

Dear Provost Osborne and Miami University community:

I'm sure that our emails crossed each other, but I do think it's important to reiterate the points of my [letter](#) that I sent to you and the president. I also believe it is important to explain why your current email fails to do service to the issue of equity. I will go by each point.

- Students: coordinating and expanding professional advising throughout the university to ensure we are effectively supporting all students effectively, with a particular focus on reducing achievement and graduation gaps, and that we are appropriately supporting student success for all Miamians; evaluating evidence-based initiatives that can broaden the diversity of graduate students preparing for professional or higher education careers;

Please share what that looks like. For example, it is unclear what failsafes are in place to ensure that mentorship is spread evenly across the campus. I advise students in the history major on conferences, publications, grants, and internships. As we all know, professional advising is in many ways pegged to the efforts of the professors themselves, none of which you can guarantee extends to the students. This is how students of color fail to receive the mentorship that they need. Professors deem them unworthy, "not ready," or requiring too much effort to take the next step. Additionally, this particularly strikes me as facile given that much of student mentorship also hinges on the personal relationships of faculty- no matter what field. As such, this does not redress this issue. And what is "evidenced-based initiatives that broaden diversity?" This reads as a corporate word train, that says nothing about how one is to do this and how you will protect them from the Douglas Brooks' when you bring them here. You have no system in place to ensure their protection.

- Curriculum: ensuring offerings within the Global Miami Plan are leading effectively to the learning objectives envisioned as critical; focusing offerings to ensure students are engaging in important conversations; launching One Year One Theme this year that coordinates interdisciplinary discussions around a single theme throughout the year;

Curriculum "offerings" strategically avoids the word requirement. It is astounding to me that Miami University continually uses Freedom Summer as dressing to claim a value system of justice, but the institution does not even require tours or a 2-credit course about Freedom Summer and its ideals. This reads as a side-step. Further, in a continuing diverse United States and global world, one can not continue to be meek about introducing students to realities beyond their often bubble existence. If we are to prepare them for the future, we must activate them to receive the world in all its many nuances and variations.

- Faculty: expand evidence-based efforts to recruit, support, retain, and promote faculty with minoritized identities;

I am a faculty member. I will share with you my experience of what it means once you recruit persons like me, which will explain why you have a retention problem. First, the most obvious point - Douglass Brooks' is not an aberration and persons like him sit on the tenure and promotion committee. Additionally, faculty who receive senior mentors in the department may in fact not receive that mentorship. Second, I serve as a personal support system for students of color but also students who "read" me as approachable and willing to offer aid in ways that other professors are not. This stems from my gender and race. You can review sample articles [here](#) and [here](#). I view this as central to who I am, so I do not point to this as a complaint. I simply point out that the physical and mental labor does not translate to Miami University as work, and when it does it ranks as service with little to no value. Ironically, on the other end, I am also read as an "aggressive black woman," by both colleagues and students - read articles [here](#) and [here](#). Added to that, I'm barraged by students who either attack me verbally in class, question the validity of my lecture due to racial resentment, take out those resentments in evaluations, or complain to the chair where I'm then forced to defend myself despite the student's own behaviors. In the process, I'm labeled as difficult or unproductive. Your emails make it worse, because it makes one feel - allegorically speaking- that despite the feeling of being beaten across the head, you "still love me." I can add further, but I would suggest that you read the many articles and essays available to you before suggesting that the answer lay in just more people for Miami University to "love on."

- Research and Scholarship: investing strategically in scholarship or creative initiatives that seeks to directly improve social justice.

I literally could write a book about what's wrong with this and I will do my best to keep it short. I will use myself as an example. No one from my department or who knows me throughout the university would be surprised that my work is based in the politicized and theoretical foundations of black studies from the 1970s. It's in my dossier, which I will quote from the opening line.

"Historically, African American scholars endeavored to critically recognize, study, and communicate the black experience and its impact on the world. The historical and cultural milieus in which they lived and worked required that scholarly production, community activism, and broad based audience education converge and blend in ways that were/are politically, socially, and culturally transformative."

In short, to allow faculty to engage "scholarship and creative initiatives that seek to directly improve social justice," requires that you reconstruct the framework of what counts as intellectual production. I have a website under reconstruction here on [gentrification](#) for a community organization (assisted by the library and Humanities Center), and I currently serve in a group called COVID Black. Neither of these activities benefit my professional development as a "historian." However, there is no apparatus for judging this work but by claiming that it's--- wait for it-- service. It's not a journal article nor is it a book, and yet it does the work of outreach, critical thinking, labor, analysis, and uplift required of me by black studies. I'm always working, and my productive pendulum swings from article to public engagement, but the latter has no value that translates in promotion nor salary. What does it mean to say the university will invest in these endeavors? How will it change the definitions of intellectual production?

Provost Osborne, I would implore you to review my letter once again. It is not enough to offer platitudes or vague reassurances. This requires real work, and the faster the university embraces this, the faster it will move toward a future of equity.

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