

## **Demands Response Report Update: November 2, 2022**

The demand responses are in progress and/or are part of an ongoing process. This response report will be updated, as additional information/action is provided/taken. The bold text indicates the Black Student Association (BSA) demand, with the University's response/update below.

The November 7, 2022 update contains updated information for: AAS program rebuild; RA/hall staff training; faculty/staff searches, and more.

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To Western Illinois University,

We, as Black students who attend Western Illinois University, are demanding that Western Illinois University show that #BlackLivesMatter and do not just say. We are in a multi pandemic era, where Black people are at the mercy of diseases, COVID19 and anti-Blackness. There is only, truly, a concern for one. On campus, we have witnessed too much racism, micro-aggressions from professors, our RAs and people who are supposed to protect and be there for us. We are tired. For too long, we have experienced too much with little to no support and demand the following to be made immediately.

*For Fall 2022, the 1,310 Black students at Western comprise 17.4% of the overall student population. There are currently 406 Black students in the first-year class, which constitutes 38.2% of the first-year student body.*

**We demand that Western Illinois University rebuild the African American Studies department by allowing students to major in African American studies, providing more funding for the program and regenerating all that was decreased, stripped, in 2018.**

In Spring 2022, the Department of Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS) proposed a substantial restructuring of the LAS major, which included the creation of an African American Studies Option within the major. The Council on Curricular Programs and Instruction, the Faculty Senate and the Provost approved these changes, which will provide students with an expanded opportunity to focus their work on African American Studies. The new option requires 33 credit hours specifically in AAS courses. The curriculum changes went into effect in Fall 2022.

Following the the curriculum approval process, LAS Department faculty proposed and received approval to change the department name to better reflect its majors and minors. The former Department of Liberal Arts & Sciences is now called the Department of Race, Religion, Gender, and Multidisciplinary Studies.

A search is underway for a new chair of the Department of Race, Religion, Gender, and Multidisciplinary Studies. In addition to teaching AAS courses, the chair will be responsible for updating AAS course offerings and considering appropriate areas of curricular need and potential for growth.

**We demand that Western Illinois University includes Black students who attend Western Illinois University in the hiring process of professors for the African American Studies department.**

A BIPOC representative has been appointed for each of the searches involving the AAS program. Additionally, a BIPOC student is involved at each departmental level for CT Vivian Search Committee as part of the agreement to search in a particular department.

**We demand that Western Illinois University require that two of the courses offered through the AAS department is a required course for all students; the two courses are Intro to African American Studies and African American Literature.**

*[Information from Feb. 22, 2022 update remains current.](#)*

**We demand that a policy in the code of conduct is created to end hate speech, which should be defined in Western Illinois University Student Code of Conduct as “public speech that expresses hate or encourages violence towards a person or group based on something such as race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation” and the repercussion for a student violating this policy include suspension and expulsion.**

*[Information from Feb. 22, 2022 update remains current.](#)*

**We demand that Western Illinois University only support businesses in Macomb that support Black people and #BlackLivesMatter.**

*[Information from Feb. 22, 2022 update remains current.](#)*

**We demand that Western Illinois University hire more professors, staff, student affairs professionals that are Black or African American; and increase the ethnic diversity and racial makeup of the University by 100%.**

Carl Ervin, acting director of the Multicultural Center (formerly the associate director) has been named interim director of the new Office of Justice, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity at WIU and also the acting director of the WIU Multicultural Center. Mr. Leron Williams was hired as the associate director of the MCC, beginning his role at Western in Fall 2022.

Furthermore, two new C.T. Vivian Fellow Scholars began teaching at WIU this fall, and two of the four Fellows from 2022-2023 academic year have remained at Western in tenure-track positions. Tammie Leigh-Brown Edwards, a recent CSP graduate, has been hired to oversee the University's new HOPE Chicago program.

Twenty-one (21) faculty and 10 staff who identify as a member of an underserved population have been hired at WIU since the start of Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2022).

**We demand that Western Illinois University's University Union Board intentionally create more programming geared towards the Black college students.**

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc has returned to campus and is actively recruiting members. Sigma Alpha Iota is recruiting members and is hopeful for a Spring 2022 line.

Greek Life recently hosted two informational panels for organizations in the United Greek Council (UGC) - one for NPHC (Historically Black) FSL groups and Latine FSL groups in the Multicultural Center to promote joining the FSL community and allow students the opportunity to ask questions of current members.

The United Greek Council Yardshow was held Oct. 28, along with 'WIUnited: Multicultural Visit Day' to showcase USG to prospective students.

In addition, the Black Student Association, Cultural Expressions and other organizations hosted numerous events this fall in conjunction with Homecoming, including the Red Carpet Event, Open Mic Night and BSA Field Day.

**We demand that Western Illinois University's Office of Public Safety hire more Black officers.**

OPS continues to participate in career fairs and other opportunities to attract diverse candidate pools for open positions.

**We demand that Western Illinois University's University Housing and Dining Services (UHDS) diversity training is prioritized and expansive to include the history of the current campus climate at Western Illinois University.**

UHDS has expanded DEI training efforts, which included a diversity workshop in August for RAs and residence life staff with "Brave the Cycle" diversity company. The five-hour training session helped staff learn to talk about difficult topics with each other to better train them on how to facilitate difficult discussions and conversations on their floors.

All UHDS graduate and professional staff have completed the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) Assessment and had the opportunity to schedule a 1:1 debrief with a certified IDI Instructor. A two-hour diversity workshop is scheduled for winter RA training, featuring a consultant from Campus Speaks.

**We demand that Western Illinois University mandates that professors complete diversity training that also includes history of the current campus climate at Western Illinois University.**

The annual state-mandated Ethics Training, which took place October 2022, included sections on harassment and discrimination.

Furthermore, DEI Microaggressions training, which was introduced in February 2022, will continue each spring, as will Title IX training, which includes DEI-related content.

Additional DEI-related training and curriculum will be reviewed by the Anti-Racism Task Force and the Office of Justice, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity.

**We demand that Western Illinois University fully accept accountability and take the time to address the incessant anti-blackness that has plagued the Black community since 2018 and previously; moreover, aims to create a more inclusive environment for the Black community through a student-centered approach.**

The Office of Justice, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity has been established, and Carl Ervin has been named the interim director.

At WIU, we support our students and work to ensure fair and equitable treatment, in a safe, inclusive, and diverse environment, both on and off campus. The University recognizes the issues and concerns that our Black students, faculty, and staff face, and supports efforts, programs and resources to bring these issues forward, including the Black Student Association's Black Lives Matter protest in response to institutional and community racism, and to eliminate discrimination, racism, inequitable treatment, and anti-Black actions.

**Signed,**

**Black Student Association**

**Black Student Summit N.A.A.C.P.**

**National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, Incorporated**

**Preeminent Gentleman's Society**

**Preeminent Ladies Society**  
**African Student Association**  
**Black Male Achievement Network**  
**Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center**  
**Eta Eta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated**  
**Zeta Iota Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated**  
**Epsilon Beta Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Incorporated**  
**House Arrest 2**  
**Elite Beauty**  
**DollHouse Dance**  
**Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center Dance Troupe**  
**G.L.A.M. Modeling**  
**PPMT**  
**National Association of Black Accountants**  
**National Association of Black Journalists**  
**Beyond Beautiful**  
**B.A.G (Black Artist Guild)**  
**The Good Girls Movement**