

We will #ShutDownAcademia & #ShutDownSTEM

June 10, 2020

On June 10, 2020, we will #ShutDownAcademia, #ShutDownSTEM, and #Strike4BlackLives

In the wake of the most recent murders of Black people in the US, it is clear that white and other non-Black people have to step up and do the work to eradicate anti-Black racism. As members of the global academic and STEM communities, we have an enormous ethical obligation to stop doing “business as usual.” No matter where we physically live, we impact and are impacted by this moment in history.

Our responsibility starts with our role in society. In academia, our thoughts and words turn into new ways of knowing. Our research papers turn into media releases, books and legislation that reinforce anti-Black narratives. In STEM, we create technologies that affect every part of our society and are routinely weaponized against Black people.

Black academic and Black STEM professionals are hurting because they exist in and are attacked by institutional and systemic racism. Black people have been tirelessly working for change, alongside their Indigenous and People of Color allies. For Black academics and STEM professionals, #ShutDownAcademia and #ShutDownSTEM is a time to prioritize their needs-- whether that is to rest, reflect, or to act -- without incurring additional cumulative disadvantage.

Those of us who are not Black, particularly those of us who are white, play a key role in perpetuating systemic racism. Direct actions are needed to stop this injustice. Unless you engage directly with eliminating racism, you are perpetuating it. This moment calls for profound and meaningful change. #ShutDownAcademia and #ShutDownSTEM is the time for white and non-Black People of Color (NBPOC) to not only educate themselves, but to define a detailed plan of action to carry forward. Wednesday June 10, 2020 will mark the day that we transition into a lifelong commitment of actions to eradicate anti-Black racism in academia and STEM. We join with members of Particles for Justice in calling for a [#Strike4BlackLives](#).

To be clear: #ShutDownSTEM is aimed at the broad research community who is not directly participating in ending the global pandemic, COVID-19. If your daily activities are directly helping us end this global crisis, we send our sincerest gratitude. The rest of us, **we need to get to work.**

Get to work by visiting shutdownacademia.com and shutdownstem.com. Share your detailed plans and actions with the global community using the hashtags #ShutDownSTEM and #ShutDownAcademia. Our collective efforts will lead to eradicating anti-Black racism because Black lives depend on it.

Show up. Act now.

Are you:

a student in university?

the PI of a research lab?

A science communicator?

chair of a department

a teaching assistant?

a postgraduate researcher?

a grant administrator?

a lab technician?

a museum curator?

GREAT, you do STEM. You can shut it down.

Do you:

advise governments on science policy?

work in a lab?

attend group meetings about science?

write problem sets?

write job reference letters?

hire students for internships?

run a journal coffee discussion?

write exams?

host outreach events?

EXCELLENT, you do STEM. You can shut it down.

Do you:

watch STEM videos on YouTube?

write journal articles on STEM?

peer-review publications?

write grant proposals for telescopes?

review science and telescope proposals?

support scientific research?

teach classes on STEM topics?

make science kits that kids use?

design museums and displays?

WOW, you do STEM. You can shut it down.

Do you:

make or influence science laws?

act as professional character witnesses?

write applications?

work in the technology sector?

host science 'happy hours'?

name planets or discoveries?

hire faculty?

read articles on science?

design or build telescopes?

HUZZAH, you do STEM. You can shut it down.

#ShutdownAcademia #ShutdownSTEM

Shut it down.



It is not enough to say that you stand in solidarity. We need your **actions**. We need you to be **accountable**. We need to see exactly what your short- and long-term plan is to do the work to eradicate racism and create a just, equitable and inclusive STEM field.

When you make the commitment to shut it down, you are making a commitment towards **education**, **action**, and **healing**.

Your racism is unique to you and your narrative. You need to do the work to get out of it. You were not born with the ability to code. You learned it.

We ask you to evaluate every action you take to keep academia and STEM running. There can be no work as usual while Black people are murdered and they struggle for their humanity.

**You can act to eradicate systemic
and structural oppression**

The interconnected need for Education, Action and Healing

Education

As scientists and academics, we know that in order to solve a problem, we first need to understand it. This is just as true for structural racism and anti-Blackness! It's also important for non-Black folks to not rely on Black folks for this education -- Black people have to experience racism every day, and they don't need the additional burden of explaining or providing emotional support to everyone new to this topic.

Action

Simply learning about racism is not enough -- we have to do something about it! We must take responsibility to be anti-racist in our spaces. No matter what positions we hold in STEM and academia, we have the power to make immediate change through concrete and specific actions.

Healing

Anti-Black racism is traumatic for everyone in different ways. This affects how people feel physically and emotionally, as well as their ability to think clearly and process information. As we confront racism through education and action, it's important for us to center the work needed to take care of ourselves and each other!

Department & Group Leadership

Create an accountability system for racist actions

Define & apply transparent hiring, promotion, and admission processes that dismantle structural racism.

Funding Agencies

Examine, critique, and change the make up of committees that decide who gets funding -- ensure that Black scientists are properly represented

Professional societies

Hold your society accountable for implementing change that supports Black members and ensure that they know equity is essential to your function

Researchers

Discuss articles about racism and anti-Blackness at group meetings

Have an open and honest dialogue about your department's climate with prospective Black students and colleagues

Support Staff

Post signs and messages of support for Black colleagues

Avoid racial stereotypes when you see new faces around the department

Friends of STEM

Follow Black scientists

RT/reblog their posts

Engage with their posts, even when they're not strictly about science

STEM in Industry

Ensure that your work climate is supportive of Black colleagues.

Give people from non-traditional backgrounds the same opportunities.

Students

Listen to and advocate for your Black peers -- if you don't have any Black peers, ask why

Start conversations with non-Black folks about racism and anti-Blackness at department events

Communicators

Eliminate racist, oppressive, and violent words from your presentations, interviews and articles

Amplify Black STEM communicators

We shut it down. Now what?



Share your plan!

Share your commitment towards learning and unlearning how racism shows up in your everyday actions. If you do not share your plan, we will continue to assume that you are not putting in the work to do better.

Share your plan using the hashtags: #ShutDownAcademia and #ShutDownSTEM. Be open to suggestions and feedback you may receive, especially if it comes from Black voices. This is an opportunity to do better and you are responsible to take action, to learn, and improve.

Avoid all use of the hashtag: #BlackLivesMatter so critical organizational infrastructure remains unobstructed. Instead, we encourage the additional use of #Strike4BlackLives -- check out particlesforjustice.org for more information.

Check out ShutDownSTEM.com to see how your academic and STEM colleagues have committed to fight anti-black racism.

Resources

Education

We've compiled a variety of resources ShutDownSTEM.com/resources to help you start or continue your journey learning about anti-Black racism! Keep learning by reading books and blogs, and by following the suggested people on social media. (Note: if you buy any books, please buy from Black-owned bookshops! [Here's a list of a few.](#))

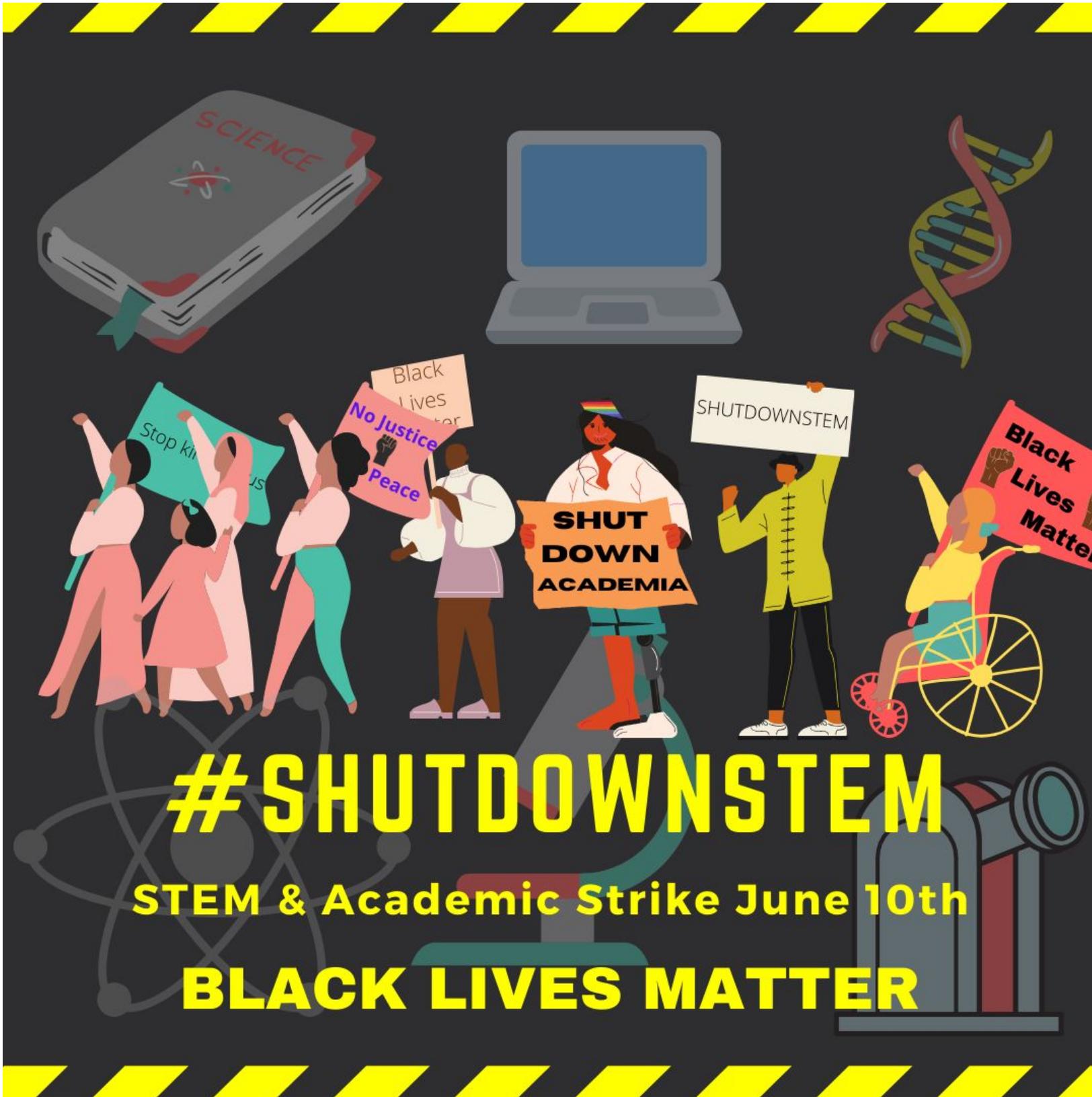
Action

Check out ShutDownSTEM.com/action for some suggested action items for folks at different levels in STEM and academia. Even if we've taken some steps before, we can always do more. Through specific actions, we can work to make our spaces more anti-racist.

Finished everything on this list? Try looking for organizations local to your area. Once you follow local influencers and community organizers, you'll learn who is doing the work you're most interested in supporting.

Healing

Racism creates toxic spaces, and those affected need to heal from it. We need to make time and space for this healing. ShutDownSTEM.com/healing lists some resources on caring for individuals and communities. Eradicating racism is going to be a long and hard fight for everyone, so we have to take care of ourselves and each other.



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