

March 8, 2023

HERE4Justice

MPH Students | Simmons University

Dear Dr. Russell Pinizzotto, Dr. Val Leiter, Dr. Shelley White, and Professor Verma-Agrawal,

As MPH@Simmons students, we are drawn to this university and this program because of shared values of [equity](#), [collaboration](#), [participatory scholarship](#), and justice. Our student group, Health Equity + Racial Equity for Justice (HERE4Justice), is examining how institutions ensure ongoing accountability to their expressed values, especially values of racial and social justice.

Following the MPH Advisory Meeting on February 15<sup>th</sup>, HERE4Justice discussed how to improve processes of garnering student feedback to increase transparency and improve two-way communication. We believe a more collaborative approach is necessary to fully develop the rigorous academic conditions necessary for change-making upon graduation. To improve equity and participatory processes within the MPH@Simmons program, we advocate for Director Shelley White and Assistant Director Meenakshi Verma-Agrawal to incorporate the **following changes to our Student Advisory Committee (SAC)**:

1. Institutionalize the SAC as an integral part of the MPH program's process improvement.
2. Include at least one HERE4Justice representative.
3. Include at least one representative from each cohort (including accelerated).
4. Student representatives work alongside the Program Director to create meeting agendas.
5. Increase transparency around the processes of addressing student concerns and timelines on implementing necessary changes.

In addition to the changes to the Student Advisory Committee, we advocate for changing the quarterly meeting structure to **Simmons MPH Town Halls**. All students, professors, directors, administrators, and advisors should be invited to Town Hall meetings and strongly encouraged to attend. This would improve program communication both vertically and laterally.

Lastly, we request monthly **MPH Program Updates** from leadership to students to facilitate improvements in program communication and transparency of processes. The update would include:

- Action plans and timelines on when items brought up in Town Halls will be addressed.
- Updates about new faculty and staff, program changes, opportunities for students, etc.
- HERE4Justice campaign updates.

As students of public health, we love and believe in the values of this program. Our proposed changes will improve accountability to our shared values, improve student experience,

and unite our MPH community. HERE4Justice asks that these changes be made in time for our Spring 2023 term to include a Simmons MPH Town Hall.

Sincerely,