

Thursday, June 11, 2020

BROOKLYN COLLEGE MUST DO MORE... NOW!

On Tuesday, June 2, 2020, President Michelle J. Anderson released a statement which lacked a clear message of support, concern, and any true commitment to acting upon the conditions that inform the experiences of BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AFRO-LATINX, LATINX, AND STUDENTS OF COLOR at Brooklyn College. Given the documented history of meetings, working groups, and conversations with the university administration, and the undeniable resource-level inaction that has been taken, THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE STUDENT BODY AND THE UNDERSIGNED REQUIRE THE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL DEMANDS LISTED BELOW.

It is past time that Brooklyn College, an institution which prides itself on its “diversity,” does more for its BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AFRO-LATINX, LATINX, AND STUDENTS OF COLOR. The currently televised sociopolitical issues are not new. Still, throughout its history, Brooklyn College has profited from studying the many reactionary movements that come as a result of systemic racism, state oppression, and police violence—even when these movements have had the school as their place of origin. From [Muslim Students being surveilled on campus by the NYPD](#) in 2011; [President Michelle Anderson’s 2017 Statement](#) “[welcoming] police to use... campus bathrooms”; [Professor Mitchell Langbert’s sexist comments](#) in October of 2018; to [Professor Rohit Parikh’s](#) xenophobic statements in 2018; BROOKLYN COLLEGE *HAS FAILED TO STAND AGAINST HATE IN ANY MEANINGFUL WAY*. Without concrete actions or plans to protect students against hate on their own campus, the "We Stand Against Hate" campaign is a spectacle of virtue signaling that the university profits from financially and uses it to boost its supposedly progressive brand. Still, the College unequivocally fails to actually "stand" for their students in any way. If we are aware that racism, xenophobia, and anti-Blackness exist on campus, why are we not more worried that simply standing against hate has not produced any considerable structural change at Brooklyn College?

THE BROOKLYN COLLEGE STUDENT BODY BELIEVES THE COLLEGE MUST IMMEDIATELY DO MORE TO SERVE OUR BLACK STUDENTS ON CAMPUS. The educational success, community building, and the safety of Black students must be ensured at all times. Over the years, Brooklyn College has dismantled services established to help Black students on campus. In addition, the Town Hall held on June 3rd, and led by the Black and Latino Male Initiative’s Director, David Wells, and the Chief Diversity Officer, Anthony Brown, proved that even Black faculty are subject to the violence of policing through the proliferation of Campus “Safety” Officers on campus.

THEREFORE, WE DEMAND THAT:

- **BROOKLYN COLLEGE CUT ALL TIES WITH THE NYPD AND BROOKLYN COLLEGE'S PUBLIC SAFETY**, whether that be current, previous, retired, or future members of the state, city, federal or any other police force. In addition, all Public Safety Officials should be removed from campus. We mean exactly this: we are not calling for the defunding of Public Safety, we are calling for their abolishment. We firmly refuse any idea of private security companies, or any other entity that has policing included anywhere in their mission.
- **THE AFRICANA STUDIES DEPARTMENT** at Brooklyn College be prioritized in the College's academic and fiscal planning for the next ten years. This must include direct financial assistance from the College for all activities, events and course offerings that the Department is scheduled to have in the next TEN YEARS. A consultation with the Department and students should take place in order to assess how the support would look like, and what are additional needs on their part. The support should include the hiring of additional tenured-track faculty where needed in the Department, the reassessment of cross-listed courses and their value for the Department's future, and the emphasis of anti-racist policies across the College that allow the Department to function comfortably within the institution. In the case that the consultation produces a working group, it too shall receive funding from the College to serve the Department's interests.
- **THE IMMEDIATE HIRING OF CARIBBEANIST SCHOLARS** who can broaden the reach of the Africana Studies Department's course offerings and connect to many of our immigrant, first or second generation Caribbean students on-campus. We suggest Professor Aleah Ranjitsingh be highly considered for one of these positions given her commitment to teaching the few courses related to the subject in the College over the years.
- **THE IMMEDIATE HIRING OF A BLACK LATINX SCHOLAR** who can broaden the reach and focus of the Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Department, and cultivate their own research, teaching, and work . This parts from some of the [demands given to President Michelle J. Anderson on October of 2018](#)—which have not yet been fulfilled. The Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Department **MUST** also receive direct financial assistance and support for all activities, events, and course offerings that the Department is scheduled to have in the next TEN YEARS. A consultation with the Department and students should take place in order to assess how the support would look like, and what are additional needs on their part. In the case that the consultation produces a working group, it too shall receive funding from the College to serve the Department's interests. We suggest Professor Lorgia García Peña (Harvard University) for her work on Dominicans in Italy and her history of commitment to the Afro-Latinx community.

- **THE IMMEDIATE REPLACEMENT OF NECESSARY LINES** that have been lost, transferred or compromised for both the Africana Studies and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Departments. For Africana Studies, Caribbeanist Scholars; for Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, a scholar of Bilingual Education. In addition, the College must immediately assess the state of these Departments and ensure their success.
- **THE CENTER FOR BLACK STUDIES AND THE CENTER FOR LATINO STUDIES** be permanently reinstated on campus. These Centers must be funded, supported and promoted by the College. When they existed in the past, these Centers allowed for elders from the community to exchange commentary, thoughts, and learn alongside Brooklyn College students, we need this now more than ever. The Center for Black Studies AND the Center for Latino Studies should *never* charge members of the community any fees for using the services they may provide. The reinstating of these Centers must not affect the livelihood or use of space that clubs or student organizations currently have or have had in the past. In addition, these Centers must provide job opportunities, beyond work-study, for Brooklyn College students.
- **THE BLACK AND LATINO MALE INITIATIVE** at Brooklyn College be financially assisted and supported for the next ten years. Since its inception, BLMI at Brooklyn College has serviced Male, Female, and Gender non-conforming students from all demographics. BLMI has also provided consistent mental health and academic counseling; and we believe these are essential services that must be expanded.
- **THE IMMEDIATE CREATION OF AN ENDOWMENT** that ensures funding for scholarships, activities, events, and academically-related travel for Black, Indigenous, Latinx and professors, adjuncts, faculty, staff and students of color. This endowment is to cover all expenses, like the prices for room rentals in SUBO that professors currently have to pay, or any other expenses they might have.
- **THE IMMEDIATE REAPPOINTMENT OF ALL** Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who are Adjuncts at Brooklyn College. History has shown that non-reappointment can lead to the death of these already-underpaid individuals. (See [the case of Thea Hunter](#), who was a Brooklyn College adjunct and was not reappointed, for more information)
- **THE IMMEDIATE NULLIFICATION OF ALL LIMITATIONS** that keep members of the Flatbush and Midwood communities from accessing spaces and services on-campus. We must begin to allow people of the immediate communities surrounding the College to engage, benefit and enjoy the spaces and places available in this Public Institution. In addition, we reject the idea of having gates surrounding the campus, and demand their removal by next year (2021).
- **THE IMMEDIATE ASSESSMENT OF THE RIGHTS, OPPORTUNITIES AND PAYMENT** given to the Brooklyn College Cafeteria Staff, regardless of their employer's privatized status.

- **THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF A LETTER SUPPORTING ADJUNCTS, AND REJECTING ALL TUITION HIKES IMPOSED BY THE CUNY BOARD OF TRUSTEES.** This includes publicly standing against the reduction of 25% in budgets, or any cuts to budgets; and rejecting the increase of class sizes to any number greater than 20 students per-course.
- **BROOKLYN COLLEGE SUBMIT A DETAILED ACTION PLAN, BY THE 30TH OF AUGUST 2020, THAT EXPLAINS HOW THEY WILL IMPLEMENT THESE DEMANDS OVER THE COURSE OF THE UPCOMING ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021. THE COLLEGE'S RESPONSE SHOULD INCLUDE THE CREATION OF AN ANTI-RACIST COMMITTEE COMPRISED OF FORTY PERCENT (40%) STUDENTS, THIRTY PERCENT (30%) PROFESSORS, FACULTY OR STAFF, AND THIRTY PERCENT (30%) COMMUNITY MEMBERS NOT ENROLLED OR EMPLOYED BY THE UNIVERSITY OR THE COLLEGE. IN ADDITION, THE COLLEGE MUST HIRE AN OUTSIDE COMMITTEE, CHOSEN BY THE ANTI-RACIST COMMITTEE, TO ASSESS THE COLLEGE'S HISTORY OF HIRING AND RETENTION OF ALL BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AFRO-LATINX, LATINX AND FACULTY OF COLOR OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS.**

WE UNDERSTAND THESE TO BE THE IMMEDIATE ISSUES THAT BROOKLYN COLLEGE MUST SOLVE. The failure to commit to ensuring these demands are met will directly affect the College's image and, consequently, funding. It is also imperative that the voices of Black professors, students, faculty, and staff are centered in the planning and implementation of these demands.

AS AN INSTITUTION, BROOKLYN COLLEGE IS NOT EXEMPT FROM PERPETUATING STRUCTURAL RACISM. In fact, recognizing certain practices which perpetuate racism is the first step towards building an anti-racist space on campus. Like the gears of any machine, this system will work to hide its true issues, and the historicity of anti-racism on campus shows there is much to work on. This list of demands does not cover all of the issues of racism on campus, but it provides solutions to those that we can immediately address.

BROOKLYN COLLEGE MUST DO MORE, AND NOW IS THE TIME. BLACK STUDENTS, PROFESSORS, FACULTY AND STAFF MATTER.

If you wish to sign this petition send a Direct Message on Instagram to @br_pra or send email to bc.pra.1968@gmail.com

Signed:

STUDENTS/STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS:

- The Puerto Rican Alliance @ Brooklyn College
- NAACP at Brooklyn College
- Women of Color at Brooklyn College
- The Brooklyn College Sociology Club
- The Mexican Heritage Student Association at Brooklyn College
- The Brooklyn College Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Alliance
- The Queer Student Activist Alliance
- The BC PoliSci Club
- The Movimiento Estudiantil Dominicano (MEDo) at Brooklyn College
- The Children First Club
- BC Psychology Club
- Students for Justice in Palestine
- BC Socialists
- Carlos “Kizaru” Ortiz, President of the Omnicron Gamma Chapter, Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity, Inc. Brooklyn College-CUNY
- Brooklyn College Islamic Society
- The Anthropology Club
- BC Sustainability Club
- ΦΣΧ Multicultural Fraternity Inc.

BROOKLYN COLLEGE FACULTY SUPPORTERS:

- Dr. María Pérez y González, Acting Chairperson, Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies
- Prudence Cumberbatch, Associate Professor and Chairperson, Department of Africana Studies
- Jocelyn Wills, Tow Professor of History at Brooklyn College
- Carolina Bank Muñoz, Tow Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College
- Jean Eddy Saint Paul, Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College
- Jeanne Theoharis, Distinguished Professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College

- Alex S. Vitale, Professor of Sociology at Brooklyn College
- Alan A. Aja, Professor of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies at Brooklyn College
- Joseph Entin, Professor of English and American Studies Program Director
- Rhea B. Rahman, Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Brooklyn College
- Karl Steel, Associate Professor, English Department, Brooklyn College and the Grad Center CUNY
- Naomi Schiller, Associate Professor, Anthropology
- Gunja SenGupta, Professor of History, Brooklyn College and The Graduate Center-CUNY
- Mobina Hashmi, Asst. Professor of TV, Radio, & Emerging Media and Coordinator of the Women's and Gender Studies Program
- Dr. George Cunningham, Africana Studies
- Dr. Samuel Farber, Professor Emeritus, Political Science
- Prof. Antonio Nadal (ret.) PRLS Department
- Dr. Milga Morales (Vice President of Student Affairs, ret.)
- Beth Evans, Associate Professor, Brooklyn College Library
- Irene Sosa, Professor of TV and Emerging Media and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies at Brooklyn College
- Janette Torres-Arroyo, Adjunct Lecturer, PRLS Department at Brooklyn College
- Lauren Mancia, Assistant Professor, History and Studies in Religion, Brooklyn College
- Rojo Robles Mejías, Lecturer, Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies
- Kelly M. Britt, Assistant Professor of Urban Archaeology, Dept. of Anthropology and Archaeology, Brooklyn College and The Graduate Center, CUNY
- Adreina Torres, Doctoral Candidate Anthropology (CUNY Graduate Center), CLACLS Fellow, Adjunct Lecturer at CUNY Brooklyn College
- Katie Rose Hejtmanek, Associate Professor, Anthropology and Children and Youth Studies at Brooklyn College
- The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at Brooklyn College
- Eto Otitigbe, Assistant Professor, Art Department at Brooklyn College
- The Art Department at Brooklyn College
- The Children and Youth Studies Program at Brooklyn College
- John B. Van Sickle, Professor of Classics
- The Sociology Department at Brooklyn College
- Tracy Wong, Associate Professor, Health and Nutrition Sciences at Brooklyn College
- Celina Su, Professor, Political Science
- Margrethe Horlyck-Romanovsky, DrPH, Assistant Professor, Department of Health and Nutrition Sciences at Brooklyn College
- Kelsey Chatlosh, Brooklyn College Adjunct Instructor

ALUMNI AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

- Leslie Guadarrama
- Christopher Lasasso (Brooklyn College alumni)
- Lisbett Rodriguez (Brooklyn College alumni)
- Gisely Colón López, Salutatorian '15
- Abdalla Hassan, (Brooklyn College '95)
- Phillip Coard, (Brooklyn College '16) Social Studies Teacher, Instructional Technology Coordinator
- Emma Francis-Snyder, (Brooklyn College alumni)
- Dominic Clarke, Brooklyn College '15, Doctoral Candidate/Grad Student Worker NYU
- Julissa Olivo
- Kate McGorry, Brooklyn College alumni
- Mildred Nieves-Rivera
- Tine DiLuca, Brooklyn College alumni '12, Cinematographer/Filmmaker
- Dr. Amanda Chicoli, Brooklyn College alumni '10, Lecturer/Neuroscientist
- Stephen Thompson, Class of 2014
- The Urban Indigenous Collective
- Kate Doyle Griffiths, Doctoral Candidate, CUNY Graduate Center, Department of Anthropology
- Mary Seeburger, Brooklyn College alumni
- Karli Kopp, Brooklyn College alumni '15, Filmmaker
- Brian P. Sowers
- Dalila Mendez, Brooklyn College Alumni '16
- Nicole Sabino, Brooklyn College Alumni, '18
- Marissa Gamliel, Brooklyn College Alumni '09
- Joaquin Rosa, Class of 1973
- Ricardo Gabriel, Doctoral Candidate in Sociology at the CUNY Graduate Center

Last Updated on Sunday, June 28th, 2020