

EBHS Statement on Anti-Racism and Diversity

The Trustees of the Economic and Business History Society recognize that black lives matter and affirm our commitment to mutual respect and social justice for all.

The worldwide protests sparked by the senseless killing of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, by members of the Minneapolis police department have made this a historic moment and a time for reflection. As historians, we are well aware that equality has been the exception rather than the rule in modern societies. For most of American history, African Americans were treated as if their lives mattered little. Despite legal and political progress, the legacies of slavery, segregation, discrimination, and institutionalized racism remain powerful, in the United States and elsewhere.

Beyond condemning these killings and advocating for reform, what can we do to help eliminate systemic racism and promote equality of opportunity? Although we have much to offer as historians, we also have much to learn. This is an opportunity for us to broaden our teaching and research horizons.

As an organization, we recognize that our own track record in terms of racial diversity leaves much to be desired. We pride ourselves on our inclusion of different fields and methods, our geographic and political diversity, and our collegiality, but we still have much to do to diversify our organization. Our journal and our annual conference have always welcomed submissions of papers on racial inequality, but we can do more to actively solicit such papers going forward.

Real action requires work, resources, and willpower. The EBHS commits itself to realizing the ideals of equality and justice for all. We are in the process of developing an actionable plan for how our organization's membership, programming, and publications can be as inclusive and diverse as the world we study. We welcome input from the general public. We commit to announcing the actions we plan to implement by August 15, 2020.