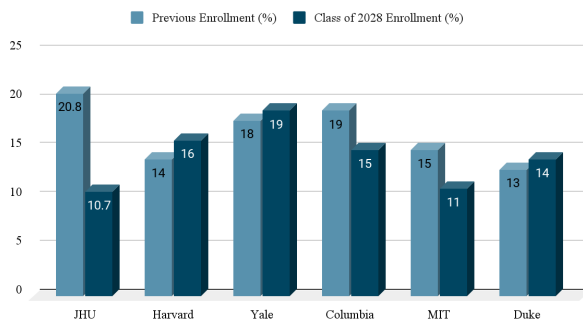


Resolution for a More Inclusive JHU: Demanding Action on Diversity Decline

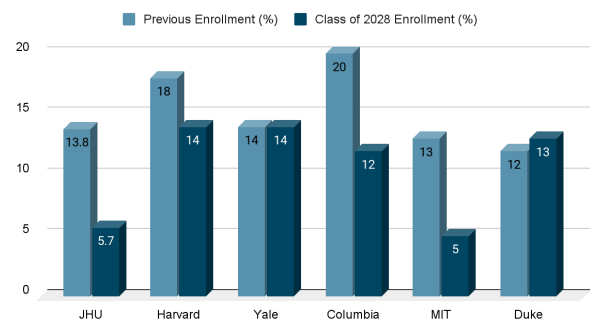
Dear President Daniels, Provost Jayawardhana, and University Leadership

The Student Government Association (SGA) writes with urgent concern over the severe and unacceptable decline in Latine and Black student enrollment in the Johns Hopkins University Class of 2028. Latine student enrollment has dropped from 268 students to 138—a 48.6% decrease. Similarly, Black student enrollment has fallen from 178 students to a mere 73—a 58.7% decrease. These figures represent a failure of leadership and foresight with Johns Hopkins far behind its peer institutions.

Comparison of Latine Enrollment Changes at Peer Institutions



Comparison of Black Enrollment Changes at Peer Institutions



A Leadership Failure: The Collapse of Diversity at Johns Hopkins

While the Supreme Court's ruling on affirmative action posed challenges for all universities, peer institutions like Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Duke did not experience such drastic losses in student diversity. Johns Hopkins University, however, did not act with the necessary urgency or innovation to prevent this crisis. The catastrophic decline in Latino and Black student enrollment at Hopkins exposes a blatant failure of leadership and a lack of foresight that stands in direct contradiction to Hopkins' declared belief that 'every person has equal dignity and worth' (*Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*, 2021, p. 23). Despite this professed commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, the university's actions—or rather, inactions—demonstrate the opposite. Peer institutions like Harvard and Yale successfully upheld diversity during this crisis, while Hopkins' failure to act with urgency led to the decimation of diversity within our student body. We demand immediate accountability and action to rectify the harm done to our community.

The administration's response to this crisis has been woefully inadequate, consistently deflecting responsibility onto the SCOTUS decision on affirmative action rather than owning the university's egregious failure to implement strategies that recruit and support historically marginalized groups. This is especially hypocritical when Hopkins claims to 'strive to be a model of a pluralistic society' that embraces diversity in all its forms (*Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*, 2021, p. 5). Peer

institutions like Harvard, Yale, and Duke successfully maintained or even increased diversity by implementing innovative initiatives. Harvard increased Latine enrollment from 14% to 16%, while Yale maintained Black enrollment at 14%. Duke, with whom Hopkins is tied for sixth in the Best National University Rankings by U.S. News & World Report, increased Hispanic student enrollment from 13% to 14% and Black enrollment from 12% to 13% by expanding its Carolinas Initiative, which provides full tuition grants for qualifying students, and boosting participation in the QuestBridge program. These universities extended outreach to Spanish-speaking communities, utilized socioeconomic indicators effectively, and prioritized recruitment in underserved areas. If these institutions can achieve such success, why has Johns Hopkins fallen so drastically behind? Instead of taking decisive action, the university has hidden behind legal constraints, avoiding accountability for its own role in this diversity crisis.

Let us not forget that this university exists within Baltimore, a city defined by its rich cultural diversity, and Maryland itself the most diverse state in the northeast. It is unconscionable that a university with our resources and our location has failed to reflect this diversity within our student body.

While Hopkins boasts about programs like CTY (Center for Talented Youth), designed to engage academically high-performing students who lack access to advanced academic opportunities, the university has failed to engage students of color in any meaningful way, neglecting to create an environment where "all members of our community know with certainty that they belong at Johns Hopkins" (Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2021, p. 23). Despite long standing connections with local schools, the refusal to recruit from predominantly minority-serving schools demonstrates the university's empty promises and abandonment of its diversity initiatives. By targeting schools in the DMV area, Hopkins could encourage more Black and Latino students to engage with the university and apply when they reach their senior year. This approach would help build relationships with high-performing students of color and foster long-term interest in Hopkins.

This failure extends beyond Baltimore and across the U.S., with many students of color reporting that Hopkins never visited their high schools. Hopkins has overlooked high schools where students of color have proven they can excel when given the opportunity, highlighting a lack of commitment to broadening access and ensuring diverse representation in its student body.

A Failure of Accountability: The University's Role in the Diversity Collapse

Johns Hopkins University has failed to address the alarming decline in diversity within its student body, offering only vague reassurances instead of substantive action or transparency. Despite commitments outlined in the *Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*—which emphasizes that "transparency is a driving force in our sustained progress" (2021, p. 12)—the administration has not provided a clear account of its efforts during the recent admissions cycle. What specific actions were taken to combat the drastic drop in diversity? What strategies were implemented to improve recruitment and outreach, particularly to schools serving students of color both locally and nationally? Without answers to these critical questions, the university's stated commitment to diversity remains hollow and unsubstantiated.

The recent Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action, while significant, does not absolve the administration of its responsibility to act decisively. Instead of responding to this challenge with

innovative and proactive measures, the university's lack of urgency has deepened the distrust between the administration and the student body, particularly for those from underrepresented communities. The repercussions of this failure extend far beyond enrollment statistics, undermining the sense of belonging, inclusion, and community that Johns Hopkins claims to value. This failure to act decisively, coupled with the administration's unwillingness to engage openly with the community, has eroded trust and worsened the divide between leadership and students.

We call on the administration to acknowledge the profound ways this situation may impact students of color at Johns Hopkins and their undergraduate experience. This acknowledgment must come with a clear commitment to mitigating the secondary effects of declining diversity by providing resources and support to ensure these students feel valued and included. Additionally, the administration must recognize its shortcomings in upholding its commitment to transparency. Moving forward, the university must commit to issuing continuous, timely updates and progress reports, as well as creating more accessible and inclusive channels for dialogue. Students deserve a seat at the table in conversations that directly impact them, and the administration must demonstrate a willingness to engage meaningfully with the broader university community.

As a world-class research institution, Johns Hopkins should be leading the way in using data-driven strategies to address this diversity crisis. However, the university has failed to apply its research-driven ethos to its own diversity and inclusion efforts. The *Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* asserts that "accountability requires all individuals and organizations within Johns Hopkins to have a clear understanding of and commitment to their roles" (2021, p. 22), yet the institution has failed to set specific, quantifiable goals or publish transparent progress reports. While the Roadmap references DEI scorecards and biennial reports, the absence of clear benchmarks undermines any real accountability and reflects a troubling lack of urgency in addressing diversity concerns.

We petition the university take immediate, concrete action to reverse this trend. This includes setting clear numerical goals, publishing regular progress reports, and implementing robust accountability mechanisms to track the university's performance in addressing diversity challenges. Johns Hopkins, as a hub of innovation and research, has the tools and capabilities to confront this issue head-on but has thus far failed to use them effectively. The time for vague reassurances and empty promises has passed. The community deserves transparent, measurable progress that reflects the values of inclusion and equity the university claims to uphold.

Performative Inclusivity: Unveiling the Depth of Institutional Neglect

This ongoing crisis is part of a broader, deeply entrenched pattern of institutional neglect and failure to genuinely engage underrepresented groups. Although the university itself admits the need to 'forthrightly look at the kinds of founding stories, the myths, the half and partial truths, that undergird our institution' (*Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*, 2021, p. 12), it continues to perpetuate the same harmful practices, refusing to address the systemic issues that have brought us to this point. Even though 70% of student respondents acknowledged the existence of a diversity strategic plan, 27% felt it was either not accessible or not communicated clearly, further proving that diversity rhetoric is often empty without real actionable results (*JHU Campus Climate Study*, 2023, p. 7). As one faculty member bluntly stated, some of the university's diversity initiatives feel like 'checking a box without genuine effort

to enable positive change' (*JHU Campus Climate Study*, 2023, p. 3). This perception mirrors the broader student concerns that Hopkins' diversity efforts are more performative than transformative.

We demand an end to performative gestures and expect a shift toward genuine engagement from leadership. Deans, provosts, staff, and even President Daniels must be truly present for their students of color. Their past appearances at events for and by students and alumni of color have been nothing more than shallow photo ops, treating people of color students like props rather than valued members of the community. This kind of tokenism will no longer be tolerated. What we need is authentic, ongoing engagement from the highest levels of leadership—not just when it's convenient or when there's a camera. Empty gestures have failed our community, and it's time for the university to commit to real, transformative action.

Cultural Erosion: The Consequences of Enrollment Decline on Student-Led Organizations

It is essential to recognize the longstanding history and significant contributions of student organizations representing Latine and Black communities on our campus. Despite facing historically limited resources, groups such as the African Student Association, Black Student Union, Organización Latine Estudiantil (OLÉ), and other Latine and Black cultural organizations have played a vital role in enriching campus culture and programming. However, the alarming decline in enrollment has created a precarious situation for these organizations, as dwindling membership leaves them without the necessary student leadership to sustain their activities. This reduction not only threatens the viability of these vital student groups but also risks further diminishing the cultural diversity that enriches the Johns Hopkins community. If left unaddressed, this cycle of disinvestment will likely result in a significant decrease in programming and engagement, ultimately weakening the community bonds that these organizations have worked tirelessly to build.

The Weight of Neglect: Mental Health Consequences for Students of Color

The emotional and mental toll on students of color at Johns Hopkins has been profound, as they feel not only unsupported but actively exploited by a university that claims to recognize the "multigenerational harm" caused by discrimination (Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2021, p. 14). Despite this acknowledgment, students of color often feel tokenized in university communications, while their real needs remain unmet. Studies show that racial status exacerbates mental health challenges: Black and Latine students have experienced over 40% and 106% increases, respectively, in depression symptoms since 2013. Hispanic students, in particular, face higher anxiety and depression rates due to ethnic discrimination, with research linking discrimination to decreased self-esteem and elevated anxiety and depression levels (Lipson et al., 2022; Cano et al., 2016).

The 2023 Campus Climate Survey reveals the extent of exclusionary and hostile conduct experienced on campus, with 18% of respondents observing conduct that created an exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment, primarily based on racial identity (27%, n = 518). Such hostile behaviors, including incidents like a professor using the N-word in class and refusing to apologize, have left Black students feeling alienated and disrespected (*JHU Campus Climate Study*, 2021, p. 15). This hostile climate has even led to 38% of Black undergraduate students and 31% of Latine undergraduate students

seriously considering leaving the institution, highlighting the severe impact on their sense of belonging. Coupled with the fact that only 40% of Black students seek mental health support—compared to over 50% of White students—these exclusionary experiences intensify feelings of isolation and marginalization for students of color (Lipson et al., 2022). It is disappointing and unjust that they must continuously advocate for basic respect and recognition on top of their academic and personal responsibilities.

Actionable Change: Establishing an Undergraduate Advisory Board for Diversity

The Diversity Leadership Council (DLC), integral to the Second JHU Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, has notably failed to advocate effectively for diverse enrollment strategies and equitable student support. Despite the DLC's advisory role to the administration on diversity initiatives, it lacks undergraduate representation—there is not even one undergraduate student on the Council. This absence leaves a significant gap in voicing undergraduate concerns, particularly those of Latino and Black students who have faced enrollment declines. The lack of any undergraduate presence undermines the Council's ability to fully understand and address the unique challenges and needs of this group, limiting its impact and oversight on critical matters that directly affect the undergraduate experience. As a result, the Council's structure does not adequately support or represent the undergraduate population in ways that align with the Roadmap's stated objectives for inclusivity and support.

We demand the creation of a dedicated advisory board tasked with developing and overseeing strategies to increase Latine and Black enrollment. This board must include student leaders from underrepresented communities, representatives from the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, SGA leadership, and admissions staff with decision-making authority. The board should have clear, actionable goals, and its work should be transparent and measurable.

To ensure equitable representation and avoid barriers that often limit the voices of underrepresented students, we recommend a multi-step selection process for advisory board members. Rather than relying solely on elections, which may disadvantage students from smaller communities, we propose a blend of appointed positions and open applications. This process should guarantee specific spots for Latine, Black, and first-generation students and include direct organizational representatives from groups supporting these communities. An inclusive selection committee—made up of diverse students, faculty, and administrators—should review applications, prioritizing candidates who demonstrate commitment to diversity initiatives and advocacy experience. To ensure ongoing representation and fresh perspectives, the board should implement rotating membership terms and maintain clear communication on selection criteria and expectations. This approach will create an advisory board that truly reflects the diversity it seeks to foster.

This board's first action should be to reevaluate the Second Roadmap on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Ten for One initiative, ensuring that these plans are adequately addressing the challenges we face. Furthermore, the board should launch a campus climate survey to gather direct feedback from faculty, staff, and students about their experiences with diversity and inclusion at Johns Hopkins.

Making DEI Training Accessible: A Step Toward Real Inclusion and Accountability

We demand immediate and accessible diversity, equity, and inclusion training across all levels of the university. The history of microaggressions and discriminatory behavior—from students to faculty, staff to professors—is not only unacceptable but reflective of a deeper institutional failure. These issues stem from a lack of proper training and a failure to acknowledge the lived experiences of marginalized students and staff. Johns Hopkins has long touted its commitment to diversity, but without meaningful action, this rhetoric remains hollow. While 86% of staff respondents were aware that diversity training was available, only 62% believed that it positively influenced the climate (JHU Campus Climate Study, 2023, p. 419). This gap in effective training highlights the need for robust and enforceable accountability systems. We need to end the cycle of harm that stems from ignorance and lack of awareness.

Recognizing that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are crucial components of a comprehensive education, we propose an extension of the existing Identity & Inclusion workshop into a multi-lecture series/training that can be completed for a DEI Training certification. This university-sponsored certificate training series should be modeled after similar certificate training available at some peer institutions like Cornell (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion- Cornell Certificate Program) and Georgetown University (Executive Certificate in Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion).

This approach supports JHU's mission "to educate its students and cultivate their capacity for lifelong learning, to foster independent and original research, and to bring the benefits of discovery to the world." By exposing all students to training that explores issues of equity, cultural diversity, and social justice, we cultivate well-rounded, socially aware graduates who understand the complexities of an increasingly globalized world. DEI training provides essential tools for empathy, critical thinking, and cultural competence, preparing students to bring meaningful insights and solutions to diverse communities beyond JHU.

Additionally, offering this opportunity to students can foster a more inclusive campus culture by emphasizing that the university values these subjects as integral to personal and academic growth. This change directly supports students of color, who often bear the burden of advocating for their inclusion, by ensuring DEI topics are normalized within the curriculum. For all students, DEI education encourages empathy, broadens perspectives, and helps cultivate an environment where individuals of all backgrounds feel seen, valued, and empowered to contribute.

This training series/certification should come at no additional cost to current students and should be seen as an investment in their future by the university. It aligns with JHU's commitment to supporting their mission and provides an opportunity for students to engage with important topics, viewing their time spent as an investment in becoming well-rounded individuals prepared for a diverse and interconnected world.

Through structured DEI training, we can create a learning environment that not only benefits students during their university experience but also aligns with JHU's commitment to bringing the benefits of discovery to the world.

The time for empty promises has long passed. The time for real, decisive action is now. We, the SGA, stand united with the entire Johns Hopkins community in demanding immediate and transformative change. This university must live up to the values it claims to hold—not through hollow rhetoric, but through concrete actions that demonstrate a true and unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The time to act is now, and the entire community is watching.

Johns Hopkins has repeatedly touted its dedication to these ideals, but empty words are worthless without action. The stark disconnect between the university's grand rhetoric and its failure to deliver on meaningful progress is painfully obvious, and students are no longer willing to accept this. It is time for the university to stop hiding behind empty statements and to demonstrate the accountability and transparency it professes to champion.

In solidarity with our students,

The 112th Student Government Association
Johns Hopkins University

Appendix A: Student Organizations in Support of This Resolution

The following undergraduate organizations have expressed their frustration and stand in solidarity with this resolution:

African Student Association
¡Baila! Dance Team
Baldwin Hughes Theater Company
Black Student Athlete Association
Caribbean Ancestry Dance Team
Caribbean Culture Society
Club Colombia
Cuban American Student Association
Hermandad de Sigma Iota Alpha, Incorporada
Johns Hopkins Black Student Union
Knotty by Nature
Mexican American Student Association
Organización Latine Estudiantil (OLÉ)
Rho Omega Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
Sigma Chapter of Latinas Promoviendo Comunidad/Lambda Pi Chi Sorority, Inc.
Sigma Sigma Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Sudanese Student Union
Temps d'Afrique
The National Society of Black Engineers