



2015

BLACK STUDENT

DEMANDS

FULL TEXT

To | **University of Oregon Administration**
From | **Black Student Task Force**
SUBJECT | **List of Demands**
DATE | **11/17/2015**

Dear President Schill, Vice President Holmes, Vice President Coltrane and Vice President Henley,

As we mentioned in our meeting on Thursday November 12, 2015, the crux of our march was to stand in solidarity with the University of Missouri Black students. Moreover, the critical root of our march was to address the issues that the Black students at the University of Oregon face and to let our administration know that we face the same challenges and obstacles faced by Black students at the University of Missouri and across the country. As we mentioned in our meeting, the historical structural violence and direct incidents of cultural insensitivity and racism that Black students encounter on the UO campus, within the classroom and otherwise, is unacceptable. The repeat occurrence and general salience of these issues needs to be met with direct opposition.

Though it was explained to us that UO administration is and has been working to create a climate that is welcoming for Black students, UO remains unsafe and unwelcoming for Black Students. We have yet to see/feel the result of the administration's efforts. Black students continue to face racial discrimination and feel unsafe in the environment in which we live, work, and study. This makes it difficult for Black students to succeed. An example of the uphill struggle and unwelcoming environment for Black Students at UO can be seen in the stagnant Black student population. Black students make up only 2% of the student body. Of all faculty on campus, only 1% identifies as Black. These bleak statistics have remained a reality on our campus for over a decade.

We believe that the UO administration has not done adequate due diligence in adhering to its mission to increase the recruitment and retention of Black students while meeting the needs of current Black students. As a result, the UO administration has contributed to a climate that fosters cultural intolerance and incompetency. For this reason, we, the Black Student Task Force comprised of UO Black Women of Achievement, Black Student Union, are formally DEMANDING that the UO administration, led by President Schill, work with the aforementioned Black student leaders to compose, assemble, and implement a plan that will create a healthy and positive campus climate for Black students.

To develop this plan, we once again, DEMAND that you work with us and implement the following list of programs:

1. Change the names of all of the KKK related buildings on campus. DEADY Hall will be the first building to be renamed.
 - We cannot and should not be subjugated to walk in any buildings that have been named after people that have vehemently worked against the Black plight, and plight of everyone working to achieve an equitable society.
 - Allowing buildings to be named after members who support these views is in direct conflict with the university's goal keep black students safe on campus.
 - **We demand this change be implemented by Fall 2016**

2. Create an African-American Opportunities program that is comparable, in scope and impact, to the Opportunities program for the Latino student population and community.

- We strongly believe that having an African-American opportunities program which will feature participation and outreach by Black UO students is the best way of connecting with prospective Black students as well as the Black community.
- We demand that the individuals that lead the African-American Opportunities program identify as Black/African-American. This format is suited to cater to the unique needs of black students in particular. Such a format is demonstrated in the outreach program currently offered for the Latino student body/community and we believe a comparable format will work for African-American student body/community.
- We demand that all participating students identify as Black/African-American.
- We demand that this program be *autonomous and separate* from UO Orientation and Ambassador Program
- We demand that this program be *totally separate* from the Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence (CMAE)
- We demand to be on the hiring committee of the prospective advisor and lead faculty of this program
- We demand that all of the Black student outreach participants receive financial compensation for their time and effort.
- **We demand that this program be implemented by Fall 2016**

3. Commit to creating a Funding Resource and Scholarship initiative that is designed exclusively to support and meet the unique needs of students that identify as Black/African-American.

- The Diversity Excellence Scholarship is NOT enough.
- Due to the state/national population imbalance, it is simply unfair for Black students to compete with low income white students and students who identify as Hispanic/Latino for the same scholarships.
- **We demand a commitment to working to secure funding for this initiative by Fall 2016 and demand implementation by Fall 2017.**

4. Commit to having Ethnic Studies 101 as a graduation requirement.

- The current multicultural requirement is not enough. The ethnic studies specific requirement will require students to learn about the importance of United States history in the context of social inequality and injustice, while emphasizing the often overlooked histories of African-American as well as the histories of other underrepresented sub-groups in the United States.
- Ethnic Studies 101 is a critical course that teaches students the importance of diversity in the United States. Without taking this course, students are not sufficiently prepared with basic cultural competence skills to navigate the diversifying world.
- We are committed to working with the Faculty Senate and implementing this demand.
- **We demand that this be mandatory for all incoming students by Fall 2016**

5. Commit to creating an Academic Residential Community (ARC) that will feature African-American history/Oregon Black Diaspora.

- This residential community is a great way for Black students to connect with other Black students and foster a relationship with Black student organizations such as Black Women of Achievement, Black Student Union, Black Male Alliance, African Student Association, Black Law Student Association, and Black Greek Life.
- This residential community will increase the students' understanding of African-American history and foster a positive relationship with Black faculty, as well as the past and present Black residents of Eugene.
- **We demand that this initiative be implemented by Fall 2016**

6. Commit to hiring an African-American advisor/retention specialist as well as Black faculty across all academic disciplines, especially major UO departments such as Architecture, Business, Education, Math, and Science departments.

- Have a minimum of 2-3 Black students on each departments hiring committee, *including* Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence (CMAE).
- Many Black students at the UO have experienced racist sentiments from their respective departments.
- A rise in African-American advisors/retention specialist as well as faculty will help decrease racist sentiments and lead to an increased retention rate for Black students.
- **We demand a commitment to this initiative by Fall 2016 and demand implementation by Fall 2017.**

7. Create a substantial endowment fund and support system to FUND AND OPEN a Black Cultural Center.

- Commit to helping find and fund a space directly on campus.
- A cultural center is a place with sufficient space to function as 1) a classroom to teach courses such as African-American history, and 2) a meeting space for black student organizations. This cultural center should also have room for art and artifacts that pertain to black history.
- This will be akin to one that exists at Oregon State University. Most importantly, space will be place for ALL students to go and learn about Black history.
- **We demand a commitment to this initiative by Fall 2016 and demand implementation by Fall 2017.**

8. Commit to creating a Black Student Leadership Task Force.

- This Student Leadership Task Force should be comprised of three branches: 1. Black Students. 2. Black Alumni. 3. Black Faculty and Staff.
- We have established the Black Student branch. As we look to establish the Black Alumni and Black Faculty and Staff branch, we request and expect your unwavering support.
- **We demand a commitment to this initiative by Fall 2016 and demand implementation by Fall 2017.**

9. Commit to conducting seminars and workshops by bringing in a black faculty from a peer institution who specializes in Black history and contemporary black issues.

- Commit to 6 seminars/workshops each school year.
- **We demand that this initiative be implemented by Fall 2016**

10. Commit to creating a Student Advisory Board for The Office of Equity & Inclusion and Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence (CMAE).
- We expect the advisory board to consist of students of color.
 - We expect the advisory board to be comprised of Black Students at UO. Moreover, we expect black student representation to be equal to the other under-represented student populations under CMAE
 - This will allow Black students to be involved and hold administration accountable for the hiring of staff and faculty as well as the overall turnover within CMAE.
 - **We demand that this initiative be implemented by Fall 2016**
11. A commitment to immediate change of Fraternity & Sorority Life Baseline Standards for University recognition.
- The following is one of the Chapter Requirement for Recognition at the University of Oregon: A University of Oregon recognized Fraternity or Sorority must consist of 5 or more University of Oregon Incidental Fee paying students. Additionally, Oregon Fraternity Sorority Life (OSFL) does not recognize city wide or metropolitan chapters and therefore, all chapters must be based and chartered exclusively at UO.
 - This regulation is directly and structurally targeting Historically Black Fraternity and Sororities. In turn it is affecting the admission and retention of Black students at the UO.
 - We are demanding that the UO OSFL reduce the number of UO Incidental Fee Paying students to 1. Moreover, we are demanding that the UO OSFL recognize city wide or metropolitan Black Fraternity and Sorority chapters.
 - We are demanding that the UO administration, led by President Schill, fully support our effort in changing the aforementioned regulation.
 - **We demand a commitment to this initiative by Spring 2016 and demand implementation by Fall 2017.**
12. Commit to immediately keeping and publishing data on efforts to increase Black student acceptance, retention, and SAFETY.
- **We demand a commitment to this initiative by Winter 2016 and demand implementation by Fall 2017.**

We, the Black Student Task Force, are committed to ensuring that our demands are clearly understood and executed. We acknowledge that some of our aforementioned demands will need cross departmental support due to the specialized duties and responsibilities required. For instance, we understand that our fourth demand, which is a commitment to have Ethnic Studies 101 as a graduation requirement needs to be fielded through the UO Faculty Senate. In order to realize our demands, we, as students, avow to take the required steps and work with each respective department. During this process, we request the full support of President Schill, the Office of the Senior Vice President of Provost, as well as other pertinent administration leadership.

We are aware that some of our demands will be challenging to implement due to time constraints. Nonetheless, we believe that our demands are reasonable and can be meaningfully addressed within our projected timeline.

The Black Student Task Force looks forward to receiving email correspondence and written commitment in support of the list of demands. Please contact our leadership team to schedule a meeting prior to the end of Fall Term 2015. Furthermore, we are requesting an open door policy and consistently scheduled meetings to check on the status and implementation of our demands.

It is our responsibility to bring the University of Oregon *Mens Agitat Molem* mission to life. Utilizing our minds and capacity to move mountains of barriers, we will ensure that current and future Black students have a culturally appropriate and welcoming campus climate.

In solidarity with Black students and faculty at UO.

Best,

Black Student Task Force