

PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Blackness, Citizenship, and the Transnational Vertigo of Violence in the Americas

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When a Missouri grand jury decided not to indict Officer Darren Wilson for the shooting death of Michael Brown on November 24, 2014, the United States erupted into a symphony of protests, the likes of which we have not seen since the civil rights movement. Indeed, we are witnessing the dawn of a new movement, but this movement is not about our national politics. It is about an emerging global politics of race, citizenship, violence, and nation that requires us as anthropologists take stock of our approaches to these topics.

Since 2005 I have been working with black political organizers in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, in the fight to denounce and demystify anti-black state violence. As an activist anthropologist, my collaborations have been with the grassroots community action network Quilombo X and the campaign React or Die!/React or Be Killed! (hereafter, React or Die! Campaign). This experience has led me to write about and analyze the relationship between blackness, citizenship, and national belonging in the Americas. Specifically, I consider anti-black state violence a performance of the modern American nation-state. In other words, state violence is a process of embodiment and subject making with plots, scripts, and spectacles that have tangible, material effects (e.g., Smith 2008). My work also recognizes the global patterns that connect local black experiences to transnational ones, like police violence. This essay is a reflection on those processes and their current political implications.

On August 22, 2014, while demonstrators in Ferguson, Missouri, headed to the streets to face another day of confrontation with an excessively militarized police force in the first weeks of protest following the death of Michael Brown, over 51,000 people in cities across Brazil also took to the streets to speak out against police brutality and racial profiling. However, their primary motivation was not the death of Michael Brown. The II (Inter)National March Against the Genocide of Black People, organized by the React or Die!/React or Be Killed! Campaign, was a nationwide protest to draw attention to the fact that according to official counts, Brazilian police kill approximately six people per day, totaling 11,197 over the past five years.¹ This compares to approximately 11,090 people killed by the police in the United States over the past thirty years. Approximately

70 percent of those killed are black (Waiselfisz 2012).² Black people (*negros*) in Brazil are three times more likely to be killed by the police than their white counterparts (Cano 2010; Mitchell and Wood 1999). The numbers do not adequately reflect the gravity of this phenomenon. Records on police homicide are voluntarily kept, produced internally, and not reported by most urban cities (Lemgruber et al. 2003). Moreover, most of the deaths caused by the police are not even registered as homicides. Instead, they are recorded as “death caused by resisting arrest” (*autos de resistência*)—a controversial category that in essence allows police killings to be classified as “suicides.” This also does not take into account police death squads—“off-duty” police officers who engage in vigilante-style killings (Amnesty International 2005). Recognizing that the statistics on police homicide are grossly underreported and the disproportionate majority of homicide victims in Brazil are black, the crisis of anti-black police brutality is much graver than it actually appears.

As the march began, the women leading the demonstration began to read the names of the dead. The South African National Anthem played somberly in the background. Tony, the father of one of the victims being honored that day, turned to me and said, “I don’t want this to be a protest march, I want it to be a funeral march.” As the list went on, name after name, I felt my chest tighten and my breath become shallow. My eyes burned behind my sunglasses. I knew the families of several of the young people whose names were read who had been killed by the police in Salvador. Many of them, like Jackson, Tony’s son, were clandestinely kidnapped, tortured, and then gruesomely murdered and thrown in a shallow grave. Yet that was not the only reason that I was felt dizzy with emotion. I was also overwhelmed by the inescapable terror that defines being black and living in the Americas today.

While 7,000 of us were marching in the streets of Salvador to protest the genocide of black people in Brazil, protestors in the United States were standing in the streets of Ferguson and several other U.S. cities, raising their voices to denounce the very same concerns, albeit in a very different national context. As an anthropologist, I could easily define this in terms of transnational racial politics. Yet that social framework did not allow me to articulate the vertigo that was hitting me hard with terror and sadness. This was much more than a moment of ethnographic reflection—I

was not a fly on the wall. My personal implication in this struggle hung around my head like a fog. As a black mother of two boys, I am acutely aware that the state violence that stole the lives of the young people being remembered in both Salvador and Ferguson that day could easily have been enacted upon my children. Regardless of my geographic location, at home in the United States or abroad in Brazil, the realities of anti-black state violence followed and engulfed me. It was this sense of urgency that led me to work in solidarity with the React or Die! Campaign back in 2005. It is this personal imperative that has led me to continue working with them until today. Like most activist anthropologists, my work is about political solidarity (Hale 2006). Yet it is also about survival, and it is this distinction—solidarity versus survival—that also pushes me to consider the theoretical implications of this moment. The stakes of our reflections on Ferguson and Salvador are not just theoretical. For many of us, they are a matter of life and death.

For years, most anthropologists (with notable exceptions) have shied away from explicit discussions about the global politics of blackness and citizenship. Anthropological conversations around the question of citizenship have tended to focus on the politics of state belonging or cultural citizenship (e.g., Basch et al. 1994; Caldeira 2000; Holston 2008; Ong 1996; Rosaldo 1997; Stolcke 1995). Yet, as Kamari Clarke notes in her assessment of the scholarship on cultural citizenship, “the conceptual gaps in scholarship in the black Atlantic world are striking” (Clarke 2013:465). Those anthropologists who do engage critically with the question of black citizenship draw our attention to the unique relationship between black people and the nation state and the negotiation processes in which black people engage in order to navigate national belonging (e.g., Clarke and Thomas 2006; Clarke 2013; Jackson 2001; Perry 2013; Pierre 2013; Rahier 2014; Thomas 2004; Williams 2013). However, the persistent and escalating problem of anti-black state violence in the Americas presents unique challenges to the discourse of race and national belonging. Race—as a social, historical, and political formation—continues to define not only expressions of citizenship and the kind of citizenship we practice but also the extent to which we are recognized as citizen-subjects at all. In other words, a paradox of black citizenship forces us to grapple with our anthropological mappings of citizenship and the contours of the racial state (Goldberg 2002).

Historically, black people have been thought of as subjects that are mutually exclusive from liberal democratic citizenship and the modern nation-state throughout the Black Atlantic (Davies and M’Bow 2007). Consequently, it is not only that black people have been disenfranchised (from voting and political participation in particular) but also that they have been symbolically erased as subjects who have even the potential for national belonging. This process occurs on multiple conceptual levels, but for the immediate purposes of this discussion I would like to consider two: the symbolic and the experiential.

Black people in Brazil and the United States are legal citizens only in *sensu stricto*. This is a controversial claim to make, but I come to this conclusion through a qualitative analysis of national experience. While legal citizenship affords all citizens equal protection under the law in both nations, this protection does not practically extend to black people in either. There is a breakdown between legal, written inclusion and state practice of national inclusion. The evidence for this is the indiscriminate manner by which black people are killed, beaten, tortured, and violated by the state with impunity. This practice has become common sense, to the point that even those seeking assistance from law enforcement are killed for procuring such assistance. Two qualitative examples are the deaths of Jonathan Ferrell in Charlotte, North Carolina, in September of 2013 and Claudia Silva in March of 2014. Police officers in Charlotte, North Carolina, shot and killed Ferrell after he ran toward them seeking help after a car wreck (King and Stapleton 2013). Police officers dragged Claudia Silva to death in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, when they stuffed her in the back of their police car after she was shot in the crossfire between police and drug-trafficking suspects. The nation-state’s rules for engagement with black bodies are not a cultural process of black “citizenship” making—“producing consent through schemes of surveillance, discipline, control” (Foucault 1977; Ong 1996). Rather, they are a necropolitics of objectification—“contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death” (Mbembe 2003:39). It is a “horizon of death” (Ferreira da Silva 2009).

Symbolically, black horizons of death emerge from the cognitive dissociation between blackness and humanity. As anthropologists, we know that 19th-century anthropology associated black people with apes and relegated blackness to the nonhuman realm (Baker 1998, 2010). However, we may not be as aware that this legacy has contemporary social ramifications. Social psychologist Phillip Atiba Goff and his collaborators (2008:294) have found that “a Black-ape association influences the extent to which people condone and justify violence against Black suspects.” In the United States, this translates into the propensity for police violence and for juries to hand down death sentences. In Brazil, it casts black people as an expendable suspect type (Santos 2002). Despite an absence of conscious associations between black people and simians, subconscious associations between black people and apes lead people to sanction and practice anti-black violence (Goff et al. 2008). We need only look to the transcripts of the grand jury trial of Officer Darren Wilson to see the effects of this phenomenon. Officer Wilson described 18-year-old Michael Brown as a cross between a demon and Hulk Hogan.³ As anthropologists, we must consider the conceptual roots and routes that have led us to this moment and their political implications.

Part of what has fueled transnational, passionate protests against anti-black state violence is narrative repetition. Michael Brown was not the first and he will not be the last. We need only cite the names of the dead to recall the

long history of deadly police racial profiling in the United States, Brazil, and elsewhere. For many of us, anti-black police violence is an extension of lynching. There is an eerie resonance between Michael Brown's body being left to lie in the street while his mother watched for four hours before it was removed, the spectacular display of tortured black bodies swinging from trees across the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries, and Tony's story of being forced to dig up his son from a clandestine grave after a police death squad killed him (Smith 2013). Diasporic realities of anti-black state violence resonate far beyond national boundaries, constitute the paradox of black citizenship, and indicate the need to expand our definition of race to also include the affectual economies that produce our selves as racialized, political subjects.

NOTES

1. These numbers were reported by the Brazilian Police Forum (see <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/brazilian-police-kill-6-people-a-day-study-finds/>, accessed February 2, 2015).
2. Throughout this essay, I use the term *black* to refer to the word *negro* in Portuguese. Negros, those classified as *pardo* (brown skinned) and *pretos* (dark skinned), make up 51 percent of the total population of Brazil.
3. See Darren Wilson's full testimony transcript (St. Louis, MO, Grand Jury Volume V, September 16, 2014).

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Diversity Dilemmas and Opportunities: Training the Next Generation of Anthropologists

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BEYOND STATISTICS

In March of 2014, Lauren C. Johnson, Alisha R. Winn, and Emelda Curry, three Ph.D. graduates from the University of South Florida (USF), formed a panel titled "Beyond Statistics: Exploring the Challenges Facing Black Anthropology Students in the Pursuit of Graduate Degrees" at the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) meetings in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Their goal was to reflect on their experiences as graduate students of color and collectively discuss some of the pitfalls, challenges, and opportunities for success for black anthropology students pursuing graduate degrees. Conversations and concern among USF faculty members,

graduates, and graduate students following the SfAA panel discussion led to the establishment in the spring of 2014 of a USF anthropology department-level committee to examine issues of departmental diversity. Because we recognize that a publically relevant and accountable anthropology must reflect and respond to the communities in which we live and work, the department is taking steps to create holistic policies to promote these values.

Although the "Beyond Statistics" panel focused on issues specific to African American students, many of the experiences shared resonate more broadly with other underrepresented groups in graduate programs in anthropology. The panelists spoke of feelings of isolation, of being unduly questioned by some of their professors and graduate student peers on their choice of research topics, and about the integrity of native anthropology. They expressed their dismay at seeing contributions of black and other anthropologists of color marginalized within or excluded from the discipline's canon and said that these experiences fostered feelings of self-doubt. Participants also spoke of paradoxes such as the struggle to secure funding and the lack of robust mentorship in cases where funding had been obtained. They remarked on the experiences of being made to feel like invisible outsiders at some times (e.g., not being introduced to department visitors when others were; being viewed as subjects instead of scholars and peers in classroom discussions) and as racialized and visible representatives of diversity at others (e.g., seen as universal experts on the subject of race). They reflected upon missteps of everyday graduate student life, from being singled out as "go-to" experts on diversity in some classroom discussions to being called by the name of another black

graduate student by white peers and program staff despite a lack of resemblance.

The panelists also made innovative programmatic recommendations for recruitment and retention of anthropology graduate students from underrepresented groups with practical implications to augment the number of future anthropologists. These strategies included the creation of outreach programs at the high school level; workshops that would encourage faculty to recognize issues faced by students of color; increased availability of student resources such as graduate assistantships and research funding; more one-on-one support through mentorship relationships; honest feedback from professors at regular intervals; co-publishing opportunities; using “challenging conversations” that arise organically as the basis for discussions of racism in the academy; curricular changes that highlight diverse scholarship in anthropology; the use of ethnography as a tool to study the culture of anthropology departments themselves; and, at the level of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the SfAA, a rating system or diversity policy score for anthropology departments to raise accountability.

This call to consciousness expressed by the panelists coincided with, and echoed, current concerns within the discipline, and it resonated with initiatives by the AAA and by individual departments. Yet the panel was poorly attended, despite the presence of the executive director of the AAA. The president of the SfAA visited briefly and offered support for the panel, apologizing for the low attendance. Such underparticipation could suggest that, in the context of competing priorities of conference attendees, the panel’s topic was not considered of high importance to anthropologists in attendance, which means that more work needs to be done.

This article is written by the “Beyond Statistics” panel participants and current USF anthropology faculty. We present some of the highlights of the discipline’s efforts over the years to address issues such as those presented by the panel, as well as a brief discussion of our department’s experience and efforts at inclusion and the democratization of science. We regard efforts at inclusion and democratization as vital to ensuring that future generations of anthropologists will be reflective of the diversity of the societies in which they live, work, and serve. Our goal is to create programs and policies that will give primacy to diversity in critical, transparent, and sustainable ways and enhance our accountability to our publics. We have stories of success, yet we still have a long way to go. We think that our efforts, reawakened by experiences shared by the 2014 SfAA panelists, can inform and be informed by a broader set of efforts to move toward a more intentional, engaged, and conscious public anthropology.

ANTHROPOLOGY’S DIVERSITY—OR NOT

In the 1960s context of counterculture politics and rising civil rights struggles, there were sustained and serious critiques of anthropology from the outside, such as Vine Deloria

Jr.’s (1969) *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*, as well as internal critique that called for the radicalization of anthropology’s aims and focus (Gough 1968) and criticized anthropology’s involvement with colonialism (Asad 1973). William S. Willis (1972) wrote of anthropology’s racist past and contemporary silences and skirting of issues in “Skeletons in the Anthropological Closet,” and there followed calls to “decolonize anthropology” (Harrison 1991), a focus on pioneers from historically underrepresented minority groups (Harrison and Harrison 1999), discussions of what it meant to be a “native” anthropologist (Jacobs-Huey 2002), considerations of archaeologists’ role in perpetuating structural violence against native communities (Thomas 2000) and in reinventing them altogether (Castañeda 1996), and memoirs and reflections from anthropologists of color (Harrison 2008; Navarro et al. 2013).

The AAA’s institutional response was to establish, from time to time, committees to investigate (the lack of) diversity within anthropology, where diversity was defined on the basis of race, ethnicity, and occasionally gender. A resolution was passed at the 1969 annual meeting calling for measures to recruit and retain black, Chicano, American Indian, and Asian students, and the Committee on Minority Participation was established the following year. This committee morphed into the Committee on Minorities and Anthropology, and in 1973 it issued a report titled “The Minority Experience in Anthropology” (Committee on Minorities and Anthropology 1973). In 1987, the AAA Committee on Anthropology in Predominately Minority Institutions started working to increase anthropology’s visibility at these institutions, and by 1992 this committee fed into a further AAA effort that resulted in the Commission on Minority Issues in Anthropology, which called for the establishment of a permanent committee with the goals of promoting participation of underrepresented groups, fostering professional advancement by minorities, promoting intellectual awareness of minority issues, and helping to define anthropology’s role in public discourse around cultural diversity (Commission on Minority Issues in Anthropology 1996). In 1999 the AAA awarded its first Minority Dissertation Fellowship. In 2004 the Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology issued a report on “Race, Gender, and Mentoring in Anthropology Departments” (Díaz-Barriga et al. 2004) expressing dismay at the lack of actual research on the mentoring of members of underrepresented groups. Meanwhile, Roberto González’s (2002) research on “Top 10” anthropology departments showed an absence of nonwhite anthropology graduate students and faculty. By contrast, it was found that 70 to 90 percent of minority anthropologists received their degrees at public institutions and that 70 to 90 percent of minority anthropologists were employed by public institutions (Hutchinson and Patterson 2010:3).

The AAA established the ad hoc Commission on Race and Racism in Anthropology at the 2007 annual meeting, and an ensuing report noted that the AAA did not collect useable data on the ethnracial diversity of its membership and none

on its social class origins. The authors stated that apparently “not much” had changed since the 1973 report (Hutchinson and Patterson 2010:3). Evidence, perhaps, of further “dividing and subdividing” (Wolf 1980) was the proliferation and growth of AAA sections including the Association of Black Anthropologists, the Association for Feminist Anthropology, the Association of Indigenous Anthropologists, the Association of Latina and Latino Anthropologists, the Association for Queer Anthropology (formerly Society of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists), and the Association of Senior Anthropologists.

In 2012, AAA President Leith Mullings formed the Task Force on Race and Racism to develop strategies for recruitment and retention of racialized minorities in the anthropological workforce. At the 2013 AAA meeting, Karen Mary Davalos and Karen Brodtkin organized an open panel discussion entitled “Numbers Matter: How Do We Create a More Racially Diverse Anthropology?” This event was an open strategy session with participants from sub-field and section leadership, designed to help the task force develop a specific plan for recruitment and retention of students of color. Following up on the results of the panel, in February of 2014 the AAA offered a 51-minute webinar called “Best Practices: Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Minorities in Anthropology Programs,” hosted by Rosemary Joyce. In it, Joyce suggested how to develop a pipeline to graduate education, practice comprehensive admissions review, and establish clear benchmarks for minority graduate student progress as ways to recruit and retain students from underrepresented groups (Joyce 2014). Yet, for a number of historical reasons, anthropology continues to lag behind minority science and engineering degree holders. Only 2.7 percent of anthropology degree holders identify as black, for example, as compared to the 5.5 percent who do so in science and engineering.¹

PROGRAMMATIC POSSIBILITIES

Given the apparent failures of these discipline-wide efforts, it falls to individual departments to develop diversity policies and practices. In the articulation of its Diversity Mission Statement published in June of 2014, the Department of Anthropology at the University of Washington provides an excellent example of how to address issues of underrepresentation faced by historically excluded groups based on race and ethnicity, as well as how to expand the criteria upon which diversity is assessed to include issues such as gender, sexual orientation, age, and ability (University of Washington 2014). But what kinds of policies aimed at enhancing diversity make the most sense at the department level?

At first glance, USF has several advantages for the recruitment and retention of minority graduate students in anthropology. It is located in Tampa, Florida, a city with sizeable African American and Latino communities and growing populations of first-generation immigrants to the United States (Florida Center for Community Design and

Research 2012), which allows students to complete internships and work with diverse local organizations through their thesis and dissertation fieldwork. USF’s overall student body is composed of African American (12 percent), Asian (6 percent), Hispanic (18 percent), international (3 percent), and white (56 percent). Responding to the need for training, the department established the world’s first Master of Arts program in Applied Anthropology in 1974 and the first Ph.D. program in 1984. With over 530 graduates at this writing, the program attracts students from a range of backgrounds to address contemporary social problems with an anthropological perspective. Indeed, applied anthropology might be seen to have special relevance for underrepresented groups. As González (2002:21) noted, “Bringing anthropology back home to the struggles, realities, and inequalities of wealth and power within our own society may be a critical step in attracting a more diverse group of students to anthropology departments.”

Through the years, several highly visible and successful minority and international students have graduated from USF’s anthropology graduate program. Many of these alumni have obtained positions as professors and deans within the academy and in leading roles in the world of practitioners. Yet there has been no systematic effort to document their experiences as graduate students in the program to see what things worked well and what need improvement. Nor has there been any stated policy or set of publically articulated practices within the department focused on managing diversity, including recruitment and retention guidelines and establishment of metrics for monitoring progress. While the success of these highly visible students in the program as determined by receipt of a graduate degree can be quantified, gaps remain in the qualitative record regarding their experience. Of the nearly 150 graduate students currently registered, available metrics indicate that as few as 33 identify as people of color. This suggests that, while several among our faculty and departmental leadership have sought over the years to attract and support a more diverse and representative student body, without institutional policies in place, the results of these efforts are limited. Authors of this article seek not only to recognize and applaud individual and small group practices that have led to graduate student success in the past, but also to identify and promote ways of making successful strategies at the individual level part of a best practice policy at the department level for sustained and reproducible success.

One way that the department has addressed diversity is by maintaining strong ties with the McKnight Doctoral Fellowships program administered by the Florida Education Fund, which provides funding for African American and Hispanic students to pursue doctorates in disciplines in which they have been historically underrepresented. A number of USF students have been or currently are fellows, and faculty and alumni regularly attend the annual McKnight Fellows Meeting as guest speakers. Additionally, the department organizes campus visits by students in the McNair

Scholars Program, and international students are given special consideration for graduate assistantships, which come with tuition waivers. The department provides an endowed scholarship for minority students in archaeology, the J. Raymond Williams Memorial Scholarship in Public Archaeology, and students are regularly notified about the AAA Minority Dissertation Fellowship and other funding sources. However, as the SfAA panelists suggest, these efforts alone are insufficient to ensure the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups.

With the goal of institutionalizing policies to encourage greater inclusiveness and accountability to anthropology's many publics, our committee to examine issues of departmental diversity has proposed our own "Three Rs"—of recruitment, retention, and representation.

Recruitment

The department is establishing graduate student recruitment channels by producing materials to distribute to colleagues in historically black colleges and universities and Hispanic-serving institutions. Likewise, the department is searching for ways to support ongoing efforts to diversify the faculty. These are not easy, given the current political climate and legal challenges to programs that promote student and faculty diversity. One method used in the past is to place graduate students on search committees, including students from underrepresented groups. It should be noted that, like the University of Washington, we are seeking to expand on the notion of an underrepresented group to move beyond the association with race and ethnicity to social class, disability status, age, and sexual orientation—that is, the very criteria used in discriminating against people. This is not to undermine historical efforts at inclusion by anthropologists of color. It is to aid and abet those efforts but also to acknowledge the interrelationship of dimensions of difference and, at a practical level, to formulate different strategies and metrics for further diversifying the graduate student and faculty body. The overall ethos is the spirit of even more inclusiveness. One way of increasing inclusivity is asking all applicants to the graduate program to indicate how they would bring diversity to the department as part of their statement of purpose essay required for admission.

Retention

Retention of students from underrepresented groups starts from the pragmatics of funding. Many African American and Hispanic graduate students are able to earn a McKnight Fellowship, but the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the AAA, the Ford Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and other sources also offer funding opportunities for members of underrepresented groups. We are becoming proactive with external funding possibilities by devoting staff hours to searching for these fellowships and asking advisors to inform their graduate students about them. We are planning events such as workshops for the faculty on mentoring graduate students. We are also in

discussions to design an ethnographic survey of students and faculty, as suggested by the SfAA panelists, with the goal of understanding their views on diversity within anthropology, soliciting their ideas on how to achieve it, and determining ways to sustain an environment that encourages everyone to contribute and succeed by learning from and with each other.

Representation

Efforts to promote the visibility of our graduate students from underrepresented groups are aimed at promoting their movement into the professional ranks. USF departmental faculty members routinely co-publish with their graduate students and write them into their external funding applications. Faculty–graduate student workshops on publishing and on grant applications have been conducted in the past, and these will be expanded in the future. But “representation” is taken in another way, and these efforts are aimed at informing and inspiring all of our students. We are developing a graduate course in the history of anthropology that includes contributions of a broader range of anthropologists, with particular attention to anthropologists of color, and we are actively encouraging faculty members to consider as wide a range as possible of scholars when assigning texts and readings in courses. Invoking the notion of “anticipatory socialization” (Merton 1957) by providing insight into the values and struggles of underrepresented groups who become faculty, the department is planning workshops and film nights, showing, for example, *Living Thinkers: An Autobiography of Black Women in the Ivory Tower* (Walker-Canton 2013). Nonetheless, we recognize that more intentional teaching and mentorship will only get us so far without policies aimed at increasing the presence of underrepresented groups among both our students and faculty.

With this in mind, our committee seeks to compile more comprehensive statistics on the racial, ethnic, and gender makeup of our department, college, and university, to the extent these are available. We believe that doing so will help to illuminate institutional gaps and successes as well as support efforts at improving policies and procedures to ensure more effective recruitment, retention, and representation. In all of these efforts, establishing metrics, setting goals, and being transparent within the department and beyond will help us achieve the accountability we see as vital to our success—and our students' success—as applied, engaged, and public anthropologists.

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY

We live in a society that grants and withholds privilege and power based on racial, ethnic, class, gender, and other identity markers. Institutions of higher education, as well as our discipline of anthropology, have played a crucial role in upholding these hierarchies over the years. We add our voices to the growing call that we confront the disparities within our discipline, just as we seek to address them in the world.

In revealing shared experiences and ongoing efforts, we hope that we will stimulate further dialogue on diversity with the aim of amassing and sharing examples of “best practices” to address what we regard as a pressing problem in a profession that aims to reach out and work in diverse communities. We owe it to our publics to create programs and future researchers and policy makers that can operate inside and outside the academy and in the public sphere.

Let us conclude with a plea for further exchange by recalling the words of Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2003:117), who noted, “To ask where anthropology is—or should be—going today is to ask where anthropology is coming from and to assess critically the heritage that it must claim.” We welcome ongoing dialogue about ways that we can—for, indeed, we must—respond to this heritage in the present. If anthropology is to be relevant, it must be diverse, democratic, and inclusive.

NOTES

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1. Both numbers are dismal compared to the 11.7 percent of black Americans in the general U.S. population. For a more detailed comparison of anthropology and science–engineering degree holders by race, see Joyce 2014.

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