

To Bowdoin students, faculty, staff, and alumni,

I have been involved in the work of diversity and inclusion as a white ally for thirty years—in the business world running a diversity and inclusion effort, as a mentor, in my research and teaching, and here at Bowdoin. I believed that I was doing good work, that I was making a difference. But these past few weeks have caused me to reflect on this work, and it is clear that, whatever I have done—am doing—it is not enough. Not nearly. I have come up well short as an ally, and I need to learn how to be better and how to make a more meaningful difference in the fight against racism and to the aspiration of being anti-racist. I am at work on this.

I would like to ask the white members of the Bowdoin community do the same—consider what you can do to be a better ally to make a real difference in this fight and to join me in honest reflection and in the consideration of how to change ourselves and to make change in the world. To begin, please watch two videos; they will take about twenty minutes of your time. [The first video](#) shares a powerful truth offered by three members of our faculty—Professors Judith Casselberry, Tess Chakkalakal, and Ayodeji Ogunnaike—at a gathering Monday evening on the Quad, exactly two weeks after the murder by police of George Floyd. [The second video](#) presents the thoughts, released last Friday, of four-star general Charles Brown—the new US Air Force chief of staff.

Please take the time to view these videos, and to reflect on what they say about where we are as a country and the work that we need to do individually and collectively.

As for our College, we talk proudly about preparing our students to tackle the most difficult challenges and to lead in solving the world's biggest problems. This is real. We are genuinely successful at this. But, when it comes to racism, we have not lived up to our promise.

This past November, Bowdoin marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Africana Studies Program, the African American Society, and the John Brown Russwurm African American Center. Even as we celebrated our Black alumni and students, and the community, scholarship, and programs, we acknowledged the challenges and lack of progress that have confronted Black Americans and our Black community at Bowdoin over those fifty years. The sad truth is that we have not done enough. We are a powerful, privileged institution, and we are obligated not just to stand on the side of what is right, but to fight for it, to make it real in what goes on here and in how we educate, and to prepare our students to lead.

Deliberate, focused, and persistent commitment and action are required if we expect these outcomes to be different. With this in mind, we will start by moving forward on the following work:

- Require and support every division of the College to develop a plan for the education of its members on institutional racism and anti-racism, building allyship, and creating a more diverse work environment.

- Ask the appropriate faculty governance committees to examine how the faculty can provide robust educational opportunities for students to engage across the curriculum with the phenomenon of institutional racism, its persistence, and the inequalities, injustices, and harm that result.
- Create the mechanisms to have greater success in recruiting more Black faculty and staff, and in providing them with the opportunity to thrive and succeed. This will also be true for faculty from other communities of color.
- Create the mechanisms to have greater success in recruiting more Black students, and students from other communities of color, and give them the support necessary for success. This includes more athletes of color.
- Significantly improve the engagement and understanding of all students with the issues of structural racism, its persistence, and its outcomes.
- Create the programming to substantively engage all members of the campus community in the skills to discuss the issues of difference, race, and racism.
- Engage, educate, and collaborate with the alumni body on the work of understanding and ending structural racism and supporting anti-racism.
- Collaborate with other academic institutions in this work.
- Collaborate with state and regional partners to identify and adopt practices that address the eradication of institutional and structural racism.
- Provide the resources necessary to ensure that these measures are carried out.
- Develop specific goals and metrics with respect to all of the above, and make the progress and results fully transparent.

We will create and share a specific plan for this work by the time classes begin in the fall, and will solicit the engagement of faculty, staff, students, and alumni in the development of this plan.

We have been in this place many times before—where we see and participate in a collective cry of outrage over the horrific history and evidence of racial violence in this country, but little actually changes. My commitment is to carry out this work and I am accountable for the results. It is through progress and success in this effort that we will make clear Bowdoin's commitment to this fight, and that we stand in solidarity with our Black community—students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Sincerely,

Clayton