

Kennesaw State University Demands

We demand an official statement signed by President Papp and the dean of each college assuring students of color (especially black students) safety, acceptance, and a welcoming campus environment. Considering Kennesaw State University is located less than 5 miles away from “Wild Man’s Civil War Surplus” (a store that openly sells confederate and KKK merchandise) a straightforward statement dedicated to separating the university from the racist culture in which it is surrounded would aid in alleviating the climate of anxiety and fear commonly felt by students of color.

We demand an end to respectability policing among students from staff, and an increased commitment to social justice on campus, which is listed as one of Kennesaw State’s values in the Student Code of Conduct. This includes allowing students to express themselves through on-campus protests, chalking, demonstrations, flyers, and other forms of student activism.

We demand student-led diversity training for all advising departments. Following the viral video of Abby Dawson calling the police on a black student – one who was simply waiting to be advised, as is usual – students began to pour out their own stories of similar experiences. Ms. Dawson, who is still employed by the university after the incident, has exposed the need for accountability in ensuring cultural and racial awareness among all advisors.

We demand the adoption of strong repercussions and sanctions immediately added to policy for offenders of racist actions and racial bias on campus. Current policies listed in the student handbook identify discrimination and harassment as punishable, yet do not sufficiently detail the punishments and repercussions which come with these acts. These repercussions must be sufficient in reach - meaning not just for student offenders, but for staff as well - and they must be clearly stated within syllabi. For example, black students often feel ostracized and offended by racially charged statements made (both in the classroom and in the Marietta Daily Journal) by Dr. Melvyn Fein of the sociology department, yet no black students have been properly advised on the best way to carry out their complaints. There needs to be a clear line of defense for these students which shows them the proper way to make these complaints and be assured action follows. We want to ensure that students of color know all of their options, and know which resources are available to them in the case of discrimination or microaggressions by faculty members, other students, departments, or any otherwise university affiliated party.

We demand a commitment to funds for an anti-racist education center, which was promised in 2010 by the President’s Blue Ribbon Commission, on the Bartow County land. The land in Bartow County, which was gifted to Kennesaw State University, is the land previously owned by the family of *Corra Harris - the woman who in 1899 published a horrendous and widely popular defense of the lynching of Sam Hose* - and the university still has not turned the land into a positive space for anti-racist rhetoric or action. Why does our university own this land, one that honors the life of an extremely violently racist woman who was praised for defending the lynching of people of color? What is our university doing to make effective, positive change to this land?

We demand that by the academic year 2017-2018, Kennesaw State University increases the percentage of Black, Latino, Native, and Arab faculty and staff campus wide to represent its student body. According to the Kennesaw State University factbook, white professors account for a whopping 78% of full-time faculty (292 tenured professors) while black professors only account for 8% (34 tenured professors) and Hispanic professors are only 3% (10 tenured professors).

We demand an increase in African, African-American, and other Ethnic based courses within all applicable departments; including Interdisciplinary Studies, Sociology, Criminology, History, Education, Psychology, Nursing and the Communications departments. Students and professors over the past year have noticed the amount African and African-American based/themed classes dwindling, and this must end. We demand an expansion and promotion of courses and programs related to *our* history. We hold the university completely accountable for continuing the expansion of the diversity within the classes offered in the existing departments.

We demand required cultural awareness, race and ethnicity, and intersectional LGBT diversity training for members of Greek Life and all student organizations on campus. No one should be exempt; student members of Greek Life and staff alike. Staff members are not agents of respectability, nor are organization advisory boards breeding grounds for respectability politics; we will no longer accept the tone policing, political bias, and overarching reach of the power of organization advisors. We must be allowed to fully articulate our diversity on our own terms.