

June 18, 2020

To Whom It May Concern,

The following document consists of an action plan curated by the undergraduate, Black student leaders of the University of Pittsburgh. As members of the Pitt community, we are exhausted mentally, physically, as well as emotionally. Each day we find ourselves overcompensating to make up for the University's failures at combating racism on campus, in the classroom, and amongst students. In light of recent events, we find ourselves at a pivotal point in time. A point in which change must occur in order for the University to progress forward. A point at which the University must take a stance in solidarity alongside its Black students. A point in which the University must reflect and examine its own racist foundation as well as the impacts of systemic racism on business matters and everyday duties at the University of Pittsburgh.

These points of actions are reflective of the concerns expressed by the Black student community at the University of Pittsburgh, otherwise known as "Black Pitt". These actions, once implemented to their full potential, will aid in a high-quality experience for the Black student at the University of Pittsburgh.

This document will be signed by specified University officials (Chancellor, Dean of Students, and all deans and provosts of all undergraduate and graduate schools at the University) and the members of the Black Senate at the University of Pittsburgh Main Campus. For full transparency and accountability, this document will be released to all students, faculty, and staff affiliated with the University of Pittsburgh.

For undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools on all University of Pittsburgh campuses, the following demands should be closely adhered to. Specific implementation of these demands will be left to the Senior Leadership Teams instituted at each location.

"You don't fight racism with racism, the best way to fight racism is with **SOLIDARITY**."

-Bobby Seale

Sincerely,

The Black Student Leaders

Inioluwa Ogunsemowo, Benjamin Doctor

Khadjah Muhammad, Oluchi Okafor

Nana Gyabaah-Kessie*, Blya Krouba*

Morgan Ottley*, Destiny Mann*

Dakota Arnold*, MaKayla Palmer

Destiny Harrison-Griffin

Cameron Clarke, Gianna Clarke

Anointed Steps of Faith

Association of Black Political Science Students

The African Students Organization

The Black Action Society

Black Loud and Queer

Campus Curlz

Caribbean and Latin American Students Association

Nelson Kadji, Kendall Johnson	Friendly Rivalries Often Generate Success
Rena Reid, Inioluwa Ogunsemowo	Hearts Ablaze Dance Ministry
Sequoia Marriott, Nana Gyabaah-Kessie*	Ignite
Richard Norris, III*, Myrna Brignol*	National Pan-Hellenic Council
Yemisi Odunlami, Isreal Williams, Anaya Joynes*	The National Society of Black Engineers
Adaora Okigbo, Makenzi Patterson	Pre-medical Organization for Minority Students
Daria Hatter, Chris Pierre	Roberto Clemente Minority Business Association
Nneoma Uzoukwu*, Miles Roberts	Reaching Inside Your Soul for Excellence
Mikala Aleksandruk*, Nana Gyabaah-Kessie*	Some of God's Children Gospel Choir
Bisola Dele-Lawal, Bella Prime	Vital
Kayla Miller, Bundu Ezenwukwa	Ya'baso

* These students were specifically involved in the writing process of the following document.

Proposed Deadlines:

- Implementation of short term items (**ATTN 1**) should begin 07/01/2020 and conclude no later than the date stated in each action item. Any items that have not been met by the deadline will require a full written explanation as to what has caused the delay, an written action plan to ensure that the item is met, a deadline for which the University plans to officially implement the action item.
- Implementation of long term items (**ATTN 2**) should begin 08/01/2020 and conclude no later than the date stated in each action item. Any items that have not been met by the deadline will require a full written explanation as to what has caused the delay, an written action plan to ensure that the item is met, a deadline for which the University plans to officially implement the action item.
- If the specified deadlines are not met, members of the ¹*People's Voice* Committee are subject to hold members of the Senior Leadership Team accountable at their discretion.

¹ See bullet point 1 in "AMPLIFYING THE BLACK STUDENT VOICE"

AMPLIFYING THE BLACK STUDENT VOICE

- **Creation of the *People's Voice Committee*.** In order to ensure that all of these demands are met in a timely fashion based on the deadlines stated in this document, we request that a standing committee is established and approved by members of the Board of Trustees to oversee the changes stated in this document that are to be implemented. This committee will serve within the entity that is the Senior Leadership Team and must be composed of **Black** faculty, staff, alumni, and student liaisons who are well-versed in the field of Black studies/culture. Once all demands are complete, this committee should be re-implemented at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees as response to any call of action from the Board of Trustees by the student population. (*ATTN 1 07/01/2020-08/19/2020*)
 - Members of the Black Senate as well as the People's Voice Committee will have quarterly check-in meetings with the Dean of Students, Chancellor Gallagher and the Board of Trustee to examine and analyze the University's progress.
- **Recognize the Black Action Society as an umbrella organization.** The Black Action Society will be expanding its structure as it is being restructured to include all of SORC recognized Black student led organizations, with the exception of the National Society of Black Engineers and the National Pan-Hellenic Council. (*ATTN 1 08/19/2020*)
- **Provide full financial support as well as assistance with securing a location for events and projects that cater to the Black Experience.** (*ATTN 1 08/19/2020*)
 - *Black Prestige Gala* to annually occur in the spring semester. This event is meant to celebrate the Black excellence and showcase the accomplishments of the Black community at the University of Pittsburgh.
 - *Black Graduation* to recognize the academic successes and accomplishments of graduating Black students.
 - *Black Student Leader Conference* to encourage fellowship and collaboration between members of the Black Action Society Board of President. Each year students will be able to select a conference that focuses on equipping Black student leaders with the necessary leadership skills and resources to properly lead their organizations and represent their target Black audience. In attending this conference the student leaders will learn new ways in which they can educate, advocate, and support Black Students on campus.
 - The Black Action Society's event, *All in the Family* to be held during orientation week, will be one of the first events to expose students to Black Pitt. The purpose is to provide freshmen and transfers with an opportunity to meet leaders, faculty, and staff of the Black Pitt community and educate them on all of the resources this University provides them with. (Event can be pushed to the week of 08/29/2020 for proper safety precautions to be put in place due to COVID-19).

- *Welcome Back BBQ*, a collaboration event between Black Senate and the National Society of Black Engineers, to occur during the first weekend of September. The NSBE BBQ was a yearly event hosted by the University of Pittsburgh chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers. This past year, Swanson administration declared that the BBQ could no longer be held on the Benedum Patio due to capacity restraints. This event is critical to the Black student experience and has provided Black students with a safe space to destress, meet new peers and kick off the semester on a good note for the last 10+ years.
- The University of Pittsburgh National Pan-Hellenic Council's *Divine 9 Plot Project*. The NPHC Plots should be fully funded and supported by the University of Pittsburgh **without** requiring the NPHC to reimburse the University once construction is complete. The NPHC should also have a say in where the plots are to be constructed. The University of Pittsburgh must provide a written construction plan of the NPHC Plots to be approved by the President and Advisor of the NPHC by October 2020.
- *Exhibition of Black Artists and Art* around campus to showcase Black culture, art, and history. The University should hire a Black muralist to create a mural alongside the Hillman Library (the side facing Posvar). The University of Pittsburgh must provide a written plan to hire a muralist and conduct the painting of the mural to be approved by the Black Senate, the Dean of Students, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion by August 2020.

CURRICULUM

- **Transform the mission of the focus of our academic curriculum to be inclusive and comprehensive regarding the plight and triumphs of Black people.** The first step in appreciating the Black experience, whether as members of the community, allies, or bystanders, is educating one another. Changes in current curriculums, and introducing new courses to the University will allow opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to fully understand the history of Black people. Beyond this, members of the University will be officially informed of how to recognize and call out prejudice, racism, bigotry, etc., in their own thoughts and actions in order to prevent a situation where they are consciously or unconsciously acting on it. The aforementioned curriculum should be vetted by members of the *People's Voice* Committee before implementation.
 - Incorporate a mandatory introductory course to touch upon systemic racism, white privilege, and prejudices that caters to each school under the University, including all undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. Many first-year students come into the University of Pittsburgh from non-diverse backgrounds. It is important to create a space that emphasizes open dialogue about race and

encourages students to be well-rounded in their own thoughts. This specific section should be taught by Black professors. (*ATTN 1 08/2021*)

- In courses that are required for freshmen to take while in their first year at the University, incorporate the learning and engagement of the above concepts into their curriculums. (*ATTN 1 08/2021*)
- Include the Black Narrative in all curriculums. Though the Black narrative is intertwined with all sectors of society, it has been cut out of all curriculums: art, health, philosophy, etc. With certain degrees/professional tracks students may lack time in their schedules to take a class outside of their major. As a result, classes that are specifically designed to address the Black narrative are only taken by students who *actively* want to learn about Black culture; resulting in many students advancing in professions without being educated in the Black narrative. Additionally, a lack of diversity in teaching leads to a lack of diversity among the students these departments attract. Curriculums of different departments need to normalize and incorporate readings of Black authors and texts discussing Black culture. A world-class institution such as the University of Pittsburgh should ensure that students are educated with the whole picture and not just white-washed snippets. (*ATTN 2 08/2024*)
- **Establish both a Masters and PhD Program in Black Studies/Africana Studies.** The National Council of Black Studies states that as of 2020, 20 colleges offer a master program for Black Studies and 19 colleges offer a doctoral program for Black Studies. In today's climate it is pivotal for colleges all over the country to provide scholars with the opportunity to examine the Black narrative throughout history. There is a shortage of professionals who are well-educated in Black culture and the University of Pittsburgh can aid in equipping students with a proper education. (*ATTN 2 08/2026*)

CURRENT FACULTY

- **All faculty and staff must undergo three (3) training sessions a year (before the start of each new academic session) that cover topics on racial biases, microaggressions, micro-assaults, and equity.** Faculty and staff with implicit biases can directly impact opportunities for students of color. All faculty and staff need to be trained on how to properly interact with students from different backgrounds. In order to teach for the semester faculty would need to pass these trainings and receive a certificate of completion.
 - The design of these training sessions is to be approved by the *People's Voice* committee. All changes to this training will be left to the discretion of this Standing Committee. Additionally, there must also be a training log that is kept and maintained by the Office of Student Affairs. (*ATTN 1 08/2021*)

- **Terminate the employment of racist and/or discriminatory employees on campus.** Students should be allowed to submit formal complaints when they experience racial bias by University of Pittsburgh faculty and staff. These complaints should be investigated by the *People's Voice* committee. Additionally, the OMET survey should contain questions pertaining to the professor's ability to interact with students from different backgrounds and strength in creating an inclusive learning environment. (ATTN 1 08/2020)
 - Faculty and staff with one (1) incident or complaint of racial bias, excessive force, or unlawful arrest/detainment should be terminated and banned from the University campus immediately if found at fault. During the time of the investigation, the faculty/staff should be disclosed by name and banned from the University campus until its completion.
 - Faculty and staff with poor OMET evaluation scores regarding their ability to interact with students from diverse backgrounds and create an inclusive learning environment must be placed on probation and investigated by the *People's Voice* committee.
- **Increase renowned, tenured streamed, and tenure Black Faculty to 10% within the next four years.** This demand should be seen evenly across *all* departments, not just the Africana Studies department. This increase will require that Black faculty numbers rise by 1.75% a year. To ensure this increase takes place, the percentage of Black faculty members hired a year should be reported to the Senior Leadership Team and the *People's Voice* committee. (ATTN 2 08/2024)

CURRENT STUDENTS

- **Emphasize the importance of Black students' mental health.** Black students are constantly exposed to microaggressions, blatant racism, the reminder of tragedy in the Black community, and more. Despite all of this, we are still expected to function normally and go on with our daily lives. The University needs to show that they care about the well-being of their students by implementing these protocols and any other necessary procedures deemed necessary through Black professionals like Black counselors.
 - Expand counseling to the Black community. Counseling services should be readily available for Black/POC students. As long as said student has been a university student or affiliated with the University within the past two semesters they are to receive wellness center benefits regardless of active enrollment. For inactive students, they should be able to pay a percentage of the wellness fee to reflect the services that they are requesting. (ATTN 1 08/2020)
 - Maintain the mental health workshops and counseling sessions that cater to Black students the University Counseling Center currently has in place. In addition,

there needs to be an increase in promotion of these events through Resident Assistants, emails, text messages, and social media. (*ATTN 1 08/2020*)

- Hire more Black mental health professionals to ensure that Black students are adequately supported at the Pitt Counseling Center. Revise Pitt's budget for Black mental health professionals to encompass 30-40% of the counseling team, and to receive pay equal to their white counterparts. (*ATTN 2 08/2024*)
- The Chancellor should release a statement to University faculty and staff to allow more flexibility for Black Students during times of extreme stress resulting from the white supremacist culture of America.
 - Black/POC students should be offered 1-week extensions on any project deadlines, essay deadlines, or exam dates that occur within 2 weeks of a highly publicized and traumatic racial injustice event such as the murder of George Floyd. Students should provide documentation, as administered by the Counseling Center. (*ATTN 1 08/2020*)
 - Allow excused absences from class in the case of protests/sit-ins/remembrance ceremonies (*ATTN 1 08/2020*)
- **Create a space, aside from the BAS office in the William Pitt Union, on campus solely for Black students to congregate.** The Black student body would prefer a location in Posvar to keep us connected to the Africana and African Studies Department. (*ATTN 1 01/2021*)
- **Increase the population of Black students on campus.** Black students makeup approximately 4.88%² of this campus' student population. The University should increase the Black student body to 10% within the next 5 years with an 1% every year. This increase to 10% is independent of Black Student Athlete population/admission. (*ATTN 2 08/2025*)
- **Create a diverse admissions panel to focus on increasing enrollment and retainment of Black students from the Pittsburgh area, lower socioeconomic communities, and abroad.** To aid in the recruitment of Black students in the Pittsburgh area to the University, Black student led organizations should be involved in the recruitment of Black students and outreach to Black accepted students. (*ATTN 1 10/2020*)
 - Establish a long-standing partnership and increase recruitment efforts at the Pittsburgh Science and Technology Academy.
 - Increase representatives of color who are heavily engaged in the Pittsburgh Promise Program.
- **Establish three (3) scholarships of \$10,000 each for Black incoming first-year students in the memory of Antwon Rose II.** (*ATTN 1 10/2020*)

²*University of Pittsburgh Fact Book 2020*. (2020). Institutional Research.
<https://pre2.ir.pitt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Fact-Book-2020-16.pdf>

- Applications for these scholarships should be reviewed and chosen by Black staff and faculty at the university. One family member of Antwon Rose II should also have a seat on the application review committee should they agree to participate.
- Students that are awarded this scholarship will be able to apply it to tuition, room and board, and or research.
- **³Establish 48 scholarships of \$5,000 each for Black upperclassmen.** (*ATTN 1 01/2021*)
 - These scholarships will be divided into three awards honoring Breonna Taylor, Trayvon Martin, and Tony McDade for students identifying as Black women, men, and LGBTQIA+ individuals, respectively. This will result in a total of 48 winners, with 16 recipients per named scholarship and \$5,000 per recipient.
 - Requirements for this scholarship should be active enrollment, good academic standing, and at least one year of the following experiences: leadership in a Black student-run organization as listed above, community service that can be documented by a supervisor, or completion of an innovation for the Pittsburgh community (This also needs to be documented by an advisor).
 - Students that are awarded this scholarship will be able to apply it to tuition, room and board, or research.
 - At the beginning of the school year, recipients of the aforementioned scholarships should be recognized by Chancellor Gallegher and Dean Bonner, and be featured on the University of Pittsburgh website similar to the Nordenberg scholars.
 - Senior recipients of these awards should be announced at commencement to increase awareness around the scholarships and those who have been murdered due to police brutality.
- **Become a sponsor for community outreach programs.** In order to aid in one of the University's goals in increasing diversity, it is important that the University is actively working to engage in the community right outside of our campus. We request that the University provide financial and promotional support to the following outreach programs, but not limited to: (*ATTN 1 08/2020*)
 - DREAM Team and Gwen's Girls: these organizations have been devised to mentor high and middle schoolers, as well as provide academic support for all students in grades K-12.

POLICE

- **Terminate the employment of racist and discriminatory Police Officers.** Students should be allowed to submit formal complaints when they experience racial bias, the use

³ This number is based on the 48 students who took over the Cathedral Computer room in January of 1968. *Black Action Society*. (2014). University of Pittsburgh. <https://www.pitt.edu/~sorc/bas/history.html>

of excessive force, or are unlawfully arrested/detained/searched by University of Pittsburgh police officers. The University of Pittsburgh Police Department should no longer be allowed to solely investigate internally and discipline their own officers. Current events have shown us that the police cannot be trusted with their own accountability. These complaints should be submitted to a Third Party who has no affiliation with the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh Police Department. These complaints should be investigated by the aforementioned Third Party. (ATTN 1 08/2020)

- Police officers with one (1) incident or complaint of racial bias, excessive force, or unlawful arrest/detainment should be terminated and banned from the University campus immediately if found at fault. During the time of the investigation, the officer should be disclosed by name and banned from the University campus until its completion.
- **Increase transparency with the Pitt Police and the campus community.** The University of Pittsburgh Police Department's record of arrests, traffic stops, and citations along with a demographic breakdown should be made public to the entire Pitt community to ensure transparency and encourage accountability. Up-to-date public records and accurate demographic information should be maintained through a continuous collaborative effort by university personnel and Pitt Police. (ATTN 1 01/2021)
 - All complaints, investigations, and disciplinary actions for police officers should be published by a Pitt-sponsored or recognized platform (i.e The Pitt News) to notify students of potentially dangerous police officers on or around campus.
- **Increase transparency with the Greater Pittsburgh community.** Through the initiation or collaboration from the University, the records of termination due to all aforementioned offenses by Pitt Police should be made public to the Greater Pittsburgh Community in order to prevent the re-hiring of overtly or covertly biased officers in adjacent police departments. (ATTN 1 01/2021)
 - i.e. Michael Rosfeld murdered Antwon Rose II during his time as a City of Pittsburgh police officer on June 19, 2018 after already being placed on administrative leave and fired from the University of Pittsburgh Police Department for the unlawful arrest of University of Pittsburgh students on Dec. 9, 2017.
- **Respect an organization's rights when involving police presence.** Organizations should be allowed to request reduced police presence at events catered to the Black population. As a result of law enforcement's racist history many Black students do not feel comfortable in the presence of police. Black organizations hold events in order to provide a safe space for Black students and the presence of police completely negates that experience. (ATTN 1 08/2021)

- Reduce the cost of booking officers for events by 50%. If the University is going to force us to share our space with an institution known to oppress Black people then they must reduce this cost.
- The University must enable organizations the right to specify certain demands police officers are to follow while guarding our event (i.e. Come without guns).
- **Establish University partnership with the Pitt Police department to improve their diversity training and have year round training sessions.** Have professionals in Black adolescent development teach officers how to properly react in situations involving Black people and experts in Black culture address the racist culture of America that has allowed Black people to be victims of police brutality for centuries. (*ATTN 1 08/2021*)
- **Sever ties with Pittsburgh City Police Department (for outside events not tied to the University) to actively ensure the protection of Black faculty and students.** The University of Pittsburgh Police Department should sever ties with the City of Pittsburgh Police Department for all on campus events and activities which includes terminating any and all contracts with current or former City of Pittsburgh police officers for sporting events, concerts, housing security, and emergency management. Please note that we have not suggested any racial bias training or remediation curriculum because reforming racists has not proven effective. It is not our goal to invest time and resources in changing the minds of racists who have chosen to remain ignorant and a danger to our campus, but to expel them from our community. (*ATTN 1 08/2020*)
- **Facilitate events aimed to strengthen the relationship between Pitt Police and students.** Black student representatives should be invited to existing recurring meetings with University personnel and Pitt Police in order to provide Black student perspectives in university-police relations. (*ATTN 1 08/2020*)

A BETTER RESPONSE TO INJUSTICE

- **Create a Black Advocacy Council.** The University of Pittsburgh should create a council to construct and execute campus policy in response to current events that affect Black students and minority groups in the surrounding Pittsburgh community. (*ATTN 1 01/2021*)
 - This team would be in charge of creating and managing support resources for Black students, providing opportunities for Black students to engage and feel connected to the rest of the city, and strategic programming to recruit Black students, with a focus on those local to Pittsburgh. The University's response to events thus far has been lackluster at best, negligent at worst. Clearly, the current leadership is unequipped to respond as necessary and continuously requiring Black students to develop and execute support programming for ourselves is consistent with white supremacy and leads to burn out and exhaustion on top of the trauma we are already forced to mitigate.

- The Black Advocacy Council should consist of the following:
 - At least three (3) full time Black professionals with expertise in education and diversity and inclusion.
 - Black students, currently enrolled and in good academic standing in any undergraduate or graduate school on the Pittsburgh campus, who have demonstrated at least one year of leadership and community service on campus through Black organizations including, but not limited to, Black Action Society, African Student Organization, National Society of Black Engineers, Yabaso, Roberto Clemente Minority Business Association, or the National Pan-Hellenic Council. These are students that have decades of experience dealing with racial violence against the Black community and therefore should be compensated for their expertise and for their time spent reliving police terror. Each student should receive a \$10,000 scholarship for each year of service on the committee.
 - There should be one committee spot each year designated for any member of Antwon Rose II's immediate family should they agree to participate.
- **Stand in solidarity with Black faculty and students proactively.** The University of Pittsburgh Department of Student Affairs or some form of university leadership needs to publicly address the racial violence against Black American citizens by the police and the threats made by the President of the United States. (*ATTN 1 08/2020*)
 - Members of the Senior Leadership Team should offer notifications and resources, within 24 hours after the occurrence of an injustice, in support of Black and minority students during these events similar to the outpouring of support that was shown during the Tree of Life tragedy and COVID-19 pandemic. Actively naming the victims, denouncing state-sanctioned murder, and acknowledging the systemic racism that penetrates U.S. Law Enforcement and our own university system should be included as a minimum.
 - Public apologies should be made in the case that students, faculty, or staff are directly affected by racially motivated injustices. The appropriate University personnel should reach out to these affected individuals and provide them with resources.