

University of Guelph Black Students List of Demands For Administration

1. Address the underrepresentation of black administrators, faculty, and teaching staff with the goal of increasing the percentage of black faculty and staff members by 2017-2018. A recent, publicly available survey conducted in 2014, makes clear that visible minorities are poorly represented in the body of University of Guelph employees. Ensuring that black students see themselves represented in the University's faculty and staff across all departments is crucial to providing an inclusive environment: it means that students will be able to access a great range of experiences and knowledge's as part of our existence within the University community. Furthermore, the presence of black faculty in particular encourages black students to see themselves in teaching, research, and administrative leadership positions. . This is a major issue that the University of Guelph should address and investigate.
2. Address the underrepresentation of Black students in all programs. We find it troubling that our images are constantly used to promote the University of Guelph as a diverse campus, even as we find ourselves excluded and alienated in concrete ways as a minority population. We know that the University of Guelph is currently in the process of creating the #chartourpath strategic renewal process. However, as it stands, the process and end goal are vague, and fail to acknowledge specific issues faced by black and indigenous students on campus. A basic first step would be to meaningfully include black and indigenous students in the strategic planning process. Simply posting that there will be community consultations is ineffective as it fails to account for our existing alienation from the process as a barrier to participation. We wish to see proactive outreach to campus organizations that moves beyond tokenism, as well as the establishment of incentives to encourage students to actively be involved in this process. We expect to be involved immediately and for this underrepresentation to be addressed by 2016-2017.
3. Establish mandatory anti-oppression and equity training for all students, faculty, staff, and administration. The university has come to understand the importance of addressing social issues as a means of creating inclusive and safe communities. As seen through the "Can I Kiss You?" programming during orientation week and the campus-wide effort to implement training in relation to mental health, there is the capacity to prioritize large scale programming on anti-oppression.
4. Increase the number of scholarships (in SFS) and other funding available to black and indigenous students, including scholarships that focus specifically on black students with low-income backgrounds that express financial need. Financial insecurity is a key barrier to the academic success of black and indigenous students, but there are presently no in-course scholarships that cater to only students who identify as black and only two exist for those who identify as indigenous. Of the entrance scholarships, the Lincoln Alexander scholarship and the Devine Family Scholarship are offered to, "students who are Aboriginal, persons with a disability or members of a racial minority". This is not enough. The university prides itself on "diversity" and needs to demonstrate this by going beyond a single blanket scholarship to a more targeted approach consisting of multiple funding opportunities that address the specificity of our experiences of oppression.
5. Establish sufficient culturally appropriate counseling and mental-health services on campus to serve the mental, emotional, and psychological needs of black students. There is currently only one black counselor available that understands the mental health needs of black students. This counselor should have an experiential background and have an understanding of anti-oppression and work within an intersectional framework. The university should intentionally address this as they have failed to acknowledge how race, class and gender intersect.
6. Provide proper administrative support to facilitate the CJ Munford Centre implementation of the anti-racism taskforce. This includes the funding of a full-time position created through student life and overseen by CJ Munford Centre students. This position would be responsible for implementing the following: mandatory trainings on racism and cultural appropriation for first year students, offer support and counseling to black students and assisting the CJ Munford center with programming. In addition, the position will provide support

on programming for any events and campaigns pertaining to black students. We demand that this position is created and filled by February 2016.

7. Develop a plan to establish a fully funded and otherwise supported standalone Black, African, and Caribbean Studies Department. Given Canada's material (if understudied) involvement with (and implication in) chattel slavery; the establishment of Black refugee communities within our borders; and our continued direct involvement in the economics and politics of Africa and the Caribbean, it is clear that such a program needs to be prioritized. Furthermore, any new and existing curricular content related to Black, African, and Caribbean studies needs to draw on the well-established insights of critical race theory. Over the last decade, programming that previously enabled critical exploration of blackness has been markedly de-politicized. For example, courses like "Black America in the 20th Century" and "Black History" were cut in the early 2000s and replaced with "Africa and the Slave Trades" and "Migrations in the Atlantic World." Additionally, the removal of Women's Studies as a degree program has meant that various courses that highlighted the experiences of black women (such as "Women's History in Asia and Africa") are no longer available. This erasure of Black realities from the curriculum cannot continue and must be addressed. We are no longer willing to accept courses in which our only option for seeing our realities represented is to try to convince (predominantly white) instructors (who control our grades) to allow us to pursue topics outside the syllabus with "special permission."
8. Implement free education for Black and Indigenous students. This recognizes that the intersection of settler colonialism and slavery—including the dispossession of Indigenous communities and the extraction of wealth through the exploitation of Black labour domestically and internationally—has been a key factor in determining the shape and complexion of University of Guelph's curriculum, population, and structures of governance. Implementation of free tuition would serve as a means of recognizing and taking responsibility for this history.