

Actions “Beyond Words”

The Black Faculty and Staff Association’s Response and Challenge to President Timothy Law Snyder, Ph.D.

PREFACE AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Black death has once again awakened the United States to racial injustice. In response to uprisings throughout the nation concerning the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many others, President Timothy Law Snyder, wrote the LMU community expressing his hope for peace and his willingness to dedicate LMU to the fight against anti-Black racism. Incidentally, five years earlier, LMU’s previous president, David Burcham, wrote a similar letter after the eruption of student protests that began at universities in Missouri in response to injustices in the wake of the police-involved shooting of Michael Brown. President Snyder’s letter as well as the anger and anguish of the moment are painfully familiar to the Black community.

A half decade ago, Black students led the response to President Burcham’s message, drafting a set of “community goals” (which at the time was lauded in lieu of “demands”). The community goals were at one point placed on the President’s Office website. Given the constraints of summer and the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Black Faculty and Staff Association (BFSA) offers a set of demands. The word “goals” has not led to substantive structural changes, so the word “demands” better emphasizes that BFSA finds the current state of affairs intolerable. These demands need to be met in order for LMU to validly claim that it has made progress in efforts to fight anti-Black racism and equity on our campus.

BFSA focuses on primarily concrete actions instead of aspirational goals. If the items in this document are successfully addressed, BFSA will join with LMU in celebrating significant rather than symbolic progress towards becoming a more diverse and inclusive Jesuit Marymount institution. This document features two types of demands. The first is a demand for information. In order to fight against anti-Black racism at LMU, information regarding demographics, salaries, etc. needs to be available to BFSA. The university must cooperate in BFSA’s efforts to procure useful data about the LMU Black experience. The other demands are for action, concrete steps that will allow the university to manifest the hopes expressed by President Snyder’s “Beyond Words” letter.

BFSA will be the sole arbitrator of whether these demands have been met. It will be vocal in its evaluation, willing to praise the university publicly for performing the items it lists below but also willing to scorn the university for claiming a commitment that the university then did not fulfill. Acknowledging that some items can be accomplished more quickly than others, BFSA remains impatient with the institutional inertia that is historically, consciously, and strategically used to resist change.

DEMAND FOR INFORMATION

BFSA demands information regarding employees before December 1, 2020. The essential data that BFSA receives may result in alterations or amendments of this document. **The information is to be provided to BFSA each semester thereafter, becoming a standard dataset kept by the university.** “Black” here refers to self-identified Black individuals, including Black multiracial individuals if that data is possible. “LMU” here also includes Loyola Law School.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

BFSA demands that the Office of Institutional Research provide the following:

1. Raw number of Black students, along with percentage of total students, for every college and school, including a breakdown by degree program (both undergraduate and graduate majors).
2. Raw number of Black staff, along with percentage of total staff, for every unit, including a breakdown by department and/or supervisor.
3. Raw number of Black faculty, along with percentage of total faculty, for every college and school, including a breakdown by faculty rank.
4. Raw number of Black administrators, managers, and directors, along with percentages of the total numbers, for every division of the university.
5. Raw number of Black applicants for four-year admission, along with percentage of total number of applicants, for every college and school.
 - a. Of these applicants, the raw number of students admitted, along with percentage of total applicants admitted, per college or school.
 - b. Of those admitted, the raw number of students who commit to LMU by the national decision deadline, along with percentage of total commits, per college or school.
 - c. Of those who commit, the raw number of students who matriculate, along with percentage of total incoming class, per college or school.
 - d. Of those who matriculate, the raw number of graduates [using the six-year graduate rate data], along with percentage of total graduates, per college or school.
6. Raw number of Black applicants for transfer admission, along with percentage of total number of transfer applicants, for every college and school. Please use the same breakdown requested for four-year applicants above.
7. Raw number of Black LMU scholarship recipients, along with percentage of total number of scholarship recipients, per named scholarship offered by the university. This should include college-specific scholarships as well as athletic scholarships. This should also include clarification as to which scholarships are only available to students enrolling for the first time.
8. Raw number of Black LMU trustees and regents, along with percentage of total number of trustees and regents.

SUMMER 2020 FURLOUGH INFORMATION

BFSA demands an audit of the Summer 2020 furlough.

1. Total number of Black employees furloughed, along with the total number of furloughed employees.
2. Percentage of furloughed (for any amount of time) Black employees, along with percentage of total furloughed employees.
3. Percentage of furloughed Black employees, along with total number of Black employees.
4. Percentage of Black employees who received a salary cut or reduction in hours, along with percentage of total employees who received a salary cut or reduction in hours.
5. Information regarding the seniority of Black furloughed employees in comparison to other racial demographic groups.
6. Total number of Black employees who resigned from their position at LMU during Summer 2020.
7. Total number of Fall 2020 courses to have been taught by Black faculty that were cancelled due to budgetary or enrollment shortfalls without replacement course.

SALARY INFORMATION

BFSA demands the following information concerning salaries of Black faculty, staff, and administrators. BFSA is aware that there are cases where the median salary of Black people will reveal a single person's salary and cannot therefore be disclosed. In those cases, BFSA still requests the median salary of the greater grouping.

1. Median, mode, and mean of Black faculty salary by rank, along with median, mode, and mean faculty salary by rank, for every college and school. This should be accompanied by data concerning the matriculation or mobility of faculty.
2. Median, mode, and mean Black staff salary by division, along with median, mode, and mean staff salary by division, for every division. This should be accompanied by data concerning the matriculation or mobility of staff.
3. Median, mode, and mean of Black administrative salary by division, along with median, mode, and mean administrative salary by division. This should be accompanied by data concerning the matriculation or mobility of administrators.

DEMANDS FOR ACTION

In order to move from aspiration to reality, BFSA demands the following concrete actions by the university. BFSA is aware that these items will take time and sustained commitment on the part of the institution, but Black faculty and staff will not be patient.

ADMINISTRATION

1. Support and properly fund (immediately) contemporary and forthcoming demands of BFSA.
 - a. Incorporate BFSA's fundraising goals into all capital campaigns (including the current campaign) to ensure the sustainability of the community.

- b. Grant prioritization to these fundraising goals and access to potential donors and foundations.
 - c. Recognize and reward (immediately) the efforts of those who do the work of the initiative through merit increases; financial stipends; faculty, staff, and student awards; and rank/tenure/promotion consideration.
 - d. Meet with the BFA every semester to discuss progress on the demands.
2. Increase Black presence and leadership in MarComm and the President's Cabinet.
 3. Increase (immediately) funds for and adequately staff the African American Alumni Association, which has experienced significant defunding.
 4. Increase (immediately) funding for and prioritize housing assistance and provisions for all Black faculty and staff regardless of rank to effectively retain Black employees.
 5. Require all colleges, schools, and divisions to appoint a Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator who serves as a liaison to the Office of Intercultural Affairs. This coordinator is expected to fully participate in the meetings of their college or school's leadership team. There should be a standard compensation for this position across all of the colleges/schools.
 6. Permanently add Juneteenth to the University Calendar as a paid university holiday.
 7. Hold leadership accountable for the execution of diversity initiatives through a publicly available evaluation of diversity and inclusion. **The President is ultimately accountable for the success or failure of LMU's diversity efforts.** Then, at each level, the senior officer is to be held accountable for diversity efforts. Unit operating budgets and leaders should be increased or decreased based on their advancement of the demands in this document. Concerning diversity, blame must go upwards, not downwards. Higher administrators must deem failure as unacceptable.
 8. Pledge to make anti-racism, especially in its fight against anti-Blackness, an institutional value that governs the evaluation of success or failure of all university projects.
 9. Reject and refute the "Predominantly White Institution" label associated with LMU with the goal of transforming LMU into a known and celebrated anti-racist institution.
 10. Require anti-racist and implicit bias training (centering anti-Black racism) of all LMU personnel at all levels.
 11. Create a committee or task force (with compensated members) to research the effects of anti-Black racism and discrimination at LMU.
 12. Hire or appoint an Ombudsperson external of Human Resources that focuses on protecting the labor rights of Black and people of color at LMU. This can also be a team or include a third-party consultant given LMU's overall size. This position will handle complaints and exit interviews.

FACULTY

1. Decolonize (especially in terms of race) the LMU curriculum.
 - a. Move the focus of Studies in American Diversity from "cultural understanding" to anti-racism. Reevaluate all FDIV proposals for an antiracism focus and remove the FDIV core attribute from courses that do not have this focus.
 - b. Develop and require courses that challenge Eurocentric thought.

- c. Tell the truth about the role of the Catholic Church in colonization and the teaching of Eurocentric ideology.
 - d. Provide stronger support (including scholarship, grants, and other funds) for international study, especially in Africa and the African Diaspora.
2. Fully fund and coordinate a “cluster hire” of no fewer than 12 (at least 2 per college) Black tenure-track faculty members of varied ranks and disciplines throughout the university. These hires should be completed by the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year to immediately improve campus culture.
3. Acknowledge the critical role of the Department of African American Studies as the Black intellectual hub of LMU.
 - a. Provide funding for 5 additional (and separate from the above mentioned 12 tenure-track faculty lines) faculty lines (as defined by the department) to accommodate an antiracism curriculum. The department (as do all the departments in the ethnic studies village) does an abundance of service to the university’s core curriculum, which can negatively affect the ability of the department to engage and advance the discipline. The additional faculty lines will allow the department to cover and move beyond the core.
 - b. Retain all current tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty members, and issue multi-year contracts to non-tenure track faculty. Restore the hours and wages of the senior administrative coordinator, who will greatly assist the operational needs of the department.
 - c. Increase the departmental operating budget and the professional development packages of each faculty member to 25 percent more than the 2018-2019 budget allocation to maintain faculty members’ research acumen while assisting with an antiracism curriculum.
4. Acknowledge, celebrate, and fund the work of faculty who are doing research in critical race theory and African American studies as creators of new knowledge that informs and shapes the future of the academy.
5. Respect and financially reward the (“informal” and uncompensated) work of LMU Black faculty in considerations of merit review and rank and tenure. Additionally, this work should be considered when an LMU Black faculty member applies for administrative or other leadership positions.
6. Name (immediately) Dr. Cheryl Grills President’s Professor of Psychology in recognition for her work at LMU, and the Los Angeles Black community, with all the responsibilities and privileges (especially financial) that correspond to that rank.
7. Establish additional named professorships in every college and school to recognize Black academic excellence.
8. Ensure salary equity for all Black faculty by college and school in accordance with the median academic salaries of their fields.
9. Strengthen and fund mentoring and retention efforts related to increased numbers of Black faculty. Become (immediately) a member of the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity to offer services to junior Black faculty members.
10. Employ (immediately) a preferably Black therapist who has expertise in trauma related to anti-Black racism who will be available to Black faculty and staff at no cost.

STAFF

1. Restore (immediately) the jobs and salaries of all furloughed Black staff so as not to incur further losses to the community. The losses have already significantly and negatively affected the programmatic and cultural life of the Black community.
2. DO NOT furlough or lay off another Black employee of LMU.
3. Acknowledge (immediately) the critical role of the Office of Black Student Services as the Black community hub of LMU and increase (immediately) its budget by minimally 25 percent to accommodate programming and resources students will need to navigate an institution evolving toward antiracism.
4. Acknowledge, celebrate, and fund the work of staff (particularly Black staff) whose outlook and approach increases diversity and inclusion efforts, especially efforts towards Black empowerment and leadership.
5. Respect and financially reward (immediately) the “informal” and uncompensated work of LMU Black staff in considerations of merit review and promotion. Additionally, this work should be considered when an LMU Black staff member applies for new positions in the university, especially administrative or other leadership positions.
6. Name (immediately) Mr. Charles Mason Associate Director of Admissions in recognition of his work at LMU and the Los Angeles Black community, with all the responsibilities and privileges (especially financial) that correspond to that rank.
 - a. Increase (immediately) funding for Black Student Overnight, Black Scholars Day, and other recruitment activities by 40 percent.
 - b. Provide Mr. Mason with additional staff support to adequately fulfill the increased responsibilities.
 - c. Funding for 20 internships and work-study students.
7. Hire professional staff whose primary responsibility is strategizing and implementing effective retention methods of Black students.
8. Ensure (immediately) salary equity for all Black staff in accordance with the professional median salaries of their specialty.
9. Strengthen and adequately fund the recruitment, mentoring, and retention efforts related to having a more diverse (particularly Black) and inclusive staff.
10. Employ (immediately) preferably Black therapist who has expertise in trauma related to anti-Black racism that will be available to Black faculty and staff at no cost.

STUDENTS

Each demand that BFSA makes will directly or indirectly effect the experience of Black students.

1. Meet all the demands of #BlackatLMU.
2. Commit to offering an increase in scholarship funding for Black students that will be approved by the BFSA or Office of Black Student Services.
3. Ensure financial aid packages remain consistent and commensurate with tuition and fee increases after students first year to ensure better retention rates.
4. Incorporate Black student leadership throughout LMU decision-making processes.

5. Acknowledge, award, and compensate Black student leaders for their anti-racism work at LMU.
6. Respect the intellectual work of Black students in their assignments, especially when they choose to work on questions pertaining to race, Blackness, and issues of importance to their community.
7. Promote and fund undergraduate and graduate student research for Black LMU Students.
8. Hire (immediately) a Black (preferably male) therapist trained in anti-Black trauma who would be available to students.
9. Fully fund the Kente Graduation (with LMU Black community retaining exclusive creative control) and create an on-campus site for the celebration.

BEAR IN MIND

This list of demands is not at all exhaustive and is subject to alteration and amendment. This set of demands centers the needs of Black people at LMU but by no means seeks to undermine the needs of other campus communities of color. Some may view the fulfillment of these demands as exclusive gains for the LMU Black community; that would be illogical and ahistorical. As has been the case throughout history, when Black people are treated equitably and given the opportunity to thrive, everyone excels. In this case, if the university meets the challenge of these demands, LMU will finally achieve the encouragement of learning; the education of the whole person; the service of faith and justice for all.