteness and substitutes gender for race. This calculus allows Taufen to bypass all critiques on race in order to focus on sexism, thus conveniently ignoring the distinct ways in which gender dynamics present, compound, and play out among different racial groups.

And this, AAUP family, is **how the saviorism and fragility played by white women has gotten Black people hurt and killed under false pretenses for generations.** See[Emmet Till](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-death-of-emmett-till), see [Barbeque Becky](https://www.newsweek.com/bbq-becky-white-woman-who-called-cops-black-bbq-911-audio-released-im-really-1103057), see the [Central Park Five](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/arts/television/when-they-see-us.html) (a quintessential example of white feminism pitted against Blackness, at the expense of Black lives), and see [Tulsa](https://www.tulsahistory.org/exhibit/1921-tulsa-race-massacre/).

This also shows how **white women hide the violence of their whiteness behind their womanhood**. Even though Taufen admits that *“it may be that Gold’s take is flawed in all the ways the BAMM author points out,”* in the end, her entire e-mail still chooses to engage in a clumsy, bad crusade against some non-existent harm we have supposedly dealt to white womanhood, instead of looking further into the deep and harmful anti-Black violence demonstrated by Gold in her initial statement.

Why does Taufen not find Gold’s views violent enough to argue that instead, BAMM is **actually and factually** resisting racialized harm from Gold? [As Bree Newsome Bass describes the transactional grace of white folks](https://twitter.com/breenewsome/status/1287918162495844352): “If you want us to respect you as human beings and equal citizens, you must plead your case before us within these parameters we have identified according to our own comfort level or else we will have no choice but to further brutalize you. - white society.”

Why is Taufen attempting to paint **Black students as aggressors**without any analysis on how that stance, *especially* within the context of Black students organizing against the white supremacy intrinsic to all kinds of academia, functions as anti-Blackness? Moreover, why can’t non-Black people like Taufen ever hold actual anti-Blackness, as named by actual Black people (friendly reminder that non-Black people do not get to decide what is anti-Black!), to be as egregious and damaging as the alleged sexism against white women?

**Does anti-Blackness not function as an offense that is both racial and sexist as well?**Why did Taufen reserve the descriptor “vitriol” as a condemnation for our only e-mail? Why did she not use this term to describe the violent entitlement so intrinsic to white feminism that undergirded both of Gold’s nonsensical e-mails?

We also want to emphasize that in Taufen’s allegations of BAMM’s acts of harm against womanhood, her logic ignores the **reality that Black folks of marginalized genders experience gender based violence at disproportionately higher rates compared to other groups**. Are you, Taufen, only capable of recognizing violence under the cisgender gaze, despite the reality that Black trans women are especially vulnerable to both racial and gender-based violence due to the encompassing nature of anti-Blackness?

To reference Gold’s **inaccurate**and once again **incomplete analysis**…( “*Yet what sends them into high dudgeon? A white person's having invoked the name of Fred Hampton*” ), we want to clarify that what set both Taufen and Gold into their own high dudgeon was their visceral, white chagrin to being denied authority in discussing matters of Blackness and anti-Blackness. The **white audacity** of it all is that Taufen pathetically attempts to equate racial accountability with harm to [white] womanhood.

The reason we are writing these e-mails is that we are **intentional** in letting Gold (and now Taufen) know that **we will not allow whiteness to imagine or re-imagine Black narratives, nor the violence targeting Black folks for centuries**.

Therefore the true *“case study” (“The Seeds of BAMM letter is a great case study in ways that identitarian ideology…”)* we are witnessing here in this AAUP community is **the anti-Blackness integral to white womanhood**. We are more than excited to analyze how Gold and Taufen consolidate their power as white women on the basis of anti-Blackness, with the ultimate goal of highlighting how such tactics should be condemned and critiqued within every space in which they exert their white womanhood.

Alas! Even though we have written quite a bit at this point, **our introduction ends here** and our actual response to these two white women begins now. We will begin with our critique of Roberta Gold before tackling statements made by Anne Taufen.

**On the anti-Black violence of Roberta Gold: A story of associative white colonial terrorism on Black people:**

We are continuing our critique of Gold by zeroing in on her obsession to Black proximity and subsequent refusal to arrest her use of **Blackface**, the latter of which appeared in her primary response and intensified after our subsequent critique.

As Black students, we admit that we are disappointed yet not surprised that Gold did not have the range to answer the multifaceted ways in which BAMM invalidated all of her problematic statements.

Even after our specific critique of her misrepresentation of Hampton and her use of Black scholars to undermine our mission in an effort to **Blackface her rage against actual Black folks**, Gold responded in with a mislead talking point that centered herself and her own whiteness, that *the central issue is that she named Hampton as a white woman.*

We also want to point out that we asked Gold to [capitalize the B in Black](https://www.cjr.org/analysis/capital-b-black-styleguide.php), a request that went ignored in her second e-mail. Similarly, we asked Gold not to refer to Black people as “*blacks*,” and she also failed to make this change to her language. [Black linguists have been theorizing on how we can talk and write about Black people **with dignity**](https://www.poynter.org/reporting-editing/2007/black-as-an-adjective-not-a-noun/) through the colonizer’s language, and how one of the ways we can achieve this is by capitalizing the B in Black. This is a small concession, and yet it is not a concession that Gold was willing to make. **Gold’s refusal to use respectful language in reference to Black people despite our requests is not a mistake. It is anti-Blackness.**

Gold’s labelling of us as *case studies* (see the loaded anti-Blackness behind such a statement [here](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/185986/medical-apartheid-by-harriet-a-washington/)) shows that we are dealing with a white woman who does not engage with abolitionist principles and whose imagination of Black people does not extend beyond constructs of imprisonment. It is not by accident that the language used by Gold in her references to a group that is exclusively Black,**is language we know to be that of legalized slavery**.

Gold then cowers behind her proximity to Black people by giving testimony of Black trauma and Black pain, as if Black narratives are only legitimate when she traces them back to her whiteness. Gold did not write these testimonies to emphasize that it is Black people (namely, our Black kin) who experience these racialized traumas; rather, she brings up these examples to highlight that it was her whiteness that bore witness to it.**When Gold centers these stories, she is ultimately centering her white voyeurism of Black sorrow.**

*“And i’ve witnessed the sorrow of many virus-bereaved neighbors in my predominantly African American and Dominican area of the city...”*

 We are also unsure of how many awards Gold would like because she has Black neighbors. She writes this as if Black people aren't redlined and living amongst each other as a community. She brings this up as if Black people cannot be simultaneously victims of and witnesses to the violence we experience firsthand. This is the classic “I have a Black friend” tactic, notoriously used by white people when they are asked to examine how their movement through whiteness is often one of violence.

After this exploitation of Black trauma to legitimize her own arguments, Gold then states that none of the disparities she sees today in healthcare as seen by COVID-19 have “*stemmed from white people’s study of, or teaching gigs in Black history. Or from medical school lectures on violence against people of color”.*Yet many texts from her field, especially ones written by actual Black people, will tell you that **academia has been one of the premier strategies used by white supremacy to carve and perfect anti-Blackness.** In fact, so much of the sciences, and in our case, medicine, is derived **from centuries of unconsented, yet legally sanctioned experiments on Black people,**experiments that had their genesis in classroom lectures and “scholarly” discussions.

It is particularly interesting that Gold acts as if this symbiotic relationship between academia and anti-Blackness has not been reinforced through her own field of study (history). As if white supremacy is not constantly perpetuated inside the classrooms, with professors being complicit in and/or actively continuing this legacy of violence. From past to present, academia has functioned as both catalyst and mainstay for many of the racialized constructs that form the basis for so much of today’s racial inequity. Academia legitimizes white supremacy under the guise of education, with the end result of marginalized populations continuing to suffer egregious, tremendous harm at the hands of white supremacy. Even in our own medical school lectures, we have learned how supposedly innocent racial biases add up and ultimately manifest as higher death rates in the clinical setting. **This is again not an alleged connection; it is one that actually and definitely exists**. A teenager just beginning their freshman year in high school can easily describe how academia has always played a major role in reinforcing so many -isms. It is shocking then that Gold, someone that teaches history at the university level, cannot come to this conclusion herself.**How is it that Gold cannot see that white supremacy in every institution, especially in academia, normalizes and allows anti-Blackness to pervade through every aspect of our society?**

We also find it baffling that Gold cannot seem to even question why academia often prefers white people to teach Black/African history over actual Black people. For decades, we have watched academic departments that are supposed to tell our Black histories instead continue to hire mostly white people. Too often, academic institutions only consider hiring just a few Black people not because they are (over)-qualified, but because they can fill diversity quotas and ultimately make the institution itself look good (“We are a diverse institution! Wow!”). Such a tactic is one from which both Gold and Krug have benefitted. Somehow, the **racial underpinnings of who gets to be a case study and who gets to be the one who studies the case study have escaped her.**

Gold also mentions *“inaccessible healthcare”* as a contributing factor to the disproportionately high mortality rates amongst Black folks from COVID-19. What she misses as **she bats for the innocence of the same medical school lectures she has never attended**is that medical institutions like UW Medicine have always functioned as gatekeepers to healthcare access, disproportionately and systemically against Black people.

Re: Gold’s talking points on Fred Hampton -- We assert once again that Gold misuses Black radicals and selectively critiques the “identitarian hustle” **to support white re-tellings of Black narratives; to use Blackface as a cover for her racist white rage against Black people.**

How do we know that Gold’s criticism is selective? Well, if Gold was such an advocate against the politics of identitarianism, **why has every single scholar whose work she has weaponized against us Black students also been Black? Why is she giving testimony exclusively of proximity to Black** **trauma? Blackmentors? Black neighbors? Black friends lost to COVID-19?**

If identitarianism is not a construct Gold practices, then as a white woman, why does she not also use white constructs, white theorists, and white people from which she has descended to strengthen her own arguments? Why is she going out of her way to let the AAUP community know that she had Black mentors, that these Black mentors allegedly approved of her continuing to whitesplain anti-Blackness and white supremacy within Black spaces? **Is it perhaps because Gold actually does practice identitarian ideologies, but only when it suits her?**Has Gold *only* ever had Black mentors, or **is it through her practice of identitarianism that she realizes Black mentors are the only ones worth mentioning in her crusade against Black students?**

Even after we emphasized the heterogeneity of Black communities and how it is anti-Black to assume that all Black people are a monolith in our first e-mail, here she comes, with all the Black cards she can find, as if to say, “Look at me, and the Black people I have followed and gathered that have made concessions for my racism.” **This itself is an identitarian construct.** We know this, because if the mentors she had named were not Black, her entire argument would fall apart. Gold’s “takedown” of our arguments retains whatever little integrity it has on the basis of her racist weaponization of Blackness against actual Black people.

Moreover, why does Gold fail to engage in omphaloskepsis to dissect how her entire presumption that her opinion on what is or what is not anti-Black is relevant, is, in itself, anti-Black? **Whiteness is the most powerful and violent form of identity politics,**and self-insertions such as the one made by Gold, have granted white women in academia the record title in reproducing Dolezals and Krugs.

**Are we supposed to give Gold awards because she had Black mentors?** **Because she studied Afro-Pessimism and Black Marxism? Because she lives in a predominantly African American and Dominican neighborhood? Because she knows of Black people who lost their lives to COVID-19?**No, because Gold is incapable of staying outside of Blackness, **a lane over which she has no ownership**. Gold’s inability to recognize the audacity of her own whiteness was never criticized by either herself or Taufen. So, we want to bring up this discussion question -- How is it that Gold cannot even attend to the whiteness in her own home, instead opting for breaking into Black spaces to become the white cop that dictates how Black people define anti-Blackness, and how they should respond to it? At the heart of it all, **Gold’s actions are invasions of Blackness.**So we can now start by having the real conversation, about the ways in which **Black spaces are never considered sacred, even when the invasive act is murder**. Which gives room for white people like Gold to break into discussions of Blackness and anti-Blackness while expecting absolutely no consequences for her out-of-line behavior.

**We should clarify that Gold specifically does not practice these politics of staying in her own lane when the lane is that of Black people.** This foundational tenet of anti-Blackness is the true origin of her resentment with our denial to let her redefine anti-Blackness. Gold wants to take the mic, she wants to be the center, she wants to draw the lines of experiences she can never embody. **To which we refuse, and rightfully so.**

Gold also rambles about the importance of recognizing social privileges as a teacher. Yet she attempts to escape the accountability that goes hand in hand with both the recognition and power that comes with being an educator. She says that teachers should be *“on the lookout for their own blind spots”* and be open to*“constructive criticism,”* suggestions which lead us to believe that these are theoretical ideas that sound good in an e-mail but that she has failed to practice herself. She is stuck in theory and failing to put her theory into praxis.

Gold goes on to claim that she is “not losing any sleep over afro-pessimism,” and yet she began her email with statements that blatantly demonstrate her discomfort with Afro-Pessimists and “*other woke pieties*.” We want to stress anti-Blackness existed before Wilderson III and Sexton came up with Afro-Pessimism, that Black people have long had the language and ability to talk about anti-Blackness before Afro-Pessimism. **So why does Gold believe she can dictate how useful Black theories can be in the fight against anti-Blackness, when in fact, Black definitions and conversations about anti-Blackness have always been fluid?**Gold can only achieve the intellectual gatekeeping and policing she does if she believes Blackness to be monolithic.

In Gold’s selective recall of Fred Hampton, she neglects to mention that Hampton was a member of the Black Panther Party, that by being a member of the BPP, Hampton was de-facto practicing identitarian ideologies. She also fails to acknowledge that first and foremost, Hampton worked within Black communities. Gold goes on to mention that Hampton forged “*a coalition among [B]lack people, Puerto Ricans and poor whites*.*”* Given the predictability of Gold’s selective criticism, we firmly believe that if *“poor whites*” had not been present in Hampton’s coalition, Gold would have found yet another Black radical to play her sacrificial lamb. Thus, in her choice to name Hampton instead of Malcolm X, Gold evidences how white people are uncomfortable **with spaces and radicals that are exclusively Black in formation and in politics**. This discomfort is part of a fragility we know to exist within whiteness.

And the truth of the matter is, that Gold is delusional if she believes that Hampton, a Black man associated with Black Panther Party who was assassinated because of his Black radicality, would have forgone his central tenets of Blackness to favor embracing whiteness in some form of racial kumbaya that has never existed.

Gold’s analysis of multicultural coalitions also fails to address that many of these coalitions expect that individuals with more privileged identities will ***stay in their lane*** **and not to speak over or decenter more individuals with more marginalized identities**, especially Black folks, especially Black folks who are queer and/or trans and/or disabled.

We would like to encourage Gold to take much more time to fully look into Hampton and the Black Panther Party. It is very embarrassing as an academic with a PhD at a prestigious university, that she failed to do this and still somehow thought she had the range and authority to speak on such matters.

**On Anne Taufen: A story of white damsels in distress, and the dangers of faking victimhood to silence Black Marginalized Genders**[**(MaGes)**](https://www.theblackfeministproject.org/#:~:text=MaGes%20stands%20for%20Marginalized%20Genders,includes%20women%2C%20girls%20and%20femmes.)

We now turn our attention to [Dr. Taufen](https://directory.tacoma.uw.edu/employee/atw5), a white woman who is a faculty member in the Urban Studies Department at the UW Tacoma campus. Taufen admits that she cannot “*assess the relative merit of Gold’s claims,*” yet what she sees as the true issue in this e-mail correspondence is that antics similar to Gold’s “*provocation and inquiry can be tolerated by men*”.

Taufer also argues that BAMM, **whose members’ genders she does not know**,is participating in a “*gendered grenade-throwing topic,*” where ironically, the victim is Gold, and the “*gendered grenade”* that BAMM is allegedly throwing is one that “*many women herself included have come to anticipate as normal*.” Somehow, this harm we have supposedly dealt Gold is one that only Gold can experience, **as our genders are apparently non-existent and irrelevant to this conversation.**Ultimately, Taufen’s positioning of Gold as a victim of sexism is part of a grander strategy often deployed by white women in order to claim some sort of **white monopoly over experiences of sexism**.

Taufen’s charge of our supposed sexism against Gold immediately falls apart once you remember that Black women exist**.** Which begs us to ask -- if women have come to a*nticipate vitriol as normal*, **where do the Black non-men in BAMM fit in this narrative?**Why are Taufen’s statements (which are contradicted by her own earlier admittance that white appropriation is a form of institutional violence) **not also part of the construct of gendered violence, or, more specifically, gendered violence that Gold herself had committed against Black MaGes?**

Furthermore, Taufen engaged in racialized tone policing. There is the expectation that Gold is still owed respectability and kindness despite her racism toward us, that Gold is owed these things **even as she participates in violent practices of erasure, anti-Blackness, and Blackface**, practices which we know are far more dangerous and violent than anything that we could ever write in this digital space. This is a classic example of respectability politics.

**The violence integral to Gold’s emails is conveniently overlooked in order to support Taufen’s claim that Gold’s initial email was polite and devoid of any malicious intent**. Or perhaps, was this not violence at all, because (according to Taufen’s white individual perspective) it was presented within the boundaries of what Taufen deemed as respectable?

We encourage Taufen to educate herself on how[fake victimhood by white women](https://www.kqed.org/arts/13881138/racist-women-who-fake-victimhood-are-dangerous) is a **documented form of racism and racialized sexism committed by white women against Black and Brown women**. We encourage her to delve further into undoing the ways in which her narrative of the (white) [damsel in distress](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/may/08/how-white-women-use-strategic-tears-to-avoid-accountability)functions as white supremacist antics.

**We want to close by emphasizing:**

1. Black women exist
2. Anti-Blackness includes gendered violence that all non-Black people use specifically against Black MaGes. Therefore, **anti-Blackness is also an issue of sexism**. We note that both Taufen and Gold fail to understand this, especially in the context of the fluidities of Blackness.
3. You cannot argue about sexism without understanding how centering the victimhood of white women conveniently erases the experiences of Black MaGes.
4. If you are brave enough to admit that you are not knowledgeable enough to even verify the merits of Gold’s claims, all of which we have been more than happy to invalidate, it is also not your place to re-interpret narratives you already do not understand to claim violence against whiteness. Understanding the very definition of what racism is and how it functions would have avoided this blunderous and erroneous claim.
5. Tone policing is an act of racialized violence, especially in context of who gets policed and who does not.

Perhaps instead of policing and gatekeeping Black language/radical thought/study, both Gold and Taufen’s time would be better spent in unraveling how their roles in this discussion are part of white supremacy, which kills Black people again and again.  Consider that the two of you, both white women in academia, **are similar in your support for the other in your collective anti-Blackness.**

The space white women, Gold in particular, have continued to take up is astounding. You both have been incredibly predictable in how you have practiced white violence in this digital space. Your antics are seen across the countless memes illustrating how white supremacy shows up in everyday interactions. And to that end, this has been the ultimate case study in anti-Blackness’s spawning of white fragility and white feminism. Well done.

Best,

--

BAMM,

Seeds of **B**aldwin, **A**ssata, **M**alcolm & **M**arsha

UW School of Medicine, Coalition of Black activism

They/Them/We/Us/Our/BAMM

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"It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win......We have nothing to lose but our chains"- Assata Shakur