

July 23, 2020

Dear Bryn Mawr Math Students,

Many of you are aware that the Bryn Mawr Mathematics Department had an external review in Spring 2019; this review was formally concluded in June 2020. While the report of the review committee was positive overall, a key area emerged that requires critical reflection, assessment, and improvement. It became clear that we need to engage in deep and sustainable work related to creating learning environments that feel affirming and inclusive to all students, specifically for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) and for those from other underrepresented communities within our department. Our department, similar to our larger society, is experiencing a great moment of reckoning, and issues of race, identity, and power are front and center. Central to this movement for change is the necessity for a serious focus on racial justice in every sector of our society.

Within the Math Department at Bryn Mawr, we have decided to engage an external DEI (diversity, equity, & inclusion) consultant and social justice educator, [Marta Esquilin](#), to help us engage in this evaluative process. Before we can determine the most appropriate course of action to help create a more inclusive and affirming culture within the Mathematics Department, we must first unearth and identify the challenges and strengths that exist. To this end, Marta will be gathering experiences from current math students, majors, alumna, and faculty within the department. She will be gathering this data via confidential **focus groups/listening sessions** and **confidential surveys**. After all data has been collected, she will present us with themes and issues that emerged, as well as recommendations for next steps. We will share these themes with our Math community and enlist your feedback and participation in determining how to best address the issues that emerge.

Below is an outline of our intended approach to this “data gathering” process, and we encourage you to use your voices via either surveys or focus groups to help us best understand the cultural climate within the Mathematics Department.

Listening Sessions with Marta:

1. For those who are interested in participating in listening sessions with Marta, please select one session to sign up for that you feel best reflects the space you would like to participate in. We recognize that these categories are not mutually exclusive and that you may identify with more than one group. All groups will be intersectional and allow for diverse experiences.
2. Listening session will be capped at 12-15 people. We recognize that all students will not be able/or desire to participate in listening sessions. We will send out a corresponding brief survey to all students to capture this larger range of experiences.
3. If you believe that the listening sessions do not include a voice/community that adds an essential perspective to this conversation, please email me (ltraynor@brynmawr.edu), and we will consider incorporating more sessions moving forward.

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Focus groups/Listening Groups with Marta: If you are interested in participating, please sign up here.

1. [BIPOC \(Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color\)](#) **Wednesday August 5, 8pm (EST)**
2. [First Generation and/or Low-income](#) **Monday August 10, 8pm (EST)**
3. [General Session, including Math Major Representatives and TA's](#) **Thursday August 13, 8pm (EST)**

As we wrote to you earlier this summer, the faculty members in the Department of Mathematics have made a commitment to learning about the history of racism and oppression in the United States, to understanding how the associated structures are embedded within Bryn Mawr, and to changing these structures within our mathematics community so as to better support our students and colleagues of color.

Thank you in advance for your participation in and support of this process. For more information or questions, please contact either me (ltraynor@brynmawr.edu) or Amy Myers (anmyers@brynmawr.edu).

Sincerely,

Lisa Traynor

Professor and Chair of Mathematics, Class of 1897 Chair of Science