

Anti-Racism Initiative

To the administration of Eastern University:

As a Christian university pursuing faith, reason, and justice, Eastern cannot take a neutral stance on the issue of racism. The school has a responsibility to be actively and aggressively anti-racist, to take significant measures to support and protect students of color in the predominately White environment, and to educate its community on issues of racism and bias.

Now more than ever with the sudden coverage of the killing of Black individuals, the increase in divisiveness and hate, and the rise of White supremacy, Eastern needs to stand with the marginalized communities at Eastern. It is not enough to simply have diversity or the appearance of diversity; we, as students of color, must have the same opportunity to grow and succeed at Eastern, and that is not possible if we are not safe and supported.

We, students of color, deserve to be valued in Eastern's community. Our lives matter, and our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well beings matter; we demand to be treated as such. We have met, discussed, and organized a list of policies and initiatives that are essential for the safety and protection of marginalized groups, particularly the Black community, on campus.

Policy

We demand that Eastern University adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards incidences of racism and makes Eastern's community aware of this change.

Eastern embraces justice as one of its core values; therefore, the school must adopt a zero-tolerance anti racism policy that protects all students, faculty, and staff, particularly those who are of color. Immediate, punitive action must be taken against anyone at Eastern who engages in racist speech or acts or promotes racist ideologies. If an individual, student, faculty, or anyone compensated by the university (including the Board of Trustees, Deans and President) engages in any of these acts, they must be removed from any leadership positions they may hold on Eastern's campus. As a community working towards justice for all people, we will not allow community leaders to promote messages or commit acts of hatred, discrimination, or prejudice. In addition, if a student participates in racist speech or acts or promotes racist ideologies, the student's involvement in athletic activities, scholarship programs, and social events must be reviewed by the diversity committee, and possible suspension from these events and organizations must be considered. When possible, the person or groups on the receiving end of the racist speech or act should be consulted about the disciplinary actions taken against the offender. We demand that action must be taken against people disrupting our community;

warnings are no longer good enough. Just as there are student conduct policies that students need to follow, there must be a clear outline on the policies that faculty and staff must follow as well. They need to be displayed on Eastern's website, in the Student Handbook, and the Faculty and Staff Handbooks.

We expect for the Eastern University community to be notified of this new policy via email before the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester.

Training & Curriculum

We demand that Eastern University mandates and funds ongoing anti-racism and bias training for all students, administration, Board of Trustees, faculty, and staff.

Our community is in desperate need of anti-racism and bias training, so that we may recognize and address incidences of racism, whether blatant or subtle, and become a safer, empathetic space. All students, faculty, and staff, including the university's President and Board of Trustees, must have anti-racism and bias training before and during each semester that includes but is not limited to topics such as confronting unconscious bias, systematic oppression, microaggressions, privilege, equity, and inclusion. There are multiple online courses that allow faculty and staff to cover topics such as these in minimal time but have the most impact for the safety of the students. These courses are proven to have the highest retention rates and longstanding impacts alongside the opportunity to be diversity and inclusion certified. For this training to have the most impact on our community, it should be an active experience, requiring participation in conversation and activities, rather than a passive experience, such as watching recorded training sessions. Additionally, there must be a pre-assessment before the semester, and a post-assessment after the semester, which assesses participants' views on racial equality and not political affiliation. An example that could possibly be followed is Temple Universities system of Equal Opportunity of compliance and how it goes through a thorough compliance investigation and also has a non-discrimination/Equal opportunity statement. On course evaluations, there must be a section to assess the professor's awareness and sensitivity to issues of race, as well as their effort to be anti-racist. As for students, there must be an announcement at the beginning of the semester that addresses how students should be respectful of all races and how they should actively be anti-racists. The desired outcomes for anti-racism and bias training is to have fewer incidents involving racism, for our community to be well equipped to address these incidences, and for participants to become more aware of their own biases and take active steps to confront them.

We expect for the initial training to be offered and implemented by the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester.

We demand a Black history course that is mandatory for all students.

We demand a Black history course to be added to our General Education requirements that is mandatory for all incoming students. Black history is not taught in American schools in the same manner that European and White-American history is taught. Without an emphasis on Black history in schools today, we are left feeling like an afterthought, a secret, and as unimportant to the understanding of the world despite our clear influence through all of history. Ignoring Black history not only harms Black individuals, but blinds everyone to reality. It blinds us to the atrocities we must reconcile and the contributions we must celebrate. It creates a sense of false reality for some and instills trauma in those who still experience its repercussions. Teaching Black history would benefit every school and university across the world, but it would particularly benefit Eastern as we strive towards not only faith and reason, but also justice as Jesus would have us understand and create it.

It is unacceptable to have only “Global Diversity” classes because that is a blanketed term, and it avoids specifically talking about Black history. Professors of color need to write and teach these courses to avoid bias. Everything of any instructive nature, including books, videos and anything extracurricular for this course needs to be written by people of color and authors from all types of sexual orientations. We want to use the TED Talk, “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Adichie as the foundation for these classes because it reminds people of the peril in American education of having our textbooks written by predominantly White (and inherently biased) authors. If we choose to ignore Black history, we are not being accountable to our mission of upholding faith, reason, and justice.

“But their white blindness is not an accident; it is cultivated in our elementary and high schools. ” - Emily Walton (“Flashback: College students should take mandatory course on black history, white privilege”)

“The cost of liberty is less than the price of repression.”
—W.E.B. Du Bois

We expect for this course to be developed and offered by the Spring 2021 semester.

We demand a revamp for existing courses that focus on Black history or aspects of the Black experience.

Black history or Black topics courses (for example, “HIST 440: Black Church in America” and “HIST 350: African American History”) should be recreated/revamped while being taught every semester *and* re-introduced as an option because advertising these courses while failing to offer them is unacceptable. These courses and others like them are particularly needed to focus and highlight discussions of race, discrimination, systematic oppression, and other relevant topics in today’s world. It is not good enough to say Eastern offers courses on diverse topics; they actually need to be available for students to take every semester.

We expect for these courses to be developed and offered by the Spring 2021 semester.

We demand that courses infuse discussions of race and Black history into their curriculum Eastern, including textbook and course material from diverse authors and creators.

We demand that all courses concerning societal, cultural, historical, educational and/or political issues include discussion about race. Discussing race in various aspects of our history and society is a first step towards being anti-racist in all institutions across our country. The exclusive teaching of European history is anti-black and excludes people of color. In addition, we demand that it is mandatory for professors to include textbooks, novels, videos, and other learning content that are written or created by authors who are diverse in race, sexuality, class, etc. It is important to learn from multiple perspectives on every topic.

We expect for this curriculum change to be instituted by the Spring 2021 semester.

Professional Positions

We demand to have more professors, administrators, deans, counselors, board of trustees members, and overall faculty and staff on campus that are people of color.

There are not enough leaders on campus who are people of color. We are particularly lacking professors of color in every academic department. Both staff and faculty should reflect the student population. We demand that faculty and staff be composed of at least 33% people of color. This should be accomplished before the last phase of EU in Motion; this should also include an increase in managers and leaders of color, especially at the director level. In addition to diversity in race, each department should include diversity in gender. It is a valuable experience to learn from and about a diverse range of cultures and people. This ensures that students are prepared for the diverse world that we live in and will also help dismantle preconceived bias, stereotypes, and prejudices that come from a lack of interaction with other cultures. There must be more Black counselors/psychologists so that Black students who want to be counseled have someone that can relate to their experiences. We also want to have funds that

support black faculty. This should happen through the Funding Institutional Membership in the Pennsylvania Black Conference on Higher Education (PBOCHE). Additionally, the administration must make annual employee development workshops on issues of diversity.

In addition, we demand that more staff are hired to support the office of Multicultural Student Initiatives. We need more people on campus dedicated to ensuring that we work, study, and live in a more responsibly diverse campus.

We demand that the student body is introduced and made aware of people in the school's diversity committee. We demand full transparency as to what department is overseeing which initiatives and operations. Also, these processes should be simplified and streamlined for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

We demand the school to hire or appoint a Chief Diversity Officer who reports directly to the President in a Vice President role and oversees the multicultural happenings of Eastern University.

The main responsibility of the Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) position is that they inform the President and the rest of senior leadership about how they need to bring inclusion, equality, and diversity across campus, and to implement affirmative action. Their second main responsibility should be to lead the Anti-racism and Bias Training, and if not to find a program that can fit Eastern for this training. This person must create initiatives that are aimed at creating fair treatment for all students, faculty, and staff. The CDO must also advocate for us during board and administrative meetings. CDO must also promote equality and diversity between the senior leadership, faculty, staff, and students. This person is not to be a token of diversity in leadership settings; we demand multiple people of color to be appointed to leadership positions of authority, responsibility, and influence. Finally, the person that is hired must be certified and trained prior to getting the position and is from outside of the Eastern community.

We expect for there to be a Chief Diversity Officer hired by the end of the Fall 2020 semester.

Funding & Budget

We demand that Eastern University reassess the budget surrounding the available funding for multicultural organizations on campus and provide compensation for the leaders of MAAC.

We demand increased funding for the Multicultural Student Initiatives (MSI) office to further support Eastern's students of color and to further the mission of diversity and inclusion on campus. As the population of students of color on campus rises, the MSI office's budget should reflect that increase. A larger budget would allow for additional programming that would serve students of color in particular; this additional programming could include sponsoring students to attend conferences and bringing speakers to campus to guide conversations on race.

Because multicultural clubs have to request funds from the Student Government Association (SGA), this can lead to complications because of the subjective nature of allocating funds. SGA is predominantly composed of White students, and students' implicit biases can be a barrier for multicultural clubs receiving appropriate funding. It can be difficult to help SGA see the purpose and necessity of appropriate funding for different multicultural clubs if SGA is not directly impacted or affected. We strongly oppose the process that a predominately White organization should have the final say in the amount of funds that are deemed necessary to our community. Therefore, in addition to the budget increase for the MSI office, we demand that beginning the '20-'21 academic year, at least 20% of SGA's budget for funding clubs would be allocated to multicultural clubs, including but not limited to, Black Student League, African Caribbean Union, Bridges, Latinos Unidos, Blaze Step Team, Precious Movements, and One Generation Ministries. In addition, SGA must clearly communicate the grounds on which they approve or deny funds, which should be based on an objective process rather than a subjective one. We demand that a formal appeal process be established. In this appeal process, clubs who have been denied funds or given insufficient funds, the club's advisor should appeal the decision to the Vice Provost and their assistant.

In addition, members of MAAC's leadership team should receive compensation for their work, in the form of a stipend or scholarship. The amount of the compensation should be comparable to the amount members of the Students Activities Board (SAB) receive.

We demand transparency on Eastern's budget.

We demand that details about Eastern's budget are available and easily accessible to students. Students need to be aware of how Eastern is distributing students' money so we request to see the annual proposal for the university budget via the board of trustees. We deserve access to this information so that we can hold the university accountable to dispersing funds equitably and without bias. In the case that funds are being distributed disproportionately, students should be able to voice any possible concerns about where money should be allocated/distributed. After all, our tuition helps fund the school. Our concern is that the MSI original budget that has remained steady does not reflect the gradual increase in the population of students of color, therefore an increase in yearly funding must be considered to provide equal and equitable opportunities for underrepresented students. Revealing Eastern's budget will communicate the school's priorities, based on how Eastern allocates funds, and it will give students insight as to why tuition keeps

rising. We are requesting access to the University's Audited Financial Statements and the Board Approved Budget for FY20 via our My.Eastern Account's through the offices and centers tab. This information needs to be formatted clearly and concisely so that there is no confusion. Matthew 6:21 says "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

We demand that the University budget be made available and accessible to the student body before the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester. We demand that an annual report be published by the end of the Fall 2020 semester and that this become an annual practice moving forward.

We demand both accountability and racial equity for all student programs including, but not limited to: the Student Government Association, the Student Activities Board, the Templeton Honors College, and the Leadership Fellows Program.

These programs and their leaders are all overwhelmingly White and do not represent the diverse student population. These programs play a role in allocating institutional funds to students in the forms of scholarships and funding for student activities. We demand that each of the programs be reviewed and be made more accountable for the actions and racially equitable in their recruiting. These reviews should report student demographics, how funding is allocated, and recruitment practices. After the reviews are conducted, strategies and actionable steps need to be made for racial inclusivity and accountability. We believe that racial inclusivity and accountability should be a habit across all departments and programs at our school, but that it is especially important that these programs are examined given their role in granting students leadership opportunities and connecting them with financial resources. Racial equity reviews must be done by the diversity committee. The diversity committee should be led by a Chief Diversity Officer.

We expect that these reviews be completed by the end of the Spring 2021 semester.

The administration has an obligation, as a Christian university and as followers of Christ, to actively seek justice for the marginalized. If Eastern proclaims that this school stands for justice and diversity, actively supporting the students, faculty, and staff of color by attending to our demands has more value than just the means of recruiting more people of color. Consequently, it is in the best interest of everyone involved in Eastern's community, that a safe and productive space is created for people of color to grow and develop. Hence is the mission of the university in Eastern's diversity statement, which states:

"Eastern University recognizes that diversity and inclusiveness is essential in establishing a prosperous and productive campus community. Having a diverse faculty and staff community creates energy and insight as well as establishing

cultural awareness and shared differences among our community as we seek to follow our mission of Faith, Reason, and Justice.

Therefore, having a diverse campus is a primary initiative at Eastern. All members of our community are encouraged and empowered to achieve their personal, educational, and career goals while learning about different cultures.

A Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Team has been established to implement a comprehensive plan for diversity and inclusion consistent with Eastern University's mission and vision that responds to the needs of our students, with a particular focus on supporting underrepresented populations."

We understand that significant change often cannot occur immediately; therefore, we have proposed changes with both short-term and long-term timelines. Any changes made must be sustainable and should benefit Eastern's community, regardless of the time period and social climate.

However, neglecting these demands and not taking action indicates that the University is not living up to its diversity statement. As a university, it is crucial that we do not turn a blind eye to racism, prejudice, and discrimination by allowing it to happen on our campus. Taking proactive measures in combating these injustices is a step forward for the university. As 1 Corinthians 12:4 states, "the body is not one member, but many." We are one body in Christ, a team, and a community. The school is not made up of one specific group of students but by a diverse community of thinkers, learners, helpers, workers, and overall human beings. Hence being contradictory to the mission of creating a more diverse community but not supporting it by any means necessary. Instead, we find that the multicultural community is, in some cases, made to feel uncomfortable and left out. Right now, we demand, encourage, and also gracefully ask that Eastern University take the initiative to make the necessary changes and take advantage of the opportunity that our community is presented with. As students who will one day be alumni that hope to give back to our school, we desire to support a university that stands for justice. Therefore, as a Christian community, it is important that we all showcase the works and love of God. In the name of unity, we pray that this message is well received and that our demands are met in order to create a more holistic Christian learning environment.

"He hath shown thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" -Micah 6:8 KJV

Sincerely,
Eastern's Concerned Black Students