

# Decolonizing Public Health Teach-In

## CALL TO ACTION

1. Teach-In goals included the creation of a space to envision a change of culture at the School of Public Health and conceive action items for the administration. One participant stated:

*"I think we have to help taking the initiative ourselves, [because] the opportunities have to be created by us."*

2. Students should not feel totally responsible for this change alone; faculty and staff must also work to create an equitable atmosphere at the School of Public Health. This sentiment was expressed by some survey respondents:

*"It would've been nice to see more faculty support and attendance at the event."*

3. The Teach-In can serve as the beginning of a longer community conversation where we can be honest about student experiences, bureaucratic barriers, and the need for culture and curriculum change:

*"By no means should this be last time these issues are raised in a public forum at School of Public Health. School of Public Health would do well to internalize the points, validations, and critiques made of it by attendees and presenters."*

4. As stated by the facilitators in their action items, some next steps for the administration are as follows:

- **Hire faculty of color.**
- **Offer courses on the topics represented at the Teach-In (almost everyone mentioned this).**
- **Increase engagement with topics outside of the classroom, practice and real world opportunities, partnerships, community integration.**
- **Incorporate these issues into the curriculum and engage with them outside of their respective topic courses.**
  - **Incorporate topic within topical/methodological coursework in School of Public Health.**

## Decolonizing Public Health Teach-In

The facilitators also highlighted other possible changes:

- **Deconstruct westernized group relations and learning styles.**
- **Include intentional teamwork best practices for instructors.**
- **Collaborate with undergraduates.**
- **Offer student-led courses (PhD students have expressed interest in teaching and MPH students have expressed interest in taking these courses).**
- **Increase resources for students who are parents.**
- **Show School of Public Health support of GEO/LEO bargaining efforts.**

5. Finally, Jessica Milne created a syllabus for a Decolonizing Public Health course, based on the a student-led class at the University of California Berkeley titled Decolonizing Bodies in Public Health. The syllabus is on the Teach-In website:

<https://umsphteachin.weebly.com/proposed-course-syllabus.html>

One of the survey respondents reminded us that:

*"decolonization without changes in material conditions is liberal politics serving only the colonizer" (Coulthard 2014, Tuck & Yang 2012).*

**The School of Public Health is now charged with continuing to implement decolonizing public health practices so we can work with communities to create sustainable and equitable change.**