

Demands Response Report Update: May 10, 2023

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 May 10, 2023 update contains updated information for: AAS Studies Department, UUB/OSE programming; UHDS training; hiring practices; Universitywide diversity training; and accountability and inclusivity.

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 2022, the 1,310 Black students at Western comprise 17.4% of the overall student population. There were 406 Black students in the first-year class, which constitutes 38.2% 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.

Following the approval to establish/reestablish the African American Studies degree program, further discussion will be initiated regarding the requirement of these two courses. To make these courses a requirement for all WIU students, approval is first needed from the Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction (CCPI), followed by the Faculty Senate, and lastly, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

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 Nov. 2, 2022 updated 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%.

WIU is in the process of making offers of employment to several C.T. Vivian Fellow Scholars to be hired for the upcoming academic year. One of the two Fellows from the 2022-2023 academic year will remain at Western in a tenure-track position. We continue to advertise all open positions with diversity-specific recruitment sites.

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

All OSE events, including UUB, are inclusive of all salient social identities of students.

Leadership Programs brought in speaker Tish Norman on the following topics at the Student Leadership Topics that was hosted during Black History Month. In addition to her keynote speaking topic of “Mindset, Motivation, and Focus to be Successful in College,” she did three breakout sessions, including “Tie a ‘B.O.W.’ On It: Be Outstanding Women,” “Memory & Black Fraternalism: An Intersectional Cultural Analysis of the Role of Archival Imagery in the Black Fraternal Movement” and “One College Nation.” More details on these sessions can be found at <https://greekuniversity.org/tish/>

UUB sent out a survey to get feedback from students regarding genres for their annual Westfest Concert. Based on student feedback, one of the genres selected was hip-hop and Armani White headlined the concert.

UUB hosted a Latinx bingo themed night, La Loteria bingo night with LASO.

The United Greek Council voted to approve the reactivation of the Divine Nine (Historically Black) Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc chapter.

Volunteer Programs in collaboration with the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center hosted various events during MLK Week of Service.

The OSE and MCC Professional Staff are starting to meet on a regular monthly basis to form lasting relationships and work on collaborative programming.

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

Information from Nov. 2, 2022 update remains current.

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 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 "Brave the Cycle" diversity company. The five-hour training session helped staff learn to talk about difficult topics with each other to better train them on how to facilitate difficult discussions and conversations on their floors. January training consisted of a 2 hours diversity workshop featuring a consultant from Campus Speaks.

All of the residence life graduate and professional staff have completed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Assessment and had the opportunity to schedule a 1:1 debrief with a certified IDI Instructor.

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.

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.

A total of 2117 individuals have completed the DEI Microaggressions training to date. Title IX training, which includes DEI-related content, was again provided to faculty and staff in February of 2023.

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.

The Office of Justice, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity was established in September 2023 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.

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

B.A.G (Black Artist Guild)

The Good Girls Movement