

## **Introduction to the HMSC Working Group to Address Racial Injustice**

### **Charge**

*The charge of the HMSC Working Group to Address Racial Injustice, comprised of faculty, staff, students, and agency partners of the HMSC community, is to: i) explore structural biases leading to individual and institutional racial injustice, ii) research all manner of actions that could act to address and reduce/eliminate those biases, and iii) prioritize said actions into a set of recommendations and guidance for the HMSC community. Inherent in this charge is the realization that this effort is continual and not short term, such that research, recommendations, and actions will need to be continually reviewed and updated.*

### **Recognizing the Problem**

**Goal Statement:** We acknowledge the systematic and systemic exclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color from marine studies at the national, state, and HMSC community levels. This exclusion is racist and antithetical to [HMSC's vision](#). We realize that the [HMSC mission](#) cannot be fully achieved without the explicit inclusion of diverse perspectives. We firmly believe that representation and inclusion of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color within the HMSC community is necessary in the pursuit of equitable and just science, and that our excellence as a research community is strengthened when all people are represented. Our ultimate goal is to facilitate a welcoming and supportive environment for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, including students, staff, faculty, and agency partners at HMSC.

### **Call to Action**

Meaningful contributions toward disrupting systemic and institutional racism requires self-interrogation and is a long-term process. While we can learn from other individuals and institutions, we cannot adopt the progress of others (e.g., mission statements, strategic plans, guidelines, or other materials) without our personal and institutional development. Institutional advancement – in this case the disruption of systemic racism – depends on introspection and community growth. It is the collective process, each of us holding ourselves and each other accountable, that leads to real change. Institutional change and advancement happen only as individuals develop and change; therefore, meaningful change requires participation from all of us – this work cannot be done by others.

### **Focal Areas**

In support of our ultimate goal to create a welcoming and supportive environment for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, we will advance strategic and sustained action to:

- Promote education about systemic oppression through training, discussion, and self-reflection.
- Develop tools to listen to, confront, and disrupt patterns of racial injustice.
- Evaluate HMSC policies and procedures to ensure they promote racial justice and create a welcoming and supportive environment for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. These actions include: evaluation and revision of HMSC Mission, Vision, and Values

Statements; development and inclusion of a Land Acknowledgement for HMSC; developing antiracist mentoring requirements; and mitigating bias in hiring practices.

Recognizing that HMSC is a multi-organization community, we will employ a collective, community-driven approach to action and change in these focal areas. We will draw on partners with expertise in communication, facilitation, and training.

**Possible action items to achieve our goals:**

*1. Culture or Pulse Survey*

We consider the development of a baseline an important aspect of holding ourselves accountable. A survey about organizational culture, climate, and communications can be used to assess progress with clear metrics.

*2. Community of Practice*

We envision small groups at HMSC that share a concern or passion for learning more about racial equity, social justice, or making structural changes within their spheres of influence. By interacting regularly, the members of the learning community will raise their consciousness about issues of race.

*3. Learning opportunities for social justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion*

We encourage increased awareness, personal growth, and self-interrogation by ensuring that educational resources are available through a variety of channels including online in a “self-study” format, group trainings, seminars, and other community activities. We also intend to offer opportunities to transform learning, or intent, into action leading to substantive, sustained institutional change.

*4. Establish reporting system for bias incidents or other related experiences in Newport or at HMSC*

Black, Indigenous and People of Color face challenges in our community such as racial slurs when in town, feeling uncomfortable or standing out in HMSC group activities, and feeling uncomfortable or unsafe doing field work. By developing and implementing a bias incident reporting system, we have the opportunity to better understand and respond to incidents of bias at HMSC.

*5. Establish an HMSC-based advocate to support efforts to disrupt racism*

We recognize the need for an on-site person to coordinate programming, training, and logistics, to serve as clearinghouse for bias reporting, and to support related activities. In order to disrupt systemic oppression, educate our community, and work toward our goals of creating a welcoming and supportive environment for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, we must direct human and financial resources toward this important work.

## 6. *Allyship Training*

What does it really mean to be a supportive ally to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color within our community? How can we develop empathy, implement strategies to disrupt institutionalized racism, and create opportunities for real representation? We can improve our ability to listen, hear, and support others. This training would provide a valuable perspective to HMSC members and empower individuals to address racial injustice