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Letter to Members from SRCD President Ken Dodge

AUTHOR

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Past President

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Dear Fellow SRCD Member,

I am outraged. This past week, a white police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin, shot a young Black man, Jacob Blake, seven times in his back while his children watched. I am humiliated to recognize that it is White smugness and supremacy that have enabled such events to occur. And it is White privilege that has allowed systemic racism to flourish. I send my grief-stricken condolences to members of Mr. Blake's family and the entire Black community.

This past Friday was the day of the Commitment March in Washington on the occasion of the 57th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s historic March on Washington speech. I hope this day inspires all of us to take action to stop systemic racism in all its forms.

SRCD is committed to taking action. Here are initial steps our organization and members are taking. We are committed to doing more.

- **Becoming an Antiracist Society: Setting a Developmental Research Agenda Webinar**. Eleanor Seaton, Gabriela Livas Stein, Margaret Caughy, and Rebecca White recently led this webinar. I learned from their presentations and the work to which they refer us that it is important to face with honesty ways we might be perpetuating racism in our attitudes and daily interactions. We need to work together across racial and ethnic groups, with those who are White acting as allies with those who are of Color. As scientists, we must use our professional skills and capital to mount a major program of research to discover how children are raised to act in racist ways, how our society's institutions are crafted to perpetuate racism, how the wounds of racism harm those who are targeted and all of us, and how we can stop this brutality.
- **Supporting Asian/Asian American Children and Youth during the COVID-19 Pandemic Webinar**. This parent chat, co-sponsored by SRCD and the SRCD Asian Caucus, provided evidence-based guidance for parents on talking with their children about xenophobia, stereotypes and bullying, and for educators on how to cultivate an inclusive virtual classroom. Thanks to Charissa Cheah, Yoonsun Choi, Richard Lee, Rashmita Mistry, Kaveri Subrahmanyam, and Tiffany Yip.

- **The Graduate Student and Early Career Membership Dues Waiver Program**. SRCD is welcoming applications for memberships dues waivers from Graduate Students and Early Career Members from communities hardest hit by the pandemic, racism and discrimination. We are also inviting donations to support the dues waiver program from those who are in position to share resources. This program will help SRCD be a vibrant and diverse community. Thanks to Barbara Rogoff and Linda Halgunseth for proposing the membership dues waiver initiative to SRCD's Governing Council.

- **Socially Responsible Investing**. The Governing Council has committed SRCD to socially responsible investing by shifting its investment portfolio toward ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governmental) funds.

- **Statement of the Evidence Briefs (forthcoming)**. In response to a request submitted through the Rapid Response Process, SRCD commissioned a set of *Statements of the Evidence* on how the pandemic, combined with systemic racism, have disproportionately affected communities that have experienced discrimination and is worsening inequality of educational opportunities (with thanks to the Rapid Assessment and Response Strategy Team, the Caucus Chairs, Tiffany Yip as editor, and the authors of

each of the Evidence Statements.

- **Construction of the 'Other': Development, Consequences, and Applied Implications of Prejudice and Discrimination Special Topic Meeting**. This meeting, rescheduled from 2020 to 2022, will be held in Puerto Rico (with thanks to the organizers, Cynthia García Coll, Gustavo Carlo, Linda Halgunseth, Lisa López, and Norma Perez-Brena).

- **Scholar Development Project.** SRCD is working to increase the diversity of scholars on scientific review panels at federal agencies and to address the disparity in proposal awards by race/ethnicity (with thanks to Dawn Witherspoon, Eleanor Seaton, and the members of the Ethnic and Racial Issues Committee).

- **Anti-racism training**. SRCD will provide anti-racism training to our Governing Council members this Fall.

- The **SRCD Publications Committee** is taking steps toward expanding anti-racism journal practices (with thanks to the leadership of Deborah Rivas-Drake and journal editors, with important guidance from a recent paper by Steven Roberts and colleagues).

- SRCD has a very active set of Committees and Caucuses that are working to support anti-racism in our organization, science, and community. Consider nominating yourself or a colleague to serve on one of these groups.

Finally, I invite you to consider taking action **today**, with some urgency. A group of scientists has written a commentary about how to stop systemic racism in higher education that will appear in *Science*. You can join 1800 other scientists and sign on to the commentary, if you act before close of business today. Click here for a link to the commentary.

Here are links to how you can sign on, separately for Faculty of Color and Allies:

- **Faculty of Color**
- **Allies**

I know the steps we are taking within SRCD are not enough. We need to do so much more. *Please send me your input and ideas at dodge@duke.edu.*

Thank you,

Ken Dodge
President of SRCD