

On Behalf of the Underrepresented Minority Students at the University of Rochester,

We and our allies come together to demand that President Joel Seligman and the University of Rochester's administration implement immediate and lasting changes that will reduce intolerable acts of racism that students of color endure at our university. It is no longer sufficient for the university to solely acknowledge racial issues. We demand that the university partakes as a whole in fostering a community that addresses the needs and safety concerns of minority students. We can't be *Ever Better* if we're not together.

We, University of Rochester minority students, intend to discuss these demands with President Joel Seligman over the next two weeks and expect a commitment to specific and mutually agreed upon next steps by Friday, December 4th, 2015. Our list of demands is provided below:

1. Provide a Safe and Productive Learning Environment

- a. WE DEMAND the immediate blocking and/or removal of anonymous social media applications such as YikYak from the University of Rochester server.
- b. WE DEMAND that the University create and enforce comprehensive racial awareness and inclusion curriculum and training throughout all campus departments and units, mandatory for all faculty, staff, students and administrators. This curriculum must be vetted, maintained, and overseen by a board comprised of students, staff, and faculty of color and allies. It must include, but not be limited to addressing the effects of implicit and explicit bias, racism, prejudice, and bigotry, and how these things negatively impact our campus community. This commitment should start during freshman orientation for students.
- c. WE DEMAND the University put as much emphasis and funding in promoting the "Bias Related Incidents" reporting program as they have the CARE Program. The lack of focus on this important tool sends the wrong message about the University's commitment to combating racial injustice.
- d. WE DEMAND that the University create and implement a campaign to combat racial injustice at our university similar to signing onto the national campaign to combat sexual misconduct, "It's On Us."
- e. WE DEMAND a statement of recognition from President Seligman, the Dean of the College, and the Dean of Students to many current and former students of color for the hostile and exclusionary climate.
- f. WE DEMAND the protection of faculty and staff members who voice solidarity with students and/or express their concerns and experiences with the administration.

- g. WE DEMAND President Seligman hold a Town Hall Meeting focusing on issues specific to race. This issue has not received the recognition and attention it requires.

2. Improve Inclusion and Representation

- a. WE DEMAND transparency in the recruitment processes utilized by the Office of Faculty Development and Diversity to increase the number of faculty members from underrepresented minority backgrounds. In addition, we would like undergraduate minority students included in the process by speaking with candidates and attending job talks. Studies show that students that are taught by teachers that look like them generally do better academically. It is important that race is not confused with diversity and it is imperative that we focus on growing the number of faculty members from minority backgrounds specifically.
- b. WE DEMAND the revision of the Student Code of Conduct. The Discrimination and Harassment Policy needs to be expanded to further protect students. In comparison, the Sexual Misconduct Policy is more detailed than the Discrimination and Harassment Policy. Revisions to the Student Code of Conduct should address hate speech both in person and through social media. We demand the university follow harassment policies consistently to protect students from hostility.

3. Increase Funding and Support of Underrepresented Minority Students and Departments

- a. WE DEMAND the creation of a fund to support cultural groups served by the Minority Student Advisory Board (MSAB). These funds will allow our organizations to develop programming without barriers. These funds should be managed by the Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA).
- b. WE DEMAND OMSA be provided with their own office space separate from the Center for Education Abroad in order to efficiently serve their students. We, as students, do not have adequate space to receive the proper resources, support, and open environment that we need.
- c. WE DEMAND that the David T. Kearns Center and Minority Student Affairs be provided additional funding to provide enrichment programming and support to minority students. Also, that the Paul Burgett Intercultural Center have adequate staffing to address the needs of students on campus.
- d. WE DEMAND the Frederick Douglass Institute be established as its own department by 2018. For several years students majoring in African American Studies have had limited course options, which has affected their ability to fulfill their major; this is unacceptable. If the Frederick Douglass Institute is made into its own department this will give the administration a chance to hire more diverse faculty. In 1999, students fought to have this department supported and expanded.

The fact that FDI has been underfunded and received minimal support for the last ten years sends the wrong message about our University's commitment to the legacy and history of Frederick Douglass.

- e. WE DEMAND the establishment of the Douglass Leadership House as a permanent part of our community with funding. DLH is one of the few safe spaces for students to convene and discuss various issues around race. The Douglass Leadership House serves as a vital resource for ALL students, especially minority students and needs to become a permanent landmark at the University of Rochester. This will provide DLH the ability to become a permanent space for students to feel safe, learn, and dialogue around issues of race and culture.