



August 17, 2020

Dear Black Senate student leaders,

I am happy to share with you the below response from the University of Pittsburgh to the action plan you delivered on June 22, 2020, and later amended on July 14, 2020.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean Bonner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dean Bonner

###

Dear Black Senate student leaders,

Catalyzed by the murder of George Floyd in May, and alongside millions of other young people around the world, you renewed your call for action to dismantle systemic racism and other oppressive structures, right injustice and enact equity at every level of society.

On behalf of the Black student community at Pitt, you curated an action plan for the University that would help us achieve our collective goal of creating, nurturing and sustaining a community of belonging for our Black students. We commend you for your activism and engagement, and we understand that you expect a Pitt experience that reflects our core values. We all want Pitt to be the best it can be, because we care about the University and its community members.

Over the last several weeks, senior leaders at the University have listened closely to your lived experiences, reflected on our responsibility as an institution, and recommitted ourselves to addressing systemic racism within our institution and more broadly within our University community.

In the text below—and in the spirit of full transparency and accountability—we address your specific concerns one by one.

## AMPLIFYING THE BLACK STUDENT VOICE

- **Your request: Creation of the *People's Voice Committee*.**

The University commits to convening the Black Assembly within the next two weeks. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement and Secretary of the Board of Trustees will ask that Equipose and GPSG nominate four individuals who will serve for two years on the Black Assembly. The Black Senate will be asked to nominate six students to serve on the Assembly. This group will work to ensure that the agreed upon measures in this document are adhered to, and it will partner with the Black Action Society (BAS) to co-host the quarterly Black faculty, staff, students and administrators meeting.

- **Your request: Recognize the restructuring of the Black Action Society (BAS).**

The Division of Student Affairs commits to working with the Black Action Society and the Student Government Board toward a restructuring.

- **Your request: Provide full financial support as well as assistance with securing a location for events and projects that cater to the Black Experience.**

Student Affairs will work with the Black Action Society to support signature Black Experience Events and other affinity groups with offices in the Office of Cross Cultural and Leadership Development (CCLD).

Student Affairs agrees to complete the Divine 9 Plot Project and will continue its fundraising campaign to offset the cost of the project and engage Black alumni, faculty, staff, and students who are members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC).

The Public Art Committee has been engaged in a project to create a mural, location to be determined, and is prepared to seek input from the Black Senate at their convenience.

The Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement will also work with local artists to create an art installation that acknowledges victims of police brutality and other racist practices. All campuses will have an opportunity to gain access to the installation.

## CURRICULUM

- **Your request: Transform the mission and focus of our academic curriculum to be inclusive and comprehensive regarding the plight and triumphs of Black people.**

The University will develop a one-credit online course on systemic anti-Black racism and anti-racism, required of all first-year students and available for credit to all students and to all others not for credit. This is not the only curricular change we will make, but it is an important one that can be instituted immediately in the fall semester (2020), drawing on the expertise of our faculty who are leading scholars on these topics.

The University will make additional incentives and grants available for faculty development and recognition of inclusive classroom techniques.

- **Your request: Establish both a Master’s and a PhD Program in Black Studies/Africana Studies.**

This idea is under discussion with the Dean of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences.

## CURRENT FACULTY

- **Your request: All faculty and staff must undergo three training sessions a year (before the start of each new academic session) that cover topics on racial biases, microaggressions, micro-assaults, and equity.**

The University will add an anti-racism training module to the required anti-sexual harassment training for all new employees.

The University will create student-centered videos that illustrate and explain microaggressions for faculty and staff.

Senior administrators will have an annual training and progress retreat to evaluate our outcomes around anti-racism.

Student Affairs will require annual anti-racism training for all professional staff and student workers, will require bias incident reporting training for all professional staff and student workers, and will develop further guidelines for how to handle bias incident reports, effective academic year 2020-21.

Student Affairs will establish five staff in-service days reserved for professional training and development, effective academic year 2020-21.

- **Your request: Terminate the employment of racist and/or discriminatory employees on campus.**

The University will ensure that all students, and Black students in particular, are aware of bias incident reporting and what happens when a report is received.

The University will agree to publish statistics on bias incident reports.

The Provost, working with faculty governance, will develop questions for student surveys of teaching (OMET) about creating an inclusive classroom, such as: “Instructor interacts positively with students from different backgrounds” and “Instructor creates an inclusive learning environment.” These student evaluations will be considered when evaluating tenure files of faculty.

- **Your request: Increase renowned, tenure-streamed and tenured Black Faculty to 10% within the next four years.**

The University has named Dr. John Wallace as the new Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development to envision and oversee Black faculty diversity and development initiatives.

Schools and campuses will be required to develop diversity, equity and inclusion plans that must be approved by the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development.

Annual review conversations with deans and presidents include a review of faculty diversity targets and progress within their Schools and campuses.

The Provost has committed resources to hire a Director of Faculty Diversity and Development to execute Black faculty diversity and development programs, projects and initiatives.

The Provost has committed resources to develop and implement a university-wide Black faculty cluster hiring initiative led by the office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development. The University will launch an initiative to celebrate and promote Black faculty research and teaching—also organized by the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development.

Faculty hiring proposals will receive closer scrutiny to require plans for diversity outreach to Black candidates in order to ensure adequate diversity in the pools.

The University will hire an assistant director in the Center on Race and Social Problems to help establish the Center as an interdisciplinary, university-wide hub for race-related research and faculty development and support.

The Provost will engage the new university-wide tenure and promotion committee to develop expectations and guidelines for counting diversity- and inclusion-related service and community engaged research for promotion and tenure. The Center for Teaching and Learning will assist faculty in meeting these expectations and guidelines by expanding diversity and inclusion training opportunities.

The Provost has committed resources to mentor Black faculty and to support their professional development along the academic pipeline, from junior faculty to full professor.

For staff hiring and retention, the University will grow larger pools of diverse candidates by using cluster hiring practices and building pipelines of talent from our own graduates by connecting with Alumni Affairs and the Career Center.

The office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development will work with the academic units to design and implement Pitt's university-wide Post-Doc to Professor Program, to create a pipeline of outstanding Black Faculty.

The office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Development will lead Pitt's effort to elevate and celebrate its Black faculty and to promote their sense of belonging, through regular communication about their work and an annual "Celebration of Black Excellence" conference and awards ceremony.

## **CURRENT STUDENTS**

- **Your request: Emphasize the importance of Black students' mental health.**  
The University Counseling Center (UCC) will maintain the mental health workshops and group

counseling sessions created for Black students and will increase promotion of these programs and services through all available means.

The UCC will increase its clinical capacity to align with the percentage of Black students on campus by hiring additional clinicians who identify as Black/African American by Fall 2024.

The University will develop and implement a post-Master's fellowship program to increase opportunities for Black clinicians by Fall 2024.

The Provost releases a memo every semester reminding faculty of the policy that faculty should accommodate students' requests to miss class for religious holidays, and this memo now also will include, effective Fall 2020, accommodation for the exercise of the right to protest and an encouragement to be sensitive to the impact of racial/ethnic/gender hate incidents worldwide on Black students.

- **Your request: Create a space, aside from the BAS office in the William Pitt Union, on campus solely for Black students to congregate.**

The Office of Cross Cultural and Leadership Development staff will work with Black Senate leadership, Black graduate and professional students, and the Office of Facilities Management to explore additional spaces on campus that will allow Black undergraduate and graduate students access to a larger space that is more open for social gatherings and support during moments of unrest in our community.

- **Your request: Increase the population of Black students on campus.**

The University has set a goal of increasing the Black undergraduate population on the Pittsburgh campus to 10% within five years.

- **Your request: Include Black Pitt students in the recruitment and retainment of Black high school students.**

The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid (OAFA) will continue to increase the involvement and engagement of Black Pitt students in the recruitment, enrollment and retention of Black high school students.

- **Your request: Create a diverse admissions panel to focus on increasing enrollment and retention of Black students from the Pittsburgh area, lower socioeconomic communities, and abroad.**

The Office of Admissions and Financial Aid will increase the number of currently enrolled Black students assisting in yield/enrollment efforts of admitted Black students.

- **Your request: Establish three (3) scholarships of \$10,000 each for Black incoming first-year students in the memory of Antwon Rose II. Establish 48 scholarships of \$5,000 each for Black upperclassmen.**

The University commits to continuing to support need-based financial aid to Black (and other Underrepresented Minority) students, with the goal of continuing to reduce unmet need.

- **Your request: Become a sponsor for community outreach programs.**

The University has been actively increasing support for and engagement with the Pittsburgh community. Three examples are the opening of the new Community Engagement Center in Homewood, Pittsburgh Public Scholars (PPS) and the Pittsburgh Admissions Collaborative (PAC). The University is committed to continuing to expand and enhance engagement and partnerships with the Pittsburgh community. The Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement currently serves on the Board of Gwen's Girls and the Urban League, and these are just two of the organizations where Pitt contributes both in time, expertise and financially to community organizations that are meeting the needs of the Black community.

## **POLICE**

- **Your request: Terminate the employment of racist and discriminatory Police Officers.**

Students are able to submit complaints to the University of Pittsburgh Police Department (UPPD) or the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Office of Human Resources, the Office of Public Safety and Emergency Management, and Alert Line through the Office of Internal Audit. Disciplinary action for founded complaint includes and has included termination of employment. The University also supports the creation of an Allegheny County police oversight board.

- **Your request: 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.**

Pitt Police absolutely will hold their officers accountable upon a finding of wrongdoing. In the case of severe misconduct, termination may indeed be appropriate. UPPD supports the [Pennsylvania bi-partisan legislation](#) to create a disciplinary database for police officers.

The Pitt Police Department has a specific, detailed policy on reporting "Use of Force" incidents. The policy states that the incident will be documented when an officer used force beyond the normal guiding and directing in an official capacity on- or off-duty. The reports are prepared by supervisory personnel and reviewed by the officer's entire chain of command and subject to internal affairs review if force, or the level of force, is deemed unnecessary (Use of Force Policy, Section 13.0).

UPPD recognizes its responsibility to make every effort to serve all persons in a dignified and courteous manner, and exhibit understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity both in both professional and personal lives. The department is committed to working in partnership with the surrounding community to be responsive and blend strategic planning with community concerns.

- **Your request: Increase transparency with the Pitt Police and the campus community.**

The Chancellor has increased undergraduate and graduate/professional student membership and expanded representation by Black students on the Chancellor's Public Safety Advisory Council. The Chancellor's Public Safety Advisory Council reviews policies and procedures used by the University police, seeks to examine and understand the community's perspective on local and national issues of public safety, researches and discusses best practices for conducting police activity on campus and makes recommendations to the Chancellor regarding University action.

UPPD supports the Pennsylvania bi-partisan legislation to create a disciplinary database.

UPPD also supports the Executive Order for the Attorney General to create a nationwide database to track police officers with a history of misconduct. The order says it will track terminations, criminal convictions and civil judgments against law enforcement officers for excessive force.

UPPD will seek to increase minority attendance at its citizens' academy.

UPPD has provided arrest statistics to members of the Black Senate.

UPPD is considering how to track by race stops not resulting in arrests or citations.

- **Your request: Increase transparency with the Greater Pittsburgh community.**  
The proposed bi-partisan legislation would increase transparency of police records. UPPD has placed its policies on its publicly viewable website.
- **Your request: Respect an organization's rights when involving police presence.**  
Student organizations will not be assessed any security fees and will be allowed to request security guards in lieu of Pitt Police officers in these two scenarios:
  - The event is only open to the University community (i.e. it is not open to the public-at-large to include individuals not affiliated with the University); and
  - The hosting organization and/or speaker/performer do not have any specific security requests.

Effective August 2020, the University will establish a checklist of expectations for security guards and Pitt Police officers who are paid to support student organization events.

Student Affairs will develop and implement a customer event security satisfaction survey to be completed at the conclusion of each event by the event sponsor(s).

Student Affairs and the Office of Public Safety will co-host at least one Pitt Police Town Hall each semester for Black student representatives.

- **Your request: Establish University partnership with the Pitt Police department to improve their diversity training and have year-round training sessions.**  
UPPD has conducted implicit bias training and cultural awareness training and is open to other formats for delivery of these important topics to include training on Black adolescent behaviors and guest speakers.
- **Your request: Disarm and defund the Pitt police.**  
The University does not support an effort to defund or disarm the Pitt Police. As the police presence for more than 40,000 students, faculty, and staff members in an urban environment, UPPD provides crucial interventions in dangerous situations. In addition, the UPPD is an independent jurisdiction within the City of Pittsburgh. Without an armed and funded police

department, the University of Pittsburgh would necessarily depend upon the City of Pittsburgh Police Department for armed interventions, including response to active shooter situations.

- **Your request: 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 falls within the city limits and thus is subject to policing by the City of Pittsburgh Police. The City of Pittsburgh Police assist Pitt with investigations of crimes occurring on or near camps, with medical emergencies, and in responding to criminal incidents, such as active shooter situations. The City has also helped Pitt maintain low crime rates in the Oakland area, and Pitt has a mutual aid agreement with the City.

- **Your request: Facilitate meetings aimed to strengthen the relationship between Pitt Police and students.**

Student Affairs and the Office of Public Safety will co-host at least one Pitt Police Town Hall each semester for Black student representatives.

In addition, Student Affairs and the Office of Public Safety will co-host at least two informal events per semester to build relationships between students and Pitt Police officers.

Pitt Police will meet with students monthly beginning in September to hear student concerns and suggestions and to build the relationship between police and students.

### **A BETTER RESPONSE TO INJUSTICE**

- **Your request: Create a Black Advocacy Council.**

The University is committed to creating internal systems of accountability. Effective immediately, the Vice Provost and Dean of Students will coordinate quarterly update meetings with the Black Senate leaders and other senior leadership.

The University will create a committee of Black faculty, staff and students (the Black Assembly) to monitor progress and provide input as to how we can create a more racially equitable and inclusive organization.

The Black Assembly, served by the Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement and the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, will monitor, report and respond to current events that affect Black students and other underrepresented individuals.

The Black Assembly will post reports on the ODI website in addition to regular updates on the following:

- Annual admissions and enrollment statistics, retention and graduation gaps, graduating student debt gaps, unmet financial need gaps by race/ethnicity and by School/campus.
- Annual faculty diversity statistics disaggregated by race/ethnicity and gender as well as by School/campus.
- Staff diversity statistics disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, job classification.

- Institutional spending on outside services and supports by the business owner's race/ethnicity.

Responsibility Center heads will be annually evaluated on diversity goals and reports.

- **Your request: Stand in solidarity with Black faculty and students proactively.**

Student Affairs will continue to respond publicly to major crises that are likely to cause distress among students and use its voice to reaffirm core values and support for community members whose identities have been targeted by racially motivated injustices. Student Affairs will support affected community members and provide appropriate resources.

Leaders and departments from across the university system will be responsible for carrying out wide-ranging objectives and continuing the necessary conversations with collaborators and community members, including Black Senate leaders.

As an institution, we are committed to holding ourselves accountable and fighting all forms of oppression. We expect all members of our community to be anti-racist and do their part to build a community of belonging for Black students. We cannot ignore the intersectional nature of the oppression of Black people—which means that many Black people suffer from multiple forms of injustice—and which also unites us in our common claims to human rights and creates a rich source of allyship across identities.

We stand in solidarity alongside our Black students and in appreciation of your passion, dedication, integrity and fortitude in pursuing the realization of an anti-racist University.

Respectfully,

Ann E. Cudd, PhD  
Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor

Kathy W. Humphrey, PhD  
Senior Vice Chancellor for Engagement and Secretary of the Board of Trustees

Ted P. Fritz, JD  
Vice Chancellor for Public Safety and Emergency Management

Kenyon R. Bonner, EdD  
Vice Provost and Dean of Students