

Demands Response Report Update: April 11, 2022

The demand responses are in progress and/or are part of an ongoing process. This response report will be updated, as additional information/action is provided/taken. The bold text indicates the Black Student Association (BSA) demand, with the University's response/update below.

The April 11, 2022 update contains updated information for: AAS Department rebuild; UUB/OSE programming; OPS hiring; UHDS training; hiring practices; Universitywide diversity training; and full accountability demands.

To Western Illinois University,

We, as Black students who attend Western Illinois University, are demanding that Western Illinois University show that #BlackLivesMatter and do not just say. We are in a multi pandemic era, where Black people are at the mercy of diseases, COVID19 and anti-Blackness. There is only, truly, a concern for one. On campus, we have witnessed too much racism, micro-aggressions from professors, our RAs and people who are supposed to protect and be there for us. We are tired. For too long, we have experienced too much with little to no support and demand the following to be made immediately.

For Fall 2021, the 1262 Black students at Western comprise 17.3% of the overall student population. There are currently 321 Black students in the first-year class, which constitutes 35.2% of the first-year student body.

We demand that Western Illinois University rebuild the African American Studies department by allowing students to major in African American studies, providing more funding for the program and regenerating all that was decreased, stripped, in 2018.

The African-American Studies (AAS) Program currently offers an 18-credit-hour AAS minor within the Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). During the Spring 2022 semester, LAS proposed an option in African American Studies, within a restructured LAS major. This will provide students with an expanded opportunity to select AAS as part of a transcript option, which requires 33 credit hours specifically in AAS courses. Students will also take 12 hours of LAS credits, including an experiential learning course and a senior capstone focusing on topics directly relevant to their program. Interim Provost Billy Clow approved the feasibility study for the new option February 25; the CAS Curriculum Committee and CAS Faculty Council approved the changes March 2 and March 30, respectively; and the proposal will be reviewed by CCPI and Faculty Senate this month (April).

When the option is approved Faculty Senate, the University will hire a department chair/director as well as faculty specializing in African American Studies. In addition to teaching AAS courses, the chair/director will be responsible for updating AAS course offerings and considering appropriate areas of curricular need and potential for growth.

Committee Process for Rebuilding AAS/Underrepresented Programs:

The Ethnic, Race, and Gender Studies Exploratory Committee (ERGS) – composed of approximately 20 faculty, staff, administrators, and students, led by Political Science Professor MaCherie Placide, has explored possibilities for different types of academic programs. There are four sub-committees, covering AAS, Queer Studies, Latinx Studies, and Women's Studies. The AAS sub-committee has included representatives from the Black Student Association, the Multicultural Center, the administration and several academic departments. Committee members – many of whom are faculty, staff, and students of color - have dedicated hundreds of hours to researching and discussing plans for the AAS Program.

The result of this process, which occurred alongside a Spring 2021 Program Review of the Liberal Arts and Sciences Department (which houses the AAS Program as well as the Programs in Women's Studies and Religious Studies), was the proposal of an option in African American Studies within a restructured LAS major (see above).

We demand that Western Illinois University includes Black students who attend Western Illinois University in the hiring process of professors for the African American Studies department.

Information from Feb. 22, 2022 update remains current.

We demand that Western Illinois University require that two of the courses offered through the AAS department is a required course for all students; the two courses are Intro to African American Studies and African American Literature.

Information from Feb. 22, 2022 update remains current.

We demand that a policy in the code of conduct is created to end hate speech, which should be defined in Western Illinois University Student Code of Conduct as “public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation” and the repercussion for a student violating this policy include suspension and expulsion.

Information from Feb. 22, 2022 update remains current.

We demand that Western Illinois University only support businesses in Macomb that support Black people and #BlackLivesMatter.

Information from Feb. 22, 2022 update remains current.

We demand that Western Illinois University hire more professors, staff, student affairs professionals that are Black or African American; and increase the ethnic diversity and racial makeup of the University by 100%.

The WIU position announcement template has been further revised to include the institution's DEI statement/commitment to DEI. To achieve a more diverse applicant pool, it is essential that WIU/Human Resources includes the institution's DEI statement/commitment in the announcement(s) for open positions at WIU.

While the standard equal opportunity language is included in the position announcements, including the University's diversity statement in full, may assist in attracting more diverse applicants as it demonstrates the University's commitment; therefore, applicants from underrepresented populations may be more apt to apply knowing they have support in an inclusive and diverse environment.

We demand that Western Illinois University's University Union Board intentionally create more programming geared towards the Black college students.

Office of Student Engagement initiatives:

SGA is adding the land acknowledgement to the SGA Constitution.

SGA is restructuring its executive board (cabinet) from one Vice President to three, with one position being the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The UUB/Office of Student Engagement will schedule a meeting with all MCC student organizations to further discuss programming.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc returned to campus in Fall 2021, and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc has been approved to return to campus, and will return in Fall 2022/ Both organizations are Historically Black and part of the Divine Nine. Additionally, in the 2022-2023 academic year, Phi BetaSigma Fraternity, Inc, another Historically Black Fraternity, along with Sigma Iota Alpha Sorority, (Latinx) will start on campus.

We demand that Western Illinois University's Office of Public Safety hire more Black officers.

On March 9, OPS partnered with the Multicultural Center and Minorities in Blue to host an overview of how the police hiring process works, resume building, and police hiring interview suggestions. Twelve individuals participated in the event.

The Office of Public Safety has made an offer to a diverse candidate to begin working as a patrol officer (lateral transfer).

OPS is continuing to participate in WIU LEJA and other career fairs, and work with groups such as Minorities in Blue, to ensure a diverse applicant pool. In addition, OPS will be testing for new officers Friday, April 29. Interested individuals must complete an application with WIU Human Resources to be put on the test register.

We demand that Western Illinois University's University Housing and Dining Services (UHDS) diversity training is prioritized and expansive to include the history of the current campus climate at Western Illinois University.

UHDS supported the campus Black History Month Showcase for February, and created BHM educational bulletin boards within the residence halls.

University Housing continues to hosts in-service programs for resident life staff that address various topics related to diversity. Training sessions focusing on DEI will continue to be a focus of residence life training.

We demand that Western Illinois University mandates that professors complete diversity training that also includes history of the current campus climate at Western Illinois University.

DEI Microaggressions training was provided to faculty and staff in February 2022, and Title IX training, which includes DEI-related content, was provided to faculty and staff in March 2022.

Other DEI-related training and curriculum will be reviewed by the Anti-Racism Task Force and the Office of JDEI (when established).

We demand that Western Illinois University fully accept accountability and take the time to address the incessant anti-blackness that has plagued the Black community since 2018 and previously; moreover, aims to create a more inclusive environment for the Black community through a student-centered approach.

President Huang has established an Anti-Racism Task Force, composed of approximately 24 faculty, staff, students, and community leaders. The task force has held two meetings and subcommittees have been formed to address effective and sustained communication, success and retention, faculty and staff: hiring, promotion and retention, curriculum and access and inclusion. The task force will identify anti-racism initiatives and advise/support the creation of the University's Diversity Plan.

The Board of Trustees approved at its March 11 meeting the establishment of the Office of Justice, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, along with hiring of a director to oversee the office and further DEI-

related initiatives.

In addition, the Western Illinois University Libraries is introducing the WIU Libraries Diversity Plan, as part of the University Strategic Plan and in collaboration with the promotion of diversity, equity and inclusion. The Diversity Plan will include establishing six new collections that will work with the curriculum, research projects and community engagement of scholarship work. The proposed collections include Hispanic-Latinx, and Caribbean Studies; Africana and African Diaspora Studies; European and Asian Studies; Middle Eastern Studies; Women, Gender and LGBTQIA+ Studies; and Anti-Racism, Intolerance, Genocide and Holocaust Studies.

At WIU, we support our students and work to ensure fair and equitable treatment, in a safe, inclusive, and diverse environment, both on and off campus. The University recognizes the issues and concerns that our Black students, faculty, and staff face, and supports efforts, programs and resources to bring these issues forward, including the Black Student Association's Black Lives Matter protest in response to institutional and community racism, and to eliminate discrimination, racism, inequitable treatment, and anti-Black actions.

Signed,

Black Student Association

Black Student Summit N.A.A.C.P.

National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Incorporated

Preeminent Gentleman's Society

Preeminent Ladies Society

African Student Association

Black Male Achievement Network

Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center

Eta Eta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated

Zeta Iota Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated

Epsilon Beta Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated

House Arrest 2

Elite Beauty

DollHouse Dance

Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center Dance Troupe

G.L.A.M. Modeling

PPMT

National Association of Black Accountants

National Association of Black Journalists

Beyond Beautiful