

American Statistical Association Announces Leadership of New Anti-Racism Task Force

Alexandria, VA, September 8, 2020 — The American Statistical Association today announced the members and charge of its [Anti-Racism Task Force](#), formed as part of the association's [stated commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion](#) after the death of George Floyd and many others.

The task force is charged with following three main tasks:

- Developing recommendations for ASA infrastructure and policy that will help drive positive cultural change within the ASA and remove structural barriers to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion
- Developing recommendations that ensure the communications and activities of the association's groups align with its position on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion
- Proposing mechanisms for the association to inform the public about how statistics and data science can contribute to—or, if used responsibly, help fight against—racial and ethnic bias in society

The co-chairs of the task force are Adrian Coles, who is a senior research scientist at Eli Lilly and Company, chair of the ASA Committee on Minorities in Statistics and associate director for industrial relations for the Math Alliance, and David A. Marker, who is a senior statistician and associate director at Westat, vice chair of the ASA Professional Issues and Visibility Council and former member of the ASA Board of Directors.

“In June, Past President Karen Kafadar, President-elect Rob Santos, and I pledged to work for anti-racism reform within the ASA and broader statistics and data science communities,” ASA President Wendy Martinez said. “This includes learning from our members how to identify and overcome systemic racism and hindering biases of any kind. I’m proud that the Anti-Racism Task Force, chaired by Adrian Coles and David Marker, is an important step in our endeavors to strengthen our professional community.”

Also serving on the committee are Emma Benn, Emily Lynn Butler, Necip Doganaksoy, Samuel Echevarria-Cruz, Portia Exum, Emily Hadley, Susan Halabi, Ofer Harel, Diane Herz, Monica C. Jackson, Elizabeth Mannshardt, Wendy Martinez, Miles Q. Ott, Roy Dooti, Douglas A. Samuelson, Abdus S. Wahed, Erin A. Wiley, David C. Wilson, Jenny Hang Yang and Steve Ziliak.

“We have a tough road ahead,” Coles said. “The work of this task force will teach us a lot about ourselves, including some we are proud of and some things that may be difficult to accept. However, our

courage to lean into this difficult moment by embracing the work of this task force will help create a profession that we are all proud to pass down to the next generation of statistical thought leaders.”

“Statistical methods allow our society to better understand itself and make decisions that will better reflect our goals and aspirations,” Marker said. “However, we often find people using statistical methods in ways that undermine such aspirations and that can be harmful, such as predictive policing and facial recognition software. I hope this task force can identify positive ways to use statistics and reverse these misapplications, so it can be a force for good.”

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About the American Statistical Association

The ASA is the world’s largest community of statisticians and the oldest continuously operating professional science society in the United States. Its members serve in industry, government and academia in more than 90 countries, advancing research and promoting sound statistical practice to inform public policy and improve human welfare. For additional information, please visit the ASA website at www.amstat.org.