

Tufts University Demands

President Monaco, Tufts University Administrators, and Board of Trustees,

On November 13th 2015, as Tufts University president, you sent out an e-mail titled "Building an Inclusive Community" in reaction to the recent protests by Black college students in Missouri and other universities across the country.

Your message addresses the previous top-down solutions to campus racism that Tufts has proposed, including the creation of the Africana Center in 1969 and the hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) in January of this year. While these steps are significant, we must not lose sight of the reality that the Black community has historically had our needs both dismissed and deferred by this institution. We have noted little effort from the CDO, Mark Vargas, to engage with Black students on campus, and we acknowledge that it was the history of Black student activism that eventually convinced Tufts to compromise and provide the Africana Center instead of establishing the Black Studies Major that Black students had been fighting for in 1969. We recognize that this struggle was revitalized in 2011 when, once again, Black student activism led to the creation of the Africana Studies major.

Additionally, your message suggests an increase in cross-racial dialogue in order to build a more "inclusive community."

However agreeable this may sound, the reality is that taking this suggestion would disproportionately benefit White students. An increase in cross-racial dialogue puts the burden of educating White people about race on people of Color, on whom the majority of the burden already is being placed, and this education is a labor. It is a labor that is both emotionally and intellectually taxing. It is a labor that goes unpaid for students of Color, meanwhile race-evasive professors receive full salaries and benefits. It is an unpaid labor by students of Color, enacted on a campus built on a former slave plantation that was stolen from Indigenous peoples – the perpetuation of institutional racism. In this moment, we find ourselves at the intersections of history yet again. Tufts' Black student enrollment and retention are falling as the university's endowment and total undergraduate population are rising. It is an undeniable reality that students of Color resist racism every single day on this campus. This is not rhetoric that Tufts hasn't heard before. Every day this reality goes unaddressed is an assault on our bodies. It is an assault on our education. It is an assault on our people.

We, a large collective of Black students at Tufts University, uniting under the name #TheThreePercent, have come together to demand that Tufts address our treatment as second-class citizens by this university. #TheThreePercent refers not only to our underrepresentation here as undergraduate students, but also to the same numerical underrepresentation that we have across Tufts faculty. We recognize that these demands are by no means all-encompassing, nor have we created them in order to suggest that their implementation will serve as a definitive solution to the systemic and interpersonal racism here at Tufts. Rather, woven into these words are the voices of the people of Color that came before us to this campus, whose narratives have been silenced and forgotten, heard and ignored. Imprinted into this page is the ink of the student activists that came before us to this campus, whose work was never translated into a grade point average. And guiding our message is the light we have seen in the radical professors that came before us to this campus, whose wisdom bolsters our resistance.

These words are our words. They are our truths. They are our demands.

The following demands are a result of the labor of generations of Black communities at Tufts University. The needs addressed in this document have been generated and written by Black people, about Black people, for Black people. In that, we mean to speak on behalf of solely the Black undergraduate students at Tufts Medford/ Somerville campus. We have not made these demands to imply that no other forms of institutional racism and oppression are perpetuated on this campus, but rather, in these demands is a collection of the specific changes that must be addressed in order for Tufts to carry out its obligations to its Black students.

Additionally, #TheThreePercent has organized with the intention of seeking authentic solidarity with non-Black students of Color and the factions of White students dedicated to social justice on this campus.

I. We demand that Black identifying students make up 13% of Tufts' undergraduate population.

While annual endowment, campus construction, and total undergraduate population have seen an increase in recent years, Tufts' Black undergraduate population has consistently been dropping since 2003. In 2003, 7% of all undergraduates were Black-identifying. This percentage has since been cut in half, falling to where it is now, hovering between three and four percent.

We begin our demands with the understanding that Black Americans makeup 13% of the United States total population. Any intention of the university to limit our representation significantly beyond this number is insidious, especially when comparable ivy-league universities such as Harvard and historically segregationist universities like the University of Mississippi have up to 12% and 17% Black undergraduates, respectively. Our implementation strategies for reaching 13% include:

- guaranteeing a minimum of 200 enrolled Black identifying students for class of 2020, each class thereafter should admit a minimum of 13% of Black identifying students per class,
- setting up an endowed scholarship fund specifically for Black students from urban public schools
 - o holding monthly fundraisers in the dining halls that redistribute meal swipe money into this endowed fund
 - o working alongside Tufts Black Alumni Association (TBAA) in order to develop this fund
- implementing a policy for need-blind admissions
- Going into majority Black areas with the purpose of recruiting black students

II. We demand that Tufts be better prepared to address the mental health needs of Black students.

The 2013 Diversity Report addresses Tufts inability to provide adequate counseling services for Black students. Black students report seeking less support from Tufts Counseling, despite experiencing “a higher rate of unfair treatment due to culture” (page 59). In nearly two years since its release, Tufts has failed to hire a single full-time Black counselor, and has not shown efforts to provide anything aside from temporary solutions. Our implementation strategies for meeting the mental health needs of Black students include:

- Hiring no less than two full-time Black counselors that specifically cater to the needs of Black students

- Forming a committee of no less than five Black undergraduates from diverse social locations, who play pivotal roles in the hiring process; these students should be nominated and chosen through the Africana Center
- Meeting this demand by the end of the fiscal year

III. We demand an immediate end to the racial profiling of Black bodies and the increased event surveillance of predominantly Black events by Tufts University Police Department (TUPD).

Black students on this campus face racial profiling, heightened surveillance, and discriminatory treatment from TUPD. Black organizations looking to host Campus center events have been forced to come up with an additional \$1000 to pay up to five TUPD officers to stand inside these events and oversee Black students. These groups already have limited funding, due to the racialized funding distribution of TCU, and are then made to pay for the university's racist surveillance. Additionally, we are made to empty our pockets, be frisked down, and walk through metal detectors. These practices have never been implemented at Fraternity houses, or any of the other predominantly white spaces that hold comparable events and have historically been responsible for the majority of the underage drinking, sexual assault, and illicit drug use. Our implementation strategies include:

- Conducting an investigation into the history of racial profiling conducted by University police
- Implement a policy that does not permit any police officer to stand inside of a campus center event without justifiable cause
- Utilizing the activities fund at the Africana Center to take the burden of paying no more than two officers to stand outside of events

IV. We demand that Tufts be better prepared to facilitate the transition to Tufts for undocumented, international, and first generation students.

Undocumented, international, and first generation students – particularly Black and working class students – have experienced difficulty supporting themselves financially during their time at Tufts. These difficulties result in less access to extracurricular engagement, academic support, and an increase in feelings of isolation on this campus. Moreover, students across the nation are currently advocating that universities increase minimum wage for students. On April 1, 2015, University of Washington increased the minimum pay to students to \$11. Students on financial aid must bear the burden of working extensive hours -- some students have claimed up to 20+ hours -- to fulfill their work-study program in addition to maintaining academic excellence. This puts students on financial aid at a higher risk of failing classes, not graduating and being more susceptible to mental health issues caused by overworking such as depression and general anxiety disorder. Increasing the minimum student wage would decrease the amount of hours a student would need to achieve their work-study program. Our implementation strategies include:

- Hiring a full-time financial advisor that specializes in meeting the needs of undocumented, international, and first generation students. They will match these students with on-campus jobs by identifying locations that employ non-work study students, and will assist international and undocumented students in securing work permits.
- Increasing the minimum wage for students to \$11/an hour

V. We demand a 25% increase in both the budget of the Africana Center and an increase in Black student agency in determining the operations of the Africana Center.

Outside of the Africana Center's student organizations, Black students have little agency in determining the Center's budget allocations.

With the increase in Black student enrollment, the Center will have increased financial needs that must also be met. However, allocating additional money to the Center that is not directly tied to additional student agency will undermine not only the mission of the Africana Center, but the university as a whole. Our implementation strategies include:

- Giving the Africana Center and its Peer Advising program the power to design their own a pre-orientation program (see Team Q orientation program at Tufts University, First-Generation Pre-orientation program at Williams College)
- In the event that additional funds are not allocated to the pre-orientation program, they will be used to fund Africana Center sponsored events
- Setting up an activities fund at the Africana Center for students without going through a specific student group

VI. We demand that Black professors make up 13% of Tufts total Full-Time and Part-Time faculty.

In the same vein that Black Americans make up 13% of the United States' total population, we assert that having just 3% or 26 full- and part-time faculty is unacceptable. In order to provide more adequate academic support for Black students, Tufts faculty must reflect the Black representation of the student body. We as students on campus have recognized the lack of black professors in certain fields, such as STEM, which has discouraged black students from entering certain departments. Our implementation strategies include:

- Formulating Black professorships with Black students as an integral part of the hiring process

VII. We demand that Tufts redefine their commitment to "active citizenship" to hold Tufts accountable for their discriminatory practices against student activists.

Tisch College defines a person engaging in active citizenship as a one who "understands the obligation and undertakes the responsibility to improve community conditions, build healthier communities, and address social problems" (Tisch). Currently, students engaging in active citizenship at Tufts and across greater Boston have been intimidated, disciplined, and demonized by the institution. It is discriminatory for Tufts to only value active citizenship when predominantly privileged students engage in it through this accredited programming. For these reasons, we will hold Tisch College accountable and we will be critical of the work they do under the Tufts name.

For example, Tisch's 1+4 program sends students work in predominantly Black, urban neighborhoods like Detroit, yet not only does Tufts not admit many students from this Black community, but the program also fails to send Black students to these cities. In the effort to extend Tufts' definition of active citizenship, our implementation strategies include:

- Allowing student activists to draw from the activities fund at the Africana center to financially support movements

- Implementing a policy that recognizes grassroots student activism as an intellectual and academic endeavor.

- o This policy must acknowledge the pain of racial injury and the labor of student activism as being justifiable means for academic extensions, and must require professors to comply with the requests made by students.

VIII. We demand that Tufts be transparent about the demographics of its students, academic departments, and professors.

The 2013 Diversity Report and other documents that contain demographic information, such as Tufts Fact Book, are currently inaccessible to the everyday Tufts student. The statistics frequently lump together all students of Color, and fail to acknowledge the diversity within the Black community at Tufts. This information is valuable and must be accessible to students. Our implementation strategies include:

- Making the 2013 Diversity Report accessible to a wider audience by creating a specific report for the Africana Center

- Requiring academic departments to publicize their faculty diversity by race, gender, and ethnicity

- Increasing the transparency of diversity statistics on the Tufts University website

IX. In the event that any of these demands are unable to be met, we demand the university make a public response explaining the explicit rationale for their noncompliance.