

To the Mars Hill University community:

Institutions of higher education, including Mars Hill College/University, despite their high ideals, have long contributed to systemic inequities. We must do better, and we will do better. We promise to endeavor to do so. There are no right words in this watershed moment of such immense suffering and turmoil engulfing communities across our nation and world, but there are right actions we can begin to take together that will move us forward. We are committed to listening to and learning from every voice. We are committed to remembering that there is much we do not know. We are committed to the work of dismantling the systems that serve some but not all. Healthy education, like income, housing, and health care, is a human rights issue. The resolution below is a first step towards becoming a better institution, vigorously committed to anti-racism, equity, and inclusion, and we can only apologize that these actions were not taken sooner.

The undersigned members of the Mars Hill faculty, teaching staff, and academic administration, resolve to

- Engage actively in professional development related to diversity, equity, and inclusion as a primary focus of the August, 2020, faculty workshops and commit to ongoing professional development in this vital area.
- Make discussions of diversity, equity, and justice a more integral part of the FY curriculum.
- Revise existing curricula to better include diverse voices and experiences, in all disciplines, at the course and program level.
- Embrace and learn about inclusive teaching/pedagogy, and commit to faculty development in this area.
- Ensure that students, faculty, and staff representing diverse viewpoints and experiences have more regular, meaningful opportunities to give voice to those viewpoints and experiences in ways that will bring concrete change to campus (e.g., listening sessions, focus groups).
- Work intentionally to create an academic environment in which all students have an equitable opportunity to be academically successful, and make changes in instruction and support whenever we discover disparities.
- Help to create a campus environment free from discriminating symbols historically associated with supremacist or genocide movements.

Lists such as this one will always be insufficient and incomplete; this is a working document, and a beginning. We do not limit ourselves to the above resolutions, and we further pledge to create ongoing opportunities designed to identify how else we can improve, both personally and systemically, as we work towards making Mars Hill an educational community more deeply committed to equity and inclusion for all of our diverse voices. We have beliefs and must strive to live up to them. We believe that responsibility is the foundation of a community. Being responsible calls us to do the things we need to do so that we may be who we say we are. Being responsible means that we must acknowledge, confront, and address our shortcomings and reaffirm our commitment to being and doing better. Our responsibility, as an institution and as individuals, is to create and maintain a community that is both safe and empowering (mentally, emotionally, and physically). The inequalities brought into the harsh light of day by COVID-19 and the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery exist not

only nationally but here on our campus. And we pledge to work together as a responsible community to be and do better.

Signed:

Amanda Knapp, Faculty Chair, 2020-23

Tracy Parkinson, Provost

Donna Parsons, Dean of Professional Programs and Social Sciences

Scott Pearson, Dean of Math and Sciences

Joanna Pierce, Dean of Arts and Humanities

Marc Mullinax, Faculty Chair, 2017-20

Jonathan McCoy, Interim Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Deb Myers, Director of the Center for Community Engagement

June, 2020