



*The Wake Forest University*

# Race, Inequality & Policy Initiative

Summer-Fall 2023 Newsletter

## Letter from the Outgoing Director



Dear RIPI Family:

I hope your fall semester is off to a strong start. Please note that this will be the last newsletter that I will compose as I am stepping down from my role as Founding Director of RIPI after three years. I look forward to giving others the opportunity to use their expertise and skills to develop the Race Inequality and Policy Initiative. I will continue serving on the RIPI Steering Committee and center my energy on establishing a solid foundation for future faculty-undergraduate research endeavors. Dr. Sara Dahill-Brown will serve as the next RIPI director.

I am happy to report that RIPI completed its third academic year with several notable accomplishments. In conjunction with American Ethnic Studies (an entity with which we have a deep-seated relationship), we launched the Faculty Research Workshop Series where faculty meet monthly over lunch and [present their working projects](#) on a topic associated with race, inequality, and policy. Most of our activities this past academic year centered on raising awareness of and studying ways to address local environmental injustices. With the assistance of RIPI Undergraduate Research Fellows, we completed the [Environment and Inequality virtual library](#). Our Environmental Justice speaker series consisted of two events. In the fall, we partnered with African American Studies to host the “Where Do We Go from Here?” roundtable in which nonprofit leaders, journalists and community speakers raised awareness of NC environmental injustices particularly those centered around the Weaver Fertilizer Fire. This past spring, we hosted the “Unearthing the Effects of NC Environmental Injustices” which was co-sponsored by the WFU Environmental Program, Center for Energy, Environment, and Sustainability, American Ethnic Studies, Politics department and Office of Civic and Community Engagement. The recording of this event recording is available [here](#). This past year we

were also happy to co-sponsor two speaker events as part of the WFU Sociology department's "Societies in Crisis: Inequities and Social Change" speaker series. We are happy to report that all our organized events and co-sponsored events were very well attended.

Our RIPI family continues to grow. Our [ten RIPI Undergraduate Research Fellows](#) worked with five RIPI faculty on individual research projects and/or the development of our environment and inequality virtual library. Lastly, we welcomed one new member to the RIPI Steering Committee, [Crystal Dixon](#) (Associate Professor of the Practice, WFU Health and Exercise Science), and added the [Piedmont Environmental Alliance](#) as a Community Partner.

As we look back on the accomplishments of the past three years, I am thankful for the RIPI Steering Committee, Undergraduate Research Fellows, RIPI's WFU and non-WFU partners, and YOUR ongoing support in promoting and attending our events, sharing our virtual library resources with students, colleagues and reading our regular google group newsletters. I am proud to hand the directorship to RIPI during a period of stability and growth. Considering the latest significant challenges presented to racial, ethnic minorities on top of those that they were already experiencing, an initiative like the Race Inequality and Policy Initiative (RIPI) is critical.



Dr. Sara Dahill-Brown

RIPI's future is promising. Not only has Sara Dahill-Brown served as an integral member of the RIPI Steering Committee since its inception three years ago, her expertise in race and education policy makes her a great fit for this position. We look forward to continuing to collaborate closely with our close partners including WFU's American Ethnic Studies, the Office of Civic and Community Engagement, the Center for Energy, Environment and Sustainability, African American Studies, Latin American and Latino Studies, Humanities Institute, Intercultural Center, RECAAL, Education department, Communication department, Women and Gender Studies department, Politics department, Sociology department, and our community partners Forsyth Futures and Piedmont Environmental Alliance.

Soon you will receive more information from Sara Dahill-Brown regarding future RIPI endeavors. Please don't hesitate to contact her if you are interested in getting involved with RIPI initiatives or want to update us on your latest research associated with race, inequality, and policy topics.

Onwards in gratitude, hope and solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Belue Cultural Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'B'.