



Official Statement from SIGDOC: A Response to Injustice

SIGDOC stands in solidarity with Black members of SIGDOC and the larger Black community across the United States and around the globe in the ongoing fight for justice for the lives of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Freddie Gray, Tony McDade, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, and far too many others. State-sanctioned anti-Black violence is the manifestation of systemic White supremacy in all its forms in the United States and across the globe.¹ Black lives matter.

SIGDOC unequivocally values our members who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and as an organization focused on the design of communication, there is much more that we can, should, and will do in this ongoing fight for justice. The Executive Committee has composed this statement to articulate our commitment to leading SIGDOC towards an anti-racist, justice-minded mode of operations, joining ACM—our parent organization—in overcoming histories that have consistently overlooked the contributions of BIPOC labor.² SIGDOC commits to the work of undoing the historical roots of racism and, as White individuals leading an historically and predominantly White organization, we take up the call of BIPOC community members to reshape our organization and reform our organization to consciously combat systems of oppression.

Structural issues require structural changes, and we believe in taking action immediately to put into motion long-term systemic change. We use this space, then, to enact our organizational focus on practice by publicly committing to concrete goals of accountability and investment in anti-racist design and scholarship. As an Executive Committee, we are empowered to make decisions about allocating organizational resources and our own labor in line with our values as an organization. In that vein, we are:

1. **Learning.** We are prioritizing our efforts to learn about anti-racism especially in the context of the design of communication, the history of design, and documentation. We encourage SIGDOC members to do the same. This summer we will be taking part in the “21-Day Racial Equity Challenge”³ by MLPP and reading *Race After Technology: Abolitionist Tools for the New Jim Code* by Ruha Benjamin, *Design Justice* by Sasha Costanza-Chock, and *Technical Communication After the Social Justice Turn: Building Coalitions for Action* by Rebecca Walton, Kristen R. Moore, and Natasha N. Jones. We invite you to join us.

¹ We capitalize “White” based on our shared belief with the Center for the Study of Social Policy that it is important to “call attention to White as a race as a way to understand and give voice to how Whiteness functions in our social and political institutions and our communities” (Nguyễn & Pendleton, “Recognizing Race in Language: Why We Capitalize ‘Black’ and ‘White’,” 2020, Mar. 23, cssp.org).

² Nelsen, R. A. (2017). Race and computing: The problem of sources, the potential of prosopography, and the lesson of *Ebony* magazine. *IEEE Annals in the History of Computing*, 39(1), pp. 29-51.

³ Accessible at <https://mlpp.org/21-day-racial-equity-challenge/>

2. **Re-Envisioning.** We are revising existing bylaws, policies, as well as guidance on editorial work and conference planning through the lens of justice and anti-racism in collaboration with the SIGDOC Board and our membership. We will report our progress at the 2020 SIGDOC Conference in October.
3. **Investing.** We are dedicating funds to support justice-centered and anti-racist work:
 - **Immediate:** We are focusing the two 2020-2021 Career Advancement Research Grants (\$2400 total) to specifically fund projects that actively work to dismantle systemic injustices or create new visions of equity and justice. The CFP will be released in October at the 2020 SIGDOC Conference, with a submission deadline of November 30th.
 - **Sustainable:** We are allocating a permanent annual budgetary line item of \$2000 dedicated to supporting justice-centered initiatives in the design of communication. This line item will support the organization to purposefully dedicate resources of the organization to do justice-centered work. We will convene a session at the 2020 SIGDOC Conference to gather input from members to discuss how to use these funds.
4. **Publishing.** *Communication Design Quarterly*, our organizational publications, will examine and revise our review guidelines as needed through the lens of justice, anti-racism, and inclusion in collaboration with the Editorial Board. Editor in Chief Derek Ross will report our progress at the 2020 SIGDOC Conference in October.
5. **Re-Centering.** We are calling on the SIGDOC community to re-center their work around anti-racist practices. For academics, this could mean engaging in anti-racist sourcing and citation practices. For industry practitioners, this could mean engaging in a more diverse array of community stakeholders. We include ourselves as the Executive Committee, as well as the Conference Committee, SIGDOC Board, and the Website and Social Media Teams, in this call.

We close in asking you to join us in these efforts and work to improve our organization, the field, and society at large. We are actively seeking people who are interested in engaging with SIGDOC to work on these anti-racist and justice initiatives. Please email SIGDOC Chair Dan Richards (dprichar@odu.edu) if you are interested in getting involved.

The SIGDOC Executive Committee,
Dan Richards (Chair)
Sarah Read (Vice-Chair)
Susan Youngblood (Secretary-Treasurer)
Emma Rose (Past Chair)
Derek G. Ross (Editor in Chief, *CDQ*)