

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program at Bryn Mawr College stands in full support of and solidarity with striking students at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges. We join our students and our community in their mourning, their anger, and their exhaustion regarding the constant onslaught of state-sanctioned violence against Black bodies, including the recent murder of Walter Wallace Jr. at the hands of the Philadelphia Police Department. We recognize how these recent events are part of a larger pattern of state violence against Black people, Black families, and Black communities all across the United States and worldwide. We recognize not only the validity of but also the need for anger and disruption in the face of this systematic violence.

Institutional violence against BIPOC does not just happen “out there:” it has been an integral part of the College -- and of higher education in the United States more broadly -- since its inception. [Our mission](#), as part of the [Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program](#), is to address the structural and institutional factors that burden BIPOC and FGLI students: the systemic barriers that require our Fellows and other BIPOC students in our community to expend additional labor, to carve space for themselves in Predominantly White Institutions like the Bi-Co, and to contend with institutionally-sanctioned forms of harm and inequality throughout higher education. The MMUF Program is committed to dismantling these barriers and to increasing the number of BIPOC faculty across the humanities and social sciences and in fields where BIPOC scholars are underrepresented, imagining a future academia wherein BIPOC scholars and their work are centrally represented, supported, and celebrated.

We are deeply grateful for the work undertaken in the [Bryn Mawr](#) and [Haverford](#) strike letters and demands and in the [Open Letter to the Bi-Co](#) to list and lay bare the many ways that the College remains complicit with these barriers. We want to acknowledge and honor that this work has been led -- like so many of the great fights for social and political justice in this country -- by Black women, women of color, and queer, trans, and non-binary BIPOC individuals and communities. We also want to acknowledge and honor the labor and commitment of all the strikers. Organizing, articulating demands, and maintaining the solidarity required for this action are taxing forms of labor, and we share your belief that this labor will help transform our campus into an equitable and anti-racist space.

Following the lead of our student scholar-activists and their demands, we commit to:

- Cancel all Program-related meetings until further notice. We will continue to hold space for Fellows to process, discuss, strategize, learn, and build community; these will be open invitations for our students and will not be required.
- Guarantee that no Fellows participating in the strike will be subject to any penalties or loss of standing with the Program.

- Guarantee that when the strike ends, we will work closely with our Fellows to determine pathways forward, including with regard to programmatic requirements.

More broadly, we remain committed to the transformative potential of education and the power of anti-racist and decolonial scholarship. We believe firmly that reshaping academia will play a role in creating a more just world. Towards these goals, we pledge to take these additional actionable steps:

- To leverage our program's resources in ways that benefit BIPOC and FGLI students beyond our small community of Fellows, including:
 - hosting more events that are open to the community, including our BIPOC graduate student and faculty speaker series.
 - sharing our information and materials related to graduate school applications.
 - sharing information about academic programs and opportunities that are available to BIPOC and FGLI students outside of Mellon Mays.
- To increase our recruitment efforts even more widely across campus through more sustained outreach to departments and programs that have not historically nominated Fellows, further engagement with AMOs and Posse, and targeted recruiting in introductory classes across departments to engage students across class years.
- To work with faculty mentors to be certain that they are providing adequate, appropriate, and informed support to our Fellows.
- To continue our practice of recognizing and celebrating our Fellows' work of all kinds (including both their scholarly labor and their labor that is not strictly academic) in order to help foster a broader campus culture that values the work of BIPOC students.
- To continue to offer a cohort community model that is rooted in mutual support and that provides a space to address the harms that current academic structures inflict.
- To continue to seek out and be responsive to the feedback and needs of our Fellows.

We are immensely grateful to the work of students across the Bi-Co -- including the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows -- in their efforts to dismantle systemic oppression. We recognize that these forms of labor are not only acts of critique, but also acts of creation and community-building that imagine what a more equitable and just campus and society must look like.

We stand with the strikers and will labor beside you to transform the College.