

BSA List of Demands

Dec. 15, 2023

1. **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.**

*Status of Demand: **Met***

Action:

- *The addition of the AAS Option within the LAS major in Fall 2022.*
- *Increased the number of courses offered in African American Studies for 2023-2024 due to the hiring of Dr. Sharon Hunter as a full-time Unit B faculty member in the RRG&MS department as of Fall 2023.*
- *AAS was given approval to hire a full-time faculty member for fall 2024. (Dec. 2023)*

2. **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.**

*Status of Demand: **Met***

Action:

- *A Black student representative was on the Search Committee for the African American Studies Professor/RRG&MS Department Chair position in Fall 2022-Spring 2023.*
- *The administration invited the Student Government Association to provide student members for the CT Vivian Scholar Search Committees. Although the student seats were not filled, students may have been involved in other ways with the search process (likely by attending open or student interview sessions and providing feedback).*
- *When search committees for RRG&MS Department and CT Vivian Scholar searches are identified by the Provost Office, BIPOC student are and will remain involved in the process.*

3. **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.**

*Status of Demand: **Met***

Action:

- *AAS courses are among the mandatory General Education courses required of all students.*

4. **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.**

*Status of Demand: **Met***

Action:

- WIU Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct Policy (formerly known as the WIU Nondiscrimination Policy) states that "Hate speech is defined as: public speech, written language, or graphic material that encourages or incites violence or physical threats of harm against someone based on their status in a protected class such as race, religion, disability, veteran status, age, or gender."
- Members of the University community should live and work in an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and intimidation. University officials enforce the conduct code and policies to ensure a harassment-free environment.
- The University's Policy states, "Western Illinois University strives to provide an educational and working environment that is free from discrimination and harassment for faculty, staff, and students. WIU policy prohibits discrimination and harassment on the basis of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability, genetic information, veteran status, and any other classes protected by state or federal law. This policy covers nondiscrimination in both employment and access to educational opportunities."
- While the University must follow the First Amendment and legal rulings regarding speech, the Code of Conduct does specify several violations of the code related to harassment and violence including:
 - Engaging in harmful or potentially harmful behaviors, including, but not limited to, the following: committing actions which cause physical, mental, or emotional harm; bully; intimidate; harass; threaten; coerce; or otherwise endanger the health or safety of oneself or others;
 - Committing acts of gender harassment defined as subjecting a person to adverse treatment based on held gender stereotypes. Adverse treatment can include verbal, nonverbal, or physical aggression, intimidation, or hostility based on gender or held gender stereotypes, but is not limited to conduct of a sexual nature.
 - Any violation of law, Student Code of Conduct, or policy based on the actual or perceived identity of an individual or group of individuals. Such identities include, but are not limited to, age, ancestry, color, disability, gender expression, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Suspension and expulsion are included as potential repercussions for violating the Code.

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

Status of Demand: Met

Action:

- *In January 2022 there was the passage of the Commission on Equity and Inclusion Act, 30 ILCS 574/40-10. This created the Commission on Equity and Inclusion which began operations in January 2022. CEI was established to increase access to state contracts for small businesses owned by minorities, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, and service-disabled veterans, and to enhance equity and inclusion throughout the State workforce. CEI reviews all of the awards posted on the procurement bulletin.*
- *Macomb city officials have been made aware of the various issues, concerns, and complaints. University officials continue to work with community leaders to further foster a more supportive town-gown partnership that provides a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for WIU students, faculty, and staff. A method/manner to identify/verify businesses that "support Black people and Black Lives Matter" does not legally exist, and to create an "approved business list" could subject the*

- University to legal action. As an alternative approach, the WIU Purchasing Office has been diligently working with campus constituents to increase the institution's expenditures with minority-owned businesses and those that support minority-owned businesses. Additionally, Beginning January 1, 2022, for large purchases made by the University, diversity and inclusion must be considered when the procurement is made by a request for proposal (RFP).*
- *WIU Purchasing Office has also attended the Illinois State Black Chamber of Commerce Annual Convention the past two years in East Peoria, IL. The matchmaking sessions are used to meet minority-owned businesses and discover what goods/services they can provide.*
 - *Responses from City of Macomb agencies*
 - *Macomb Chamber of Commerce*
 - *The Macomb Area Chamber of Commerce is committed to fostering an environment of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and will not stand for discrimination of any kind. Chamber member businesses and organizations are expected to do the same. The Chamber regularly sends information to educate business owners and leaders on DEI initiatives, including anti-racist reading lists, invitations to participate in One Human Family and Shared Community Action Group workshops and events, and other opportunities (both on and off campus). Chamber leadership also works closely with community and University leaders to address the needs of Macomb-area residents, which includes WIU students. The Chamber is developing a DEI plan to implement into operating procedures and programming, and will continue to provide educational resources to its members so they may expand their knowledge on DEI to ensure Macomb grows into a more inclusive and welcoming community.*
 - *Macomb Area Economic Development Corp*
 - *MAEDCO supports an inclusive, welcoming environment in Macomb for all current and future businesses, and will provide support for all businesses in the region.*

6. 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%.

*Status of Demand: **Ongoing***

Action:

- *WIU successfully hired new racially diverse faculty and staff for Fiscal Year 2024*
- *The CT Vivian Diversity Teaching Scholars Program ensures we promote diverse faculty hires across campus. Four C.T. Vivian Fellow Scholars were hired and started this fall.*
- *The University continues to work to recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff for all positions. We advertise all vacancies with diversity-specific recruitment sites and collaborate with other Illinois public universities on strategies to improve recruitment, retention, and engagement of diverse candidates.*

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

*Status of Demand: **Met***

Action:

- *All Office of Student Engagement (OSE) events, including the University Union Boards (UUB), are inclusive of all salient social identities of students*
- *Leadership Programs is bringing in K.D. Wilson, educator, speaker, author, and member of the National Pan-Hellenic Council Divine 9 (NPHC Divine 9) chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., to be the keynote speaker at the Spring Leadership Conference. K.D. will also provide strategic sessions for minority students on leadership, positive self-image, and academic success. Additionally, Torri Smith, WIU Alumna, member of Divine 9 organization Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of the Quad Cities is doing the closing keynote presentation of the conference.*
- *UUB is co-hosting a Latinx bingo themed night, La Loteria with the Latin American Student Organization (LASO).*
- *UUB is co-hosting a College Happy Hour social event with the Black Student Association (BSA)*
- *Volunteer Programs, in collaboration with the Multicultural Center (MCC) in conjunction with the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center (GBCC) will host a variety of events during MLK Week of Service*
- *The OSE and MCC Professional staff meet consistently on a bi-weekly basis to work on collaborative programming, professional development, and to create lasting relationships between our two offices.*
- *NPHC Divine 9 member Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. hosted an information session in November as they are reactivating their chapter at WIU in spring 2024.*
- *Fraternity & Sorority Life (FSL) has started a research and development committee to explore the potential re-establishment of a National Pan-Hellenic Council for the historically black chapters that fall under that umbrella council. The committee will begin meeting in person January 2024.*
- *Staff members of the OSE are participating as members of the Racial Day of Healing planning committee for events in spring 2024*

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

*Status of Demand: **Ongoing***

Action:

- *The Office of Public Safety continues to participate in career fairs and other opportunities to attract diverse candidate pools for open positions.*

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

*Status of Demand: **Met***

Action:

- *UHDS has expanded DEI training efforts, which included diversity workshops in August and January staff training. Training in August for RAs and residence life staff was conducted by Sara Lowery from the CAMPUSPEAK organization. The training session helped staff explore*

- new perspectives on being more open to diverse populations, how to navigate complex situations they may encounter on their floors, how to ask questions, and stressed the importance of listening without judgement.*
- *DEI training will also be offered in January. The presenter has not yet been identified.*
 - *Resident Assistant and Desk Assistant training had a two-hour session on Living Room Conversations facilitating difficult dialogue with various topics addressed.*
 - *Training sessions focusing on DEI will continue to be a focus of residence life training.*

10. 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.

*Status of Demand: **Ongoing***

Action:

- *A total of 2117 individuals have completed the DEI Microaggressions training offered by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Access in the 2022-2023 academic year.*
- *Title IX training, which includes DEI-related content, was provided to faculty and staff in 2023.*
- *The workshop **Faculty Tools & Resources for Faculty Engagement: Racially Responsive Teaching and Inclusion in Higher Education Institutions and Classrooms** was presented to faculty and staff in November 2023.*
- *The workshop **Implicit Bias and Microaggressions: Identify and Overcome Personal Prejudices & Judgements to Improve Connections and Engagements** facilitated by renowned DEI expert Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington was presented to staff, students and faculty in October 2023*

11. 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.

*Status of Demand: **Ongoing***

Action:

- *The Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF), composed of members of the faculty, staff and students from both campuses, as well as community members, launched in March 2022 and was charged by President Guiyou Huang to recommend and take meaningful actions to dismantle racism and further the University's justice, inclusion, diversity, and equity (JIDE) efforts. The ARTF's first objective was to identify anti-racism initiatives and advise/support the creation of the University's Diversity Plan.*
- *The Office of Justice, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity was established in September 2022 and operates in partnership with students, faculty, staff, and community members to foster inclusive excellence and an equity-minded community. Using a student-centered approach, the WIU community listens to and actively engages Black students, faculty, and staff in the processes to create an aware and responsive community that addresses the concerns and actively works to improve the lives of the members of the Black community both on and off campus. The work to ensure fair and equitable treatment in a safe, inclusive, and diverse*

environment is an ingrained part of the WIU mission as an institution of higher learning. Through the institution's personal, social, emotional, structural, investigative, programmatic, and supportive responses to the Black Lives Matter protests, a campus-wide response to a shooting death in the Macomb community, and addressing any and all reports of incidents of racism, discrimination, unequitable treatment, and anti-Black action the campus continues to move forward.

- *A campus-wide diversity plan was developed by the Anti-Racism Task Force. The document continues to evolve as additional information is gathered and added to it. (5.12.23)*
- *To provide additional voice to the concerns and create opportunities to develop strategies to address concerns, a campus climate survey was completed in spring 2023. Town Halls with a focus on students, faculty, staff and community members were held in fall 2023.*
- *The workshop **Implicit Bias and Microaggressions: Identify and Overcome Personal Prejudices & Judgements to Improve Connections and Engagements** facilitated by renowned DEI expert Rev. Dr. Jamie Washington was presented to staff, students and faculty to help build understanding and improve intercultural relationships and learning and working environments. There is a recording of the session that provides ongoing training to the campus community. (10.12.23)*
- *The WIU President and the Mayor of Macomb quickly responded to the news of racist comments directed at WIU students by the owner of a local business and issued their condemnation of the behavior and support of student safety and respect. Students expressed their appreciation for the “support from the top” and quick response to the incident. (10.27.23)*
- *A protest march and rally organized by the NAACP-WIU and the Black Student Association was held. A diverse group of students, staff, faculty and community members marched from the Multicultural Center to a rally at the business where the owner directed racist comments at WIU students. (10.30.23)*
- *The workshop **Faculty Tools & Resources for Faculty Engagement: Racially Responsive Teaching and Inclusion in Higher Education Institutions and Classrooms** was presented to faculty and staff to add to their ability to provide effective learning environments for students from diverse cultural identities. There is a recording of the session that provides ongoing training to the campus community. (11.3.23)*
- *The Black Student Association in collaboration with the JIDE office held **A Living Room Conversation with Local Law Enforcement**. Students shared their experiences and thoughts and created understanding and hope with representatives from the Office of Public Safety, City of Macomb and the State Police. (11.6.23)*
- *The Black Faculty and Staff Council hosted the second annual **African Diaspora, Black Collegiate (ABC) Graduation Celebration** at the Multicultural Center (MCC). Graduates were recognized during the celebration and received dinner, a certificate of achievement and a special gift. The event was a testament to WIU's commitment to celebrating diversity and fostering a supportive community. More than 100 African Diaspora and Black students graduated from WIU in Fall 2023. (12.8.23)*
- *WIU has organized programming for its inaugural participation in the 8th annual National Day of Racial Healing (NDORH) on January 16, 2024. WIU joins a nation-wide movement of universities and communities to program and advocate for racial equity. WIU events for the NDORH will take place Jan. 16-30.*

- *The Illinois Board of Higher Education presented WIU and all public institutions of higher education in Illinois a framework for an equity plan to be adopted by May 2024. The ARTF campus-wide diversity plan will be expanded to create a WIU Diversity & Equity plan.*
- *The creating of a welcoming and supportive campus where there is a sense of belonging and barriers to success are removed remains a priority and focus of the JIDE office and WIU.*