

Moving Your Group to Action

Advocating for change is not always easy but it is necessary. We've seen GREAT statements of support from W&M Recognized Student Organizations about standing in solidarity to combat systemic racism. This resource gives you some (more)concrete ways to continue to move your organization's statement of support to ACTION. We must collectively work to dismantle systemic injustice and racism.

Do The Work: If you're going to lead your organization in these efforts you have to be engaged in doing the work. Commit with your fellow officers to do the work together. [Resources to get you started here.](#)

Educate Your Members on What it Means to be an Ally: [The Guide to Allyship](#) is a great place to start.

Assess the Current Environment of Your Organization: What's working? Where are there internal opportunities for change and improvement? What are the blind spots? How is your organization connected to a history of inequality and racism? What additional support and information does your organization need to be successful engaging in anti-racist work? Ask others. **LISTEN.** If you're wondering where to start with an organization assessment, these two resources could offer insights: [Robin DiAngelo's Antiracist Check List for Whites](#) AND/OR [Peggy McIntosh's "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"](#)

Ask for Feedback: Conduct a climate survey within your organization. Ask your members about their experiences (especially BIPOC). Do members or non-members have feedback to offer about microaggressions in the organization? Ask friends, community members, and stakeholders what they think about your organization's history and efforts. **LISTEN.**

Create a "Change Team" Within Your Organization: *"The change team is responsible for leading the race equity change, including the formation of clear race equity goals and processes to achieve them."* Credit: dRworks
<https://www.dismantlingracism.org/action-tools.html>

Create a Diversity & Inclusion Position: Ensure that this position sits at the Executive level of the organization. Give this position a budget. If this topic is important to your organization put your money towards providing resources for success. Concurrently, have ALL positions commit to doing this work within your organization. It's not JUST the job of one person or position.

Create Opportunities to Learn Together as an Organization:

- Check out "Learning to Action: Social Justice Skills for Student Orgs" @thesourcevt on Instagram (Virginia Tech's student organization resource center). The posts, prompts, and story highlights contain valuable action steps for student organizations.
- Read [White Supremacy Culture in Organizations](#) created by the Centre for Community Organizations and hold discussions in your organization (possibly as an exec group). Identify opportunities from these discussions and create action plans to move forward. This work is based on the work of Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) and can be found at [White Supremacy Culture](#)
- Start a book club to read and learn together. Watch films together. Discuss and reflect. Here's a comprehensive list of [Books & Films from Racial Equity Tools](#).
- Set specific learning goals for your organization each semester and plan speakers/workshops to occur regularly. Advocate for more diverse programming within your organization (and at W&M) especially if you hold a position of privilege or power.

An Anti-Racist Allyship Resource for W&M Student Organizations from Student Leadership Development and the Center for Student Diversity

(More Ways to) Move Your Group to Action

(More) Opportunities to Learn Together as an Organization:

- Check out [The MSW@USC Diversity Toolkit: A Guide to Discussing Identity, Power, and Privilege](#). This toolkit lays out 7 activities that your organization could use together to explore identity, power, and privilege as a group.
- Support culture and identity group events at W&M that your membership doesn't typically attend. Participate, attend, purchase tickets. (10 members of your group could attend an event together. Expand the horizons of how your members spend time together.)

\$\$\$\$ Talks: Divert organization funds from a social event (or other valued club initiative) and make a donation to support organizations that are working toward racial justice.

Publicly Commit: Identify, outline, and publicly state specific action steps that your organization will take. Share these goals and your progress at the start of every meeting. Share them publicly. Ask people to hold you accountable.

Advertise, Participate, and Organize Opportunities for Your Members:

- Share templates and schedule meeting time to call/write/email local, state, and federal representatives to support criminal justice reform as a group allocation of taxpayer funds towards community services, and call for civilian oversight of police.
- Share and sign petitions within your organization listservs
- Make conscious efforts to volunteer with and fundraise for black led organizations in our community
- When you do spend money as an organization, research options to support black-owned businesses
- Share opportunities and participate as a group in peaceful protests. If you are planning on protesting, [review your rights](#)

Assess Your Recruitment: How do you bring new members into your organization? You are likely VERY open to building a diverse membership. But is that what prospective members see when they experience your group for the first time? This blog post, entitled "[How Racism Lives in Modern Fraternity/Sorority Joining Processes](#)" is by Matt Mattson of [Phired Up](#) and is about fraternity/sorority recruitment but their specific tactics (at the end) you can use to review and assess your own organization's recruitment practices (if you're not a greek-letter organization).

Create an Approach for Response and Accountability: if a member of your organization violated the values expressed by your organization and your commitment to being (and participating at W&M as) an anti-racist and inclusive community, how would you handle it? Establish your expectations for your members and explicitly state these expectations and the process (and/or consequences) if members fail to support the group values. Codify these expectations (and response) in your governing documents. Create learning opportunities for members to meet the expectations of the organization.

Evaluate & Shift Who the Organization Spends Time With: Create co-sponsored activities and do more cross programming with organizations whose membership and purpose is different than your organization. Work with the CSD to identify culturally, spiritually, or diverse student organizations to collaborate with. Attend a president's council meeting with the Center for Student Diversity.

This is a living document—do you have ideas to share that have been helpful to your student organization to dismantle and address racism through the lens of your organization? Email leadership@wm.edu

<https://www.wm.edu/offices/studentleadershipdevelopment/index.php>

<https://www.wm.edu/offices/studentdiversity/index.php>

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