Solidarity Book Project

Dear New Student,

I am Amir Denzel Hall ’17, an alumnus of the College and I am thrilled to reach out to you on behalf of the Solidarity Book Project, a beloved initiative that we invite you to join.

You’ve worked assiduously to earn your place at Amherst. Congratulations.

As a Black, queer, low-income, first generation, international, former student, I also know some of you may be feeling a mix of emotions. You may not know what to expect in America, or at a liberal arts College in the northeast part of the country. Perhaps, you and your family are trying to navigate affording Amherst. Maybe, you’re not excited at all. You might feel incensed for the freedoms of college, wondering under your tongue, the burning questions of who will I be? and How will I serve my community?

The Solidarity Book Project is a collaborative artwork that commemorates the College's bicentennial, the fifth anniversary of the Black Studies Department and the fiftieth anniversary of the Amherst Uprising. It has been twenty years of our occupation of Indigenous lands and many years of the College's leading work in facilitating an anti-racist component. The capstone of the first year seminars will entail students engaging in discussions with Professor Clark about the Solidarity Book Project. You will be asked to reflect on your experiences of Antisocial Injustice in and off-campus.

A lot of the activity has been happening on Instagram (@SolidarityBook), where we have had thousands of participants. The external period for submissions is closed but we are planning more events this year. As a first year seminar student, you will have the opportunity to continue learning about racism and reparative justice. Starting this fall, all first year seminars will include an anti-racist component. The capstone of the first year seminars will entail students engaging in discussions with Professor Clark about the Solidarity Book Project. You will be asked to reflect on your experiences of Antisocial Injustice in and off-campus.

We've been cultivating this project with broad participation over the past several months. A lot of the activity has been happening on Instagram (@SolidarityBook), where we have had thousands of participants. The external period for submissions is closed but we are planning more events this year. As a first year seminar student, you will have the opportunity to continue learning about racism and reparative justice. Starting this fall, all first year seminars will include an anti-racist component. The capstone of the first year seminars will entail students engaging in discussions with Professor Clark about the Solidarity Book Project. You will be asked to reflect on your experiences of Antisocial Injustice in and off-campus.

This is simple: you participate, Amherst gives. The College will match your submissions with up to $25. #SolidarityReading

By $50.

We invite you to participate in the SolidaritySculpting portion of the project so that your solidarity books can be included in the communal monument to solidarity exhibit, a symbol of our community's commitment to social justice through art. The monument we're building will represent our collective unity as well as the College's solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities as we together push against legacies of Antisocial Injustice.

If you're unable to participate in SolidaritySculpting, consider participating in the other ways:

- Submit a reflection on solidarity. Submissions are matched by $25. #SolidarityReflection

- Share a reflection on solidarity. Submissions are matched by $25. #SolidarityReflection

- Read an excerpt from a book that taught you about solidarity. Submissions are matched by $50. #SolidarityReading

- Bring your books and learn how to sculpt them, or ask questions about the project, with Professor Clark from September to November 2021.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you and feel free to DM us on our social media handles or email us at solidaritybook@amherst.edu.