

**A Statement to the Community
from the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program**

The WGSS faculty see and acknowledge the fury, grief and pain expressed by students, alums and Lafayette community members in the Instagram pages [black.at.laf](#) and [anti.violence.laf](#). We support you. And we are outraged.

WGSS understands itself as *always in conversation and resistance* around all forms of racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and gender/sexuality-based violence--in the curriculum, on campus, and in the community. We take seriously all feedback that holds WGSS-connected faculty accountable to these values and we are committed to ongoing critical self-reflection and improvement as a program.

We consider Lafayette College to currently be in a state of emergency regarding anti-Black racism, racism in general, and sexual/gendered violence. The Lafayette administration *and* our faculty and staff colleagues must immediately act to:

- **Change the role of Public Safety** and cease to partner with policing institutions in response to long histories of anti-Black racism, a culture of racial profiling and targeting Black and POC students and colleagues, and unsatisfactory handling of incidents of sexual/gendered violence. We support recent calls by student/alumni organizers to reexamine funding for Police Safety and invest more in mental health care and unarmed response. Action should be driven by student, faculty and staff experience, particularly input from Black students, faculty and staff.
- Hire a full time **professional educator** on sexual misconduct prevention and provide **confidential advocates** for survivors of sexual/gendered violence. The College must support student organizations like Pards Against Sexual Assault (PASA) but not rely on students to drive educational programming on sexual/gendered violence or to transform a culture where sexual and gendered violence is both structurally enabled and normative.
- **Comprehensively re-evaluate Greek Life at Lafayette** in the specific context of the College's recent commitment to eliminating racism and sexual/gendered violence and to "*mak[ing] Lafayette a more equitable, supportive and safe place for all*" (Letter from the President, July 6, 2020). We direct attention to student calls to make the Greek landscape more inclusive by adding historically Black and POC Greek organizations, as well as student concerns regarding the overall role of the Greek system at Lafayette. The College must amplify efforts to end "underground" Greek organizations.
- **More effectively support faculty and staff who have care responsibilities**, including both childcare and eldercare. We note that care issues disproportionately affect women faculty and staff, and single parents. The College must provide resources needed by faculty and staff with care responsibilities both in the context of a challenging remote work environment *and* beyond.
- **Recognize patterns that suggest a markedly hostile climate for people of color, women, and women of color in STEM areas** at Lafayette. The College should mobilize the as-yet silent Hanson Center for Inclusive STEM and other resources to transform the *particular climates* of STEM fields. The College must solicit and foreground the experiences of women, people of color, FirstGen and LGBTQ+ students in STEM when seeking to improve the climate for STEM majors and in STEM classes.
- **Develop and put into place a robust anti-racist curriculum at Lafayette** that is also feminist, Queer-positive and *unavoidable* by all Lafayette students; we call specifically for *sustained attention to women of color and trans people, especially trans women of color*, across the curriculum.
- **Prioritize building deeper expertise and more courses on race and racism into traditional departments *and also* better resource interdisciplinary programs that play outsized roles in**

bringing race and intersectional issues into the curriculum (i.e., Africana Studies, WGSS).

We call on the faculty and administration to support the **Latin American and Caribbean Studies** (LACS) program with appropriate staffing and resources.

- We urge the College to maintain its long-standing commitment to **DACA students** and to continue to speak out in support of these students. The College must also continue to be vocal and active in the fight against cruel and arbitrary guidance from the Trump administration that requires international students take in-person classes in order to remain in the US.

We look forward to swift, collaborative action, and to the transformation of this College, campus and community.

The WGSS Advisory Committee

Mary A. Armstrong, WGSS Chair/WGSS Advisory Committee

Susan Averett, Economics/WGSS Advisory Committee

Dana Cuomo, WGSS/WGSS Advisory Committee

Sidney Donnell, FLL/WGSS Advisory Committee and co-Chair of the Presidential Oversight Committee on Sexual Misconduct (POCSM)

Tara Gilligan, WGSS/WGSS Advisory Committee

and

WGSS Teaching Faculty

Deborah Byrd, English

Jessica Carr, Religious Studies

Michelle Geoffrion-Vinci, FLL/Spanish

Amauri Gutiérrez Coto, FLL/Spanish

Rebecca Kissane, Anthropology & Sociology

Mary Jo Lodge, Theater

Meghan Mastro, Philosophy

Rebekah Pite, History

Robin Rinehart, Religious Studies

Joshua Sanborn, History

Andrea Sempertegui Barreiros, Anthropology & Sociology and WGSS

Nandini Sikand, Film and Media Studies

Ian Smith, English

Hannah Stewart-Gambino, Government & Law and International Affairs

Angelika von Wahl, International Affairs

Neha Vora, Anthropology & Sociology

Comments on this statement are welcome. Please be in touch with Professor Armstrong at armstrom@lafayette.edu.