

NOMAS at VT
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June 8, 2020

Virginia Tech
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
1325 Perry St
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Dear CAUS Administration,

We are writing to address the heinous murder of Mr. George Floyd that occurred two weeks ago from today. His death was not the first instance of the racist systems in America targeting Black bodies; it merely sparked a particularly dry match on the intricate struggles of Black people in this country. Although this gross action was not an anomaly, our country and all of its spaces are teeming with aversive racism. Ingrained in our history as a country, racism is inescapable and must be combated at every opportunity. **Our organization condemns any and every form of racism that lives within the College of Architecture and Urban Studies here at Virginia Tech.**

The essence of our mission is to support our students of color through equity and inclusion advocacy. We aim to enhance the minority experience within CAUS by engaging minority students in a way that fosters a welcoming environment. We focus on educating the CAUS student and faculty populations on our roles in perpetuating systemic racism as architects, designers, and planners. It would be unbecoming of our organization to not address the ways in which CAUS is complicit in continuing the cycle of racism within our environment.

In 2018, Virginia Tech's Office of Institutional Research Facts and Figures published data demographics of full-time CAUS faculty. It indicates that approximately 20 percent of the faculty are minorities. Yet, only 3 of the 163 faculty are Black. From 2019 data, the incoming architecture freshman class had approximately 26 percent of minority students with only 5 out of 137 students identifying as Black. These demographics should not be deemed as acceptable. Verbally committing to an atmosphere of total diversity and inclusion should translate to a rich mix of multiple underrepresented populations within our community. **The following demands are necessary in order to combat racism within our college. They read as follows:**

1. Hire Black and Latinx professors in CAUS with an emphasis on the School of Architecture and Design.
2. Recruit Black and other underrepresented students into CAUS with an emphasis on the School of Architecture and Design.
3. Incorporate the impact designers have on race relations in America (e.g. gentrification, low-income housing, etc.) into the mandatory curriculums of each major.
4. Include Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) voices within all CAUS courses.
5. Publicize annual reviews of progress made by CAUS in becoming actively anti-racist.

As a resource to the college, NOMAS is dedicated to sparking conversations surrounding racism and other oppressive systems centered around identity-based discrimination. We plan on continuing this discussion and others in a similar nature as an organization this school year. This will allow all CAUS students and faculty to gain educational value towards how we can design the future with an inclusive lens. We welcome and encourage a partnership between NOMAS and CAUS in order to work collaboratively in combating the racism that affects us all. As we move forward as a country, we are hopeful that the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech can become an agent of change in this pressing issue.

Sincerely,


NOMAS
National Organization of Minority Architecture Students