Dear AAAS Members,

Science, engineering, and medicine are not immune to the discrimination, subjugation, and silencing of minority colleagues and voices. The reasons for this are deeply ingrained in the systems that govern the conduct of these fields. When we hold up a mirror to the scientific enterprise, we see that it’s not only politicians and law enforcement that need to be reminded that Black lives matter.

Almost every generation has arrived at a similar moment of opportunity born of tragedy. Progress will require systemic change that, as of yet, we have been unable to make. To be clear, AAAS is part of that system. As we plan for the actions to ensure this moment does not slip away, it’s time for us to pause, listen, and reflect on how—as an organization, as members of the scientific community, and as members of our broader communities—we can and must be a powerful force for change.

As part of this, AAAS acknowledges and supports #ShutDownSTEM, a grassroots movement that aims to "transition to a lifelong commitment of actions to eradicate anti-Black racism in academia and STEM." We are committed to education, action, and healing at AAAS, and we hope to encourage other institutions and individuals to get involved. This is not a moment that our community can let pass. It is time to stop what we’re doing, take time to listen to our friends and colleagues, and commit ourselves to taking the actions needed to bring about real and lasting change.

To this end, AAAS will be taking the following actions to participate in #ShutDownSTEM this Wednesday, June 10:

• We encourage everyone in our community to observe in some way #ShutDownSTEM. I will adjust my calendar to provide time for listening and reflection, I have encouraged my AAAS teammates to do the same, and I hope you will consider doing so in some way—by reading, conversing, and engaging in constructive demonstrations or other activities. The
#ShutDownSTEM website has resources to help make your plan and share it with others.

• The AAAS.org homepage will be taken over by an invitation for members of the STEM community to submit feedback, comments, and suggestions for how we can affect positive change in our institutions and society. This is a time to listen, and we are ready to do so.

• AAAS and Science social media accounts, after a single post in the morning about #ShutDownSTEM, will not share native content* but will retweet and share posts from the STEM community using the #ShutDownSTEM hashtag.

There is real hope for positive change, but fulfilling that hope requires a plan and following through. Planning for several initiatives is underway within AAAS. Participating in #ShutDownSTEM is among the first steps. We hope you will take these first steps with us.

Sincerely,

Sudip S. Parikh, PhD
Chief Executive Officer
and Executive Publisher, Science Family of Journals

*The organizers of #ShutDownSTEM acknowledge the important work of those in the community who are working on research related to COVID-19 and encourage them to continue doing so. We thank them and our team members at AAAS and the Science journals who contribute to this important work.