



A Message to Our Membership

SEAO NY to: carrie.villani 06/22/2020 12:05 PM

Sent by: SEAO NY <admin@seaony.ccsend.com>

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A Message from the SEAO NY Board:

We are writing to address the recent events surrounding the death of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and racism in the United States. We have been grieving along with the rest of New York and are deeply saddened and outraged by the continuing violence against the Black community. Our role as structural engineers is to build a better present and future for the communities we serve. We know that silence at this time is not an option, and want to reaffirm our support for our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) members.

We are an anti-racist organization; discrimination of any kind is not aligned with the values of SEAO NY or our Code of Ethics. The NCSEA's vision statement reads, "Structural Engineers are valued for their contributions to safe structures and resilient communities." Communities will be neither safe nor resilient until we fully address the challenges we face as a society, including racism and educational inequity. While we as structural engineers cannot solve these problems on our own, it is vital that we do the work necessary, as firms, engineers, and individuals, in order to make the best decisions and actions to find solutions.

The SEAO NY Board supports our committees who have been taking action on the issues of inequality and diversity.

- The SEAO NY Education Foundation has awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships to students from the Urban Assembly School for Design and Construction and grants to fund a new laboratory on campus.
- The Diversity committee has invited experts to present to our membership on relevant issues such as understanding implicit bias, best

practices for addressing workplace harassment, the NCSEA SE3 Project, among other topics. Diversity has also begun an annual speed mentoring initiative designed to give all members of our field access to a diverse set of mentors at all levels of experience.

- The Student Outreach Committee (formerly Education Committee) has engaged in important outreach to local high school and college students who are the future of a more inclusive structural engineering community. Moving forward, we are talking to our various partners in these efforts to increase their impact and ensure the benefits are reaching those who are most in need.

Although we have taken steps towards addressing racism against our BIPOC colleagues, the SEAoNY Board acknowledges that we have been largely silent on the subject. We have not contributed enough to the ongoing conversation of racism in the United States.

Compelled by recent events, the SEAoNY Diversity committee will not take hiatus this summer as usual and will instead host a 3-part virtual seminar series addressing racism within the structural engineering profession. The first two seminars in this series are designed to educate our membership on the effects of racism against BIPOC and particularly how the built environment can influence injustice and inequality in our society. The third seminar will be a panel discussion on actionable steps that firms can take internally and externally to address racism and implicit bias in the workplace. Please look for further communications on this seminar series in the weeks to come.

We encourage our membership to be advocates for the health, safety, and well-being of the public and we encourage you to continue engaging the SEAoNY Board and one another in conversation on how to do so. We will be listening to our members as we evaluate future meaningful actions that can be taken by SEAoNY to advocate for a more equitable profession.

Sincerely,

On Behalf of the SEAoNY Board of Directors

James Vignola

SEAoNY President 2019-2020

Hannah Valentine

SEAoNY Diversity Committee Chair 2019-2020

Joya Nuruddin Herman

SEAoNY Executive Director

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