

DIVERSITY STATEMENT AND AGENDA

Many institutions in the United States and around the world have a difficult history with respect to racial and gender inclusion and must confront the legacy of physical, economic, and social injustices that flows from it. The *American Journal of International Law (AJIL)* has itself been in a process of self-reflection, evaluation, and change. As the new Editors-in-Chief of *AJIL*, we are committed to this process and to accelerating change.

We are initially guided in our mission by the outcomes of an initiative taken by our predecessors as Editors-in-Chief, Curtis Bradley and Laurence Helfer. Following a recommendation by the Blacks of the American Society of International Law Task Force, Bradley and Helfer formed a committee “to consider how *AJIL* should promote racial and other forms of diversity in the process for nominations, elections to the Board [of Editors] and selection of section heads and editorial positions on *Unbound*.”

After consultation with past and present members of the Board and with leaders of the American Society of International Law (ASIL), the committee found that, although *AJIL* largely operates independently from ASIL, it shares a similar history of exclusion. For most of its history, *AJIL* was run by a close-knit network of white men and (much more recently) white women. As far as we are aware, a Black person was not elected to the Board until 2013; a Black American was not elected until 2014. It is essential that we confront this history and the effects.

We also note that efforts to diversify the Board have for some time been pressed from both within and outside the Board. As a result of these efforts, the *AJIL* Board is today much more diverse along multiple dimensions—including gender, race, ethnicity, sub-specialty, age, nationality, and methodology—than it was even a decade ago. Now, more than half of the active members of the Board are women. There is also meaningful racial and ethnic diversity on the Board. However, the numbers of Black Americans on the Board still seem to lag, and there are reasonable concerns that, without ongoing attention to these issues, the progress that has been made will be lost.

In reflecting on and consulting about the past, the committee observed that there is a broad and genuine commitment to diversity among those who are now in or have over the past few decades held leadership positions in *AJIL*. There is overwhelming recognition that, despite the efforts and progress that have been made, we as an institution must do more to open the *Journal* to underrepresented groups and to make sure that the doors are not, by default, left too closed.

We strongly believe that making *AJIL* a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive space will also make it better. By committing to diversity in all aspects of the *Journal's* work, we will increase our chances of tapping into and benefitting from all forms of excellence. In addition, more diverse representation on the Board and in the *Journal's* pages will likely expand our reach to new and different audiences. We hope that it also has spillover effects in the field

of international law more generally. Diverse representation in positions of leadership on *AJIL* is a way of opening the field and inviting lawyers from historically disadvantaged or marginalized groups to see themselves as active participants within it.

Meaningful progress will require sustained and systematic attention on the part of *AJIL*'s leadership. This Editorial Comment, published in the print pages of the *Journal* and supported by all living former Editors-in-Chief, underscores our recognition of past problems and our attention to future improvement.

We intend to take the following steps, consistent with the recommendations of the committee:

- We will more broadly publicize openings for the Board and for other management or editorial positions and will be more transparent in our selection processes and decisions. The goal is for qualified candidates who are not closely networked more easily to put themselves forward and be appointed to positions of leadership.
- We will ensure that *AJIL* committees that nominate individuals to the Board or to other positions of leadership are themselves diverse. We will ask these committees to describe to the Board the steps they have taken to consider candidates who are diverse among multiple dimensions, especially race.
- We will provide more opportunities for Board members to interact and participate in decisions relating to the Board, including on publication policies, so that the Board itself is a more inclusive space and so that all Board members have opportunities to provide input on the *Journal's* content.
- We will institute a process for reviewing, half-way through our term as Editors-in-Chief, our efforts in this regard and for identifying next steps.
- We will look to expand the author pool and to reach broader, more diverse audiences, including through the use of technology.
- We will seek opportunities to publish more diverse content from people of different backgrounds and with different methodological or normative commitments.

We believe that these steps will build on *AJIL*'s extraordinary legacy of excellence. We hope that you, our readers, agree. And we invite you to send us your views on what else might be done in the service of both excellence and core non-discrimination norms in our field. Comments or suggestions may be sent to: admin_ajil@columbia.edu.

Monica Hakimi and Ingrid Brunk Wuerth, with support from:

José Enrique Alvarez
Curtis A. Bradley
Lori Fisler Damrosch
Laurence R. Helfer
Benedict Kingsbury
Theodor Meron
Bernard H. Oxman
W. Michael Reisman

doi:10.1017/ajil.2022.37