

Demands

Presented to Mississippi State University
by
Coalition of Black Students

1) The State flag on campus needs to be taken down

- The confederate flag represents a history of oppression and racism against the African American community.
- E.g.: State of Mississippi Declaration of Secession January 9th, 1861
 - "Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery—the greatest material interest of the world... none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun... and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization."
- Mississippi is the only flag in the Union that has the confederate flag in its state flag.

2) Equalized funding and support for black student organizations

3) Minority faculty representation

- 4.8% of all full-time faculty at MSU are African American, yet 21% of the student population is African American.
- Professors in the year 2014-2015 made \$98,776.
 - 85.7% of Professors on campus are white—3.47% are black.
 - This means that only 3.47% of black faculty are tenured full professors.
- Associate Professors in the year of 2014-2015 made \$77, 593
 - 80.2% of Associate Professors on campus are white—3.67% are black.
 - This means that only 3.67% of black faculty are tenured associate professors.
 - When both categories are totaled, only around 3.57% of black faculty are tenured/tenured-track professors.

We want African American faculty to be representative of the student population, and we want to see more tenured and tenure-track professors who look like us, come from similar backgrounds as us, and who we can turn to for academic mentors and leaders on campus.

4) Retention and graduation rates of African Americans

- African American students are consistently being retained at significantly lower rates than Caucasians or any other racial group on campus.
 - For MSU's 6-year retention rate, only 49% of African Americans are retained at the University whereas 64% of white students are retained.
 - African American students have a 41.6% graduation rate. White students have a 62.2% graduation rate.

We want proactive programming and resources dedicated to increasing the retention and graduation rates of African American students on campus. From providing support and counseling services to dedicating more money toward fostering a strong African American community on campus, we want more financing to the HCDC office, more black faculty, more support of African American organizations, and to expand current counseling, educational and financial services to African American students. We also want more transparency and research done concerning minority performance and well-being at this university.

5) Diversity and sensitivity training for all faculty and institutionalized diversity and sensitivity learning for Freshman Students

- Part of the daily struggles of being an African American student on campus is the daily micro-aggressive and macro-aggressive experiences that we face on campus.
- This can be mitigated with knowledge and training that encourages sensitivity to students from marginalized backgrounds.

6) Safe space for black students on campus

- We ask for a safe space for black students on campus that is away from both the daily stresses of navigating white spaces and the work/responsibilities associated with the HCDC office. This space can either be an expansion of the HCDC office or an entirely different space created on campus.
- MSU will not be the first or only school to provide a safe space for minority students. There are other schools that provide these spaces for their students:
 - E.g.: Malcom X Lounge, UT Austin
 - E.g.: La Casa, Yale University
- This space will be:
 - A place to have fun, socialize, and develop friendships with students with similar experiences and struggles
 - An opportunity for academic advising, tutoring, and support
 - A place of emotional and social support and a place to decompress from the daily stress of being a Black student at a PWI
- This area is intended for black students, but open to all other minority students on campus.

7) Promoting inclusive environments welcoming to all minority students on campus

- We want more inclusive policies and initiatives.
 - E.g.: Transgender bathrooms on campus
- We want to reverse discriminatory policies in order to truly promote a more inclusive environment for all minority students.

8) Equal and fair treatment of our events, concerts and programs

9) Housing and RHA Programming

- There needs to be an end to the discrimination in housing programming for the South side and North side of campus.
- Currently, an intersectionality of socioeconomic status and race exists in MS, and the housing distribution on campus exploits this intersectionality.
- There are more residence halls with more affordable rates for lower income students, many of them African American, concentrated in the South side of campus.
- Additionally, there are programming rules for the South side of campus that are not enforced for the North side—which this side of campus has more expensive residence halls and less African American students.

10) Support and services for African American Students

- We want more support and services, both physical health and mental wellness, for Black students on campus.
- One African American student recounts her experience with the predominantly white counselors at Mississippi State's Counseling Services: " I have to explain everything to help her understand. I am constantly rehashing through painful experiences of discrimination just to get her to understand and empathize enough to help me in the way I need. I have to teach her to help me."
- Research addresses how the stress resulting from being an African American in predominantly white environments physiologically impacts African Americans. Some of those impacts are:
 - Anxiety disorders
 - Depression
 - Infant mortality rates
 - Chronic migraines
 - High blood pressure
- This means African Americans need more black counselors and an increase in specific programming directed toward black students who have to cope with the physiological and mental stress that arises from discrimination and racism at a PWI.

ALL demands are to be met by May 1, 2017 with the exception of #1, #3, #4, and #10.

- #1 should be met immediately, **no later than** May 1, 2016.
- #3, #4, and #10 need to be met by August 1, 2020.

References

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