8/27/2020​

We, the members of the Kucenas lab, stand in solidarity against racial injustice, police brutality, violence, and hatred. We are disgusted and ashamed by the blatant killing of black men and women, including the murders and lynchings deeply rooted in our nation’s history. We stand as allies in the fight against this systemic racism. As a group, we are completely intolerant of all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and injustice in our lab, department, university, community, and nation. We know that change comes from within our ranks, and we strive to create a more inclusive environment within our lab and department. Scientific discovery can only truly flourish when we include diverse perspectives and backgrounds that span the full range of the human experience in our communities, universities, and labs. Science as an institution is historically deeply rooted in racism, inequality, and exploitation that still persists today. Therefore, we hold ourselves and our university accountable for acknowledging and redressing these deplorable injustices in order to build a more inclusive and just institution. We encourage others to stand with us and denounce racism in all forms.Moving forward, the Kucenas Lab pledges that alongside our mission of scientific discovery, we will consciously invest in the following activities:

* We will remain open to learning from others and owning up to our mistakes.
* We will be open to change and not be afraid to suggest change when and where change is needed.
* We will foster an environment where all individuals are championed, feel safe, and are encouraged to share their ideas and conduct science.
* We will never again be afraid to use our voice to speak out against injustice and racism in all forms.
* We will deliberately increase inclusivity in our lab and our department by recruiting scientists from all walks of life, and will explicitly advocate and recruit Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) at all ranks of our institution.
* We will encourage diversity and inclusion as both researchers and educators in every meeting, classroom, and event we attend.
* We will publicly acknowledge and demand that our lab, our department, our university, and our community, can, and must, do better.
* We will keep ourselves, our peers, our department, and our university accountable.
* Together, the Kucenas Lab will promote diversity, inclusion, and equity in science, and we encourage others to stand with us in our mission.

\*\*This is a living document. As we learn, listen, and grow, we will continually update and add to this statement with the hope that many of these goals become ingrained in our culture and institution. We will also propose specific action items related to these goals in the coming weeks and months. We encourage people to share, engage, and hold us accountable as we move forward.

Action Items:

* We will participate in discussions/learning sessions, such as book clubs and seminars, about historical and present BIPOC contributions to STEM fields as well as the history of racism in science.
  + Outcome metric: Once a month, the Kucenas lab will dedicate a lab meeting to have anti-discrimination and anti-racism check-ins (which will include discussions of DEI events/seminars/trainings we have attended).
* We will discuss and highlight articles by BIPOC/LGBTQIA+/women scientists as much as possible. We will feature these authors and their work on our website so that others can also learn about them.
  + Outcome metric: Once a month the Kucenas lab will include a JC featuring an article written by a BIPOC/LGBTQIA+/woman scientist. Synopsis of JC discussion will be published on website/Twitter.
* Our recommendations for seminar speakers will include BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and ECR as much as possible.
  + Outcome metric: We will work to keep the Biology and Neuroscience department accountable for choosing BIPOC/LGBTQIA+/ECR/women seminar speakers.
* We will participate or organize outreach to local schools to enhance science literacy and interest in science careers.
  + Outcome metric: The Kucenas lab will partner with UVA outreach initiatives (ex: BOP, LEAD, Brain Awareness Week) to actively participate in outreach efforts.
* We will support and participate in department, university, and community efforts to increase inclusive excellence, which could include signing and sharing petitions, attending town hall meetings, and other actions.
  + Outcome metric: Once a month, the Kucenas lab will dedicate a lab meeting for accountability of participation in DEI events/seminars/training.
* We will work toward implementing required implicit bias training for trainees, staff, and faculty in the department.
  + Outcome metric: Newly hired and existing trainees, staff, and faculty will complete implicit bias training every year.
* We will petition to establish a library of books, articles, and theses that address racial bias and injustice in science as well as highlight works of BIPOC/LGBTQIA+/ECR people.
  + Outcome metric: Support, actively contribute, and demand accountability of the Biology department’s efforts of creating such repositories.
* We will establish a summer internship in our lab for an URM undergraduate (either from UVA or HBCUs in Virginia) to provide an opportunity to gain research experience.
  + Outcome metric: The Kucenas Lab will participate in existing research programs (ex: SRIP, Virginia-North Carolina Alliance) to provide URM students with research experience.
* We will actively recruit URM students from Virginia high schools, HBCUs, and Womens’ Colleges to apply to UVA, UVA Neuroscience Graduate Program or UVA Biology Graduate Program.
* Outcome metric: Program coordinators of NGP and Biology will plan and attend recruitment events at HBCUs.