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New Group, Scholars for Social Justice, Launches With 100+ Members

A new activist organization of scholars has formed to address the critical issues of our time. Over 100 professors, lecturers, doctoral students, researchers and independent scholars have joined together to form Scholars for Social Justice. We represent a range of academic disciplines and are affiliated with over 40 colleges and universities. However, “this is not another professional organization, but an activist organization,” insists co-founder Cathy Cohen, a political scientist in Chicago. This group is “committed to fighting for justice for all, especially those most vulnerable,” and to connect with and support progressive social justice movements in the larger society. We will organize teach-ins, host webinars, launch petitions, issue statements, and march in the street if we have to.

We are motivated toward greater political and civic engagement for three reasons:

1. We are alarmed and outraged at the growing climate of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments that make our students and ourselves vulnerable. We stand with the movements that are resisting this dangerous and hateful turn backward and rightward.
2. There is an active effort to “dumb down” our public discourse. We are told facts don’t matter, or if they do, pick the ones that suit you. We have spent our lives and careers helping young people understand the world around them through science, social sciences, the humanities and the professions. We adamantly reject the notion of a ‘post-truth’ society, the oxymoron of “alternative facts,” and the overall assault on science and evidence-based knowledge. We further reject the crude and heinous demeaning of the cultures and identities of Muslims and peoples of color by powerful politicians. To acquiesce to either of these trends would be a betrayal of all we know to be just and true.
3. We refuse to relinquish our status as citizens of this country and the world. We condemn the repression and silencing of dissent that we see creeping across our campuses, as well as the openly fascist movements that seek to intimidate and do violence. When professors and instructors are fired or reprimanded for speaking out against injustice on their own time at rallies, through social media or in the press, they are confronting a new McCarthyism. We will not tolerate it. At the same time, we will not tolerate the kind of violent racist mob action that we

saw when neo-Nazis marched across the campus of the University of Virginia in August 2017, actions that led to the death of one young protester nearby the next day.

These are difficult times and we will not be bullied into silence or sit on the sidelines in self-imposed moral agnosticism.

Even though university faculty continue to be overwhelmingly white and male, and we welcome all of our colleagues who are in agreement to join us, we wish to note that this organization is initiated and led by scholars who are disproportionately women, people of color and/or queer. We proudly stand in the long tradition of scholar activists who have used their voices and platforms to resist repression. SSJ is an independent organization, unaffiliated with any college or university and does not reflect the position of any of the institutions with which we are affiliated, or at which we are employed. Scholars listed as members of SSJ may have their academic affiliations listed for identification purposes only. For more information about us or to join us, go to our website at <http://scholarsforsocialjustice.com>.

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