

## Response to the Anti-Racist Coalition's Six Demands August 10, 2020

Brooklyn College is committed to advancing an [anti-racist agenda](#) to improve the College and the lives of the thousands of students it touches each year. This work is bigger than any one of us as individuals, and should outlive our tenure here. It will take time, effort, and collaboration and, if we do it right, will positively affect the campus for decades to come.

Just before a zoom meeting on July 23, 2020, between the Anti-Racist Coalition (ARC)<sup>1</sup> and the Brooklyn College administration, ARC sent us the following six demands. We began to discuss them and asked to meet again to continue the discussion, but ARC refused to meet until we responded with “concrete proposals for action” on all six demands. Here is our response:

1. **Leadership:** *The Anti-Racist Coalition at Brooklyn College will be recognized as a leadership partner in the development and implementation of the anti-racist agenda on campus. ARC will work in conjunction with the president's cabinet and decision making will be in consultation, and require a majority approval process, with ARC faculty, students, and staff.*

We are eager to partner with students, staff, and faculty who are committed to anti-racist work.<sup>2</sup> However, it is not clear what a “leadership partner” means. This demand does not describe the membership of an implementation team, what its authority is, to whom it answers, whose “majority approval” is required, and who leads the team.<sup>3</sup> We cannot evaluate a radically indeterminate request.

2. **Staff Advocacy:** *Immediate review of denied staff promotions on questionable grounds. The review should set the standard of transparency and fairness that will be later advocated by the staff Ombudsperson.*

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<sup>1</sup> The groups that sent the administration earlier letters with somewhat different demands (Black Faculty and Staff, Latino Faculty and Staff, Faculty of Color, and Puerto Rican Alliance) are represented in ARC.

<sup>2</sup> On [July 8](#), we wrote: “The Implementation Team for Racial Justice, led by Chief Diversity Officer Anthony Brown and Vice President for Student Affairs Ron Jackson, is enhancing representation by asking for two student delegates from the Undergraduate Student Government and Graduate Student Organization, two staff delegates from the Black Faculty and Staff Association and Latino Faculty and Staff, and two faculty delegates from the Faculty of Color Group and Faculty Council. The Implementation Team is especially interested in members of the groups that sent the initial letters joining as delegates.”

<sup>3</sup> In the July 23 meeting, ARC complained that two members of the administration should not lead the implementation team. We asked how they suggested the team be constituted and led, and they said that they would not discuss it until we agreed to all six demands. Interestingly, the [ARC website](#) demands that an ARC-formed implementation team be empowered to deliver on ARC's demands with only one representative of the president's cabinet present solely to communicate to the administration the resources needed to carry out its demands.

We are excited to appoint a staff ombudsperson to support our staff.<sup>4</sup> However, it is not clear in this demand what the denial of promotion “on questionable grounds” means, and the terms do not appear and are thus not defined in the contract between the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) and CUNY.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, the College cannot set a new “standard of transparency and fairness” for staff promotions different than what is in the PSC-CUNY contract. Finally, the request that the College, on its own initiative, review denied staff promotions would not abide by Article 20 of the contract, which indicates that an individual employee or the PSC must initiate an informal complaint or grievance regarding “improper, unfair, arbitrary or discriminatory treatment.” Under the contract, the College has no authority to initiate a review of some class of promotions other than through a complaint or grievance.

- 3. **Endowment/Fund:** The immediate creation of a foundation account that supports students of color (whether that be in terms of pedagogy, or travel to conferences). The guidelines for this endowment must be established under close consultation with members of ARC and other professionals to ensure the long-term effects that it is to have on the lives of those who can benefit from it.*

Maximizing all existing opportunities for student support<sup>6</sup> and fundraising for more<sup>7</sup> are both crucial. However, designating funds for students exclusively on the basis of race

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<sup>4</sup> On [July 2](#), we wrote that our Staff Ombudsperson will “enhance the professional development and retention of staff of color. Additionally, the Staff Ombudsperson will analyze the representation of Black staff and staff of color in each title and at each level at Brooklyn College, which will include hiring, retention, and promotion. The Ombudsperson will also gather feedback from staff and make recommendations for additional supportive measures.”

<sup>5</sup> Some series titles under the contract are not promotional titles (e.g., HEOs) and some salary increases are discretionary (e.g., HEO Series Discretionary Assignment Differential), so those denials would not be reviewable. The [ARC website](#) demands that the staff ombudsperson have “the power to oversee promotions, disputes, and contract negotiations,” which the PSC-CUNY contract would prohibit.

<sup>6</sup> Funding to support student activities, including travel, is available through Student Government for recognized student organizations. These funds are allocated for students by students through student activity fees. In the 2019-20 academic year, before the pandemic, nine student trips occurred, which included trips by the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), the National Black Law Students Association, and two trips by the NAACP. In the prior year, 20 trips occurred, which included trips by NABA, Caribbean Student Union, Minority Association of Pre-Health Students, Women of Color, and two trips by the NAACP. The Study Abroad Student Association also funds study abroad through student activity fees, as does the Black and Latino Male Initiative through private donations.

<sup>7</sup> We have had many successes over the past few years fundraising for new student support. We raised seed funding for the Immigrant Student Success Office (ISSO), which we prioritized when faculty and students lobbied for it. We raised student emergency grants in ISSO from the Robin Hood Foundation. We raised funds from the Petrie Foundation to support our transfer students, who are disproportionately students of color. We raised more than \$2.5 million in completion grants to provide students who do not otherwise have the means to pay tuition and remain enrolled with critical support, which has supported many students of color.

would violate CUNY’s anti-discrimination policy.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, Title VI indicates that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race or color, be denied the benefits of any program that receives federal financial assistance. As a result, public colleges may not create foundation accounts on the basis of race.

4. **Faculty Hiring, Retention, and Promotion:** *The first lines in the upcoming academic year going to Africana and PRLS, in addition to a commitment to fundraising to support the development of a pipeline of scholars, post-docs, adjuncts, and alumni to develop their teaching and research.*

We have already indicated that faculty lines in Africana Studies and PRLS are a hiring priority.<sup>9</sup> We have two others. First, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the University’s hiring freeze prevented us from hiring four faculty from searches authorized last year, despite the fact that a number of finalists were people of color. Second, Computer and Information Sciences (CIS) is one of the most popular majors at the College, and the CIS department has just tragically lost two teaching, tenured faculty members to COVID-19.

Before we are able to announce any hiring plans, we must abide by the process developed by the Council on Administrative Policy, which includes consultation with the Department Chairs, Deans, Provost, Master Planning, Vice President for Administration and Finance, and others. Although we have not been able to adhere to the timeline fully due to COVID-19, the process has begun in this cycle, and we must engage in the appropriate consultation.

5. **Anti-Racist Pedagogy:** *Dedicate funds for developing critical pedagogies, materials, and trainings for anti-racist instruction in conjunction with external consultation with the African American Policy Forum. This is in addition to recognizing faculty who already invest time and energy to this effort. In this way, we can both recognize the important work being done in house while also incorporating other experts in critical pedagogy to transform Brooklyn College into an anti-racist institution.*

The Brooklyn College curriculum is entirely within the purview of the Faculty Council, and classroom pedagogy is one aspect of a professor’s academic freedom. We agree

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<sup>8</sup> [CUNY’s Anti-Discrimination Policy](#) states: “It is the policy of the University—applicable to all colleges and units—to ... provide services for students without regard to race, color, [or] creed....” See also New York State Human Rights Law § 296(1)(a); N.Y.C. Human Rights Law (Title 8 Administrative Code of the City of New York).

<sup>9</sup> On [July 2](#), we wrote, “We will work to increase institutional support for the departments of Africana Studies and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies.” On [July 14](#), we “noted that the departments of Africana Studies and PRLS are critical to the College, and that faculty lines are at the heart of what these departments need to thrive.”

that we must raise funds to offer training in critical and innovative pedagogy and that we should recognize faculty who are already investing time and energy in this effort.<sup>10</sup>

6. **Campus Safety:** *Immediately restrict access of the NYPD on campus and issue a public statement and work towards ensuring the trust of BIPOC students. This public acknowledgement leads the initiative to transform the idea of safety that is anti-racist and student centered.*

There is no police presence on the Brooklyn College campus, except when: (1) There is an emergency,<sup>11</sup> or (2) An individual police officer needs to use the restroom—a courtesy that the College, as part of the NYC infrastructure, extends to all other City employees in the field, including EMTs, fire fighters, and sanitation workers. Were there a threat of additional police presence on campus, we would prohibit it. Any change to this policy would require consultation with the [Policy Council](#).

ARC asserts that these six demands are “immediately implementable.” They are not. A college administration cannot enact sustainable change by decree. If we wish to enact enduring change that enjoys the full authority of the College, and is capable of withstanding legal and other challenges, we must respect the Brooklyn College governance structure, including the authority of the Faculty Council, Policy Council, and Council on Administrative Policy. We must follow the requirements of the PSC-CUNY contract, as well as the policies of CUNY. We must follow federal, state, and local anti-discrimination laws. Following these rules is the only way that institutional change garners legitimacy.

The tasks at hand will require dialog among us and the persuasion of one another, as well as others who occupy leadership positions throughout the campus. Ours is a system of shared governance between the administration and the faculty at Brooklyn College and, as such, any proposals for change must engage other stakeholders.

All members of the administrative leadership at Brooklyn College are committed, personally and professionally, to enacting an anti-racist agenda in their respective areas of authority. We want to partner with all people of good faith who seek to bring meaningful and sustainable change to this institution. As you know, the President has empowered Vice President for Student Affairs Ron Jackson and Chief Diversity Officer Anthony Brown to facilitate an implementation team to enact our articulated agenda. Please let us know by Monday, August 17, if you would like to join the team to create a better, safer, and more just Brooklyn College, one that is worthy of its mission, history, and promise.

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the development of critical pedagogies has been an ongoing centerpiece of the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) where Maddy Fox and Donna Granville have been doing great work. A number of faculty are now working closely with them to enhance the anti-racist resources on pedagogy available to faculty.

<sup>11</sup> The 1992 MOU between CUNY and the NYPD authorizes the NYPD to enter the campus whenever it receives a report of an emergency situation. Therefore, Brooklyn College, as part of CUNY, cannot restrict access of the NYPD in those circumstances.

To the Brooklyn College President's Cabinet:

Your response to our demands is disappointing and mostly repeats what you articulated in our first meeting on July 23. While you continue to state your willingness to engage and work with ARC, your objections and/or refusals do not reflect a willingness to engage sincerely and in good faith with our demands and present solutions or paths forward that address the problems on campus holistically.

You end with an ultimatum about joining a team to facilitate President Anderson's anti-racist agenda. We have repeatedly explained the necessity that the team be led by faculty, staff, and students and not be centered on the roles of administrators if these efforts are to have any legitimacy or hope of succeeding. Your response dismisses these concerns.

Previous task forces that were convened by the administration, such as the LGBTQ Task Force, have had a structure similar to what you recommend for this implementation team. The recommendations of the LGBTQ Task Force, which were both inexpensive and easily accomplished, were ignored or put off repeatedly for years. Our skepticism about your willingness and ability to act is grounded in history.<sup>12</sup>

We are committed to creating a true anti-racist campus. We have the expertise, imagination, and willingness to figure out solutions. As you know, both ISSO and the recent grant by the Robin Hood Foundation happened because **we** (faculty and staff) made them happen and because President Anderson recognized the value of our ideas and assisted by making ISSO a fundraising priority and securing a donor. We know how hard the faculty and staff of the Center for Teaching and Learning are working and, again, its initiatives are community-led efforts where the institution's ability to meet a challenge comes from the creativity, commitment, and inadequately compensated labor of faculty, staff, and students.

We invited you to be partners with us in developing a plan to create an anti-racist campus and we looked to you to demonstrate your good faith by committing resources (both financial and the will to act) that are at least equal to what faculty, students, and staff have donated over the years in uncompensated labor. However, you have (with the exception of the Staff Ombudsperson) couched your responses in terms of what you cannot do, instead of what could be possible. Instead of engaging with our demands in a manner that acknowledges the Brooklyn College administration's long history of ignoring requests - a history that has led to a justified mistrust of good intentions not backed by actual investment of resources - you resorted to hiding behind legal language and invoking "shared governance" in order

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<sup>12</sup> See the "[Timeline of Inaction](#)" on the ARC website. And, reflect for a minute on the immediate context for our exchange: President Anderson emailed the college with her "anti-racist agenda" on July 2 - the same day as the first ARC demonstration. At the same time as she announced "listening sessions," she had repeatedly refused invitations to meet with and talk to student, staff, and faculty groups. Her statement - in its timing and in its content - is clearly an attempt to co-opt and neutralize the demands made by the BFS/LFS/FOC and by the PRA.

to commit to nothing. You forget, perhaps, that we also understand union contracts, governance documents, and legal regulations. Further, invoking “shared governance” is deeply ironic since the administration’s investment in genuine and timely consultation with faculty and staff or students fluctuates depending on convenience. Therefore, we have to now spell out each of our demands in detail and provide the solutions ourselves instead of the more collaborative process we had hoped for.

The full document that lays out a roadmap for the next few years will be posted to our website by August 30.<sup>13</sup> What is below is a list of immediate actions that the administration can take if it is indeed serious about wanting to create an anti-racist campus. This is a start and is the bare minimum needed to demonstrate a good faith commitment to moving forward.

We present the following solutions with the understanding that eradicating institutionalized racism is a long term project. Public and private colleges and universities across the country are taking substantive actions to improve the lives of their BIPOC students, staff and faculty. In doing so, they recognize that these changes not only benefit historically marginalized communities but all members of the campus. Rather than be reactive, we are asking you to join us in being proactive and creative in building a campus where all feel welcome.

## **Leadership**

The Implementation Team will be formed by ARC and will be comprised of faculty, staff, and students who have long committed to anti-racist work. This team will include two representatives of the President’s cabinet who will be responsible for communicating with senior administration and securing the resources needed to implement initiatives.

- *Implementation:*
  - Membership and structure: This team will have 8 members: 2 students, 2 faculty, 2 staff, and 2 admin. The student, staff, and faculty members will be named by ARC. The team will meet at least monthly during 2020-2021. All members will be empowered to add agenda items. Decisions will be made by majority vote.
  - Charge: Quoting from President Anderson’s “[anti-racist agenda](#)”: “The Implementation Team will coordinate the collective development of a comprehensive plan on all issues and action items advanced to the administration. The Team will ensure coordination among many initiatives underway, so that we can maximize the impact of our campuswide effort.”
  - Authority: The Team will have a budget of \$10,000 for 2020-2021 to enable it to autonomously support measures such as anti-racism training. The Committee’s recommendations will be placed on the

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<sup>13</sup> The [June 11 letter by the PRA](#) (Puerto Rican Alliance) called on the administration to provide a detailed action plan by this date. Since the administration has failed to do so, ARC will provide an action plan.

agenda for CAP, relevant Policy Council standing committees, and it will work with Faculty Council committees, student government, and other non-administration leadership bodies to further the plan developed. Further, the President will empower the Team to meet with senior administrators as needed (e.g. Alan Gilbert, Facilities etc.)

- Accountability: The Team will be accountable to the College community. It will publish its minutes on the ARC website, will be fully transparent about budgets, and will hold a public meeting that the administration will advertise and promote, once a semester.
- *Resources:*
  - Financial: A budget of \$10,000 for 2020-2021 (see above). The student members will have student fees waived in acknowledgment of their work. Staff and part-time faculty members will receive appropriate compensation. [This team **cannot** replicate the exploitation of BIPOC people’s labor in the name of diversity as it works toward an anti-racist campus.]<sup>14</sup>
  - Administrative will: A commitment to placing and endorsing the Team’s recommendations on the agenda of the bodies mentioned above and to providing access to senior administrators.

## **Staff Advocacy**

First, the creation of the position of a Staff Ombudsperson who is adequately compensated for their work. Second, the development of a process for prioritizing the internal hiring and promotion of Brooklyn College staff, with a history of excellent service, to vacated positions in the higher offices at the college.

### Staff

#### Ombudsperson

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#### *Implementation:*

- Position description: From the President’s “[anti-racist agenda](#)”: “the Staff Ombudsperson will analyze the representation of Black staff and staff of color in each title and at each level at Brooklyn College, which will include hiring, retention, and promotion. The Ombudsperson will also gather feedback from staff and make recommendations for additional supportive measures.” ■

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<sup>14</sup> We would like to draw your attention to the College Wide Council on Advising as well as to assessment efforts that have been supported by reassigned time for lead faculty. The college considers these important priorities worth the resources. The work of the Implementation Team is no less important and also directly supports the Strategic Plan. On a historical note, the initial incarnation of the College Wide Assessment Council not only gave reassigned time to all 5 faculty members, it was also authorized to decide on how assessment would be conducted and on selecting assessment software. The push for assessment was because of external pressure from MSCHE. We’re asking you to do what is important and necessary without being forced to do so. In the same way, similar practices can be found among USG, where the highly active positions are considerably compensated by the College through a portion of Student Activity Fees.

The Staff Ombudsperson's analysis of hiring, retention, and promotion will include an analysis and review of all promotion and salary differential decisions made in the last two years for equity.

- The above analysis will result in the creation of a new, clear set of criteria for eligibility for promotion and salary differentials that does not contradict any contractual agreements with the PSC or DC-37.
  - The Staff Ombudsperson will, at the request of the staff member, work with PSC and DC-37 representatives to ensure the process of applying for a promotion or a [salary differential](#) goes smoothly.
  - Accountability: The Staff Ombudsperson will be selected from names nominated by the Implementation Team. They will work in partnership with the Chief Diversity Officer and will share a public report while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.
- *Resources:*
    - A staff-line

### Internal Hiring and

#### Promotion ●

##### Implementation:

- Reasons for denial of promotions or differentials should be provided. This is not contractually required but will go a long way to establish confidence in the process and help future applicants.
- More public and clearly accessible job postings to make sure people know about them.
- Proactively soliciting applications from Brooklyn College employees for positions in their line
- Publicizing the [civil service exam preparation](#) and mentoring services offered by DC-37 and paying the filing fees at least once for each employee.
- Automatic consideration of the CVs of Brooklyn College employees in a databank for open positions ● *Resources:*
  - Funds to pay filing fees for exams
  - Willingness to be transparent in decision-making
  - Time from IT, HR, and Communications to develop and implement the process described above.

To your objection about this demand stepping on the union contract: yes, Brooklyn College cannot unilaterally set a **different** or **lesser** standard, but neither PSC nor DC-37 would object to Brooklyn College doing better or more than this standard by striving to see that all staff are promoted as a result of a fair evaluation and that they are both better informed about and encouraged to move ahead in their careers.

## **Endowment/Fundraising**

The creation of a set of fundraising initiatives to support student anti-racist scholarship and public service; to extend student emergency support; to establish post-doctoral positions and endowed chair positions in support of the departments of Africana Studies and PRLS; and, to create a pipeline of young scholars from underrepresented groups on campus. The guidelines for this endowment must be established under close consultation with members of ARC and other professionals to ensure the long-term effects that it is to have on the lives of those who can benefit from it.<sup>15</sup>

### ● *Implementation*

- Meeting with Todd Galitz and the head of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs to create a fundraising plan for a set of post-docs on campus (with at least one to be based in Africana and another to be based in PRLS) and to create a pipeline of scholars on campus from underrepresented groups.
- Move all money collected by the Black Faculty and Staff group in the inaccessible Members Org accounts into a Brooklyn College Foundation account, so that BFS can continue with their activities.
- Commit to the Implementation Team's complete discretion in deciding how to use at least 51% of the [recently announced Mellon Foundation](#) grant that is allocated to Brooklyn College.
- Create a process for greater inclusion of faculty voices in Brooklyn College Foundation activities with the goal of increasing diversity among donors at Brooklyn College.
- Currently Brooklyn College Foundation accounts can be formed only for donations of \$10,000 or more. Change to allow for accounts of \$2,500 or more. This will allow departments/programs and on-campus organizations to create scholarships that can act as a core for further fundraising.
- Feature the [Petrie and Emergency Grant Fund](#) more prominently on the College's website. For the foreseeable future, given the realities of the pandemic, remove the following requirements: 2.0 GPA, good record of conduct, and, if legally possible, the U.S. citizenship requirement. Fundraise more aggressively for this fund so that students can get larger emergency grants, particularly given the pandemic.

### ● *Resources*

- Brooklyn College Foundation staff time and will to cooperate
- Transparency about resources
- Search for donors

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<sup>15</sup> On the subject of scholarships for students of color, you responded "designating funds for students exclusively on the basis of race would violate CUNY's anti-discrimination policy." However, in the spirit of the CUNY Thomas Tam Scholarship that awards "\$1,000 to an individual qualified undergraduate student that is currently enrolled at any of the twenty-one colleges within CUNY, Asian or non-Asian, who has demonstrated creativity in the communication of the concerns of the Asian American community in areas such as health, education, culture, media and advocacy", there should be a way to create more of these types of awards.

- President Anderson's directive to make this a priority for Brooklyn College fundraising.

### **Faculty Hiring, Retention, and Promotion**

The first two full-time, tenure-track lines for faculty starting in Fall 2021 will go to the Department of Africana Studies (one line) and to the Department of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies. Additionally, the Department of Puerto Rican and Latina Studies will receive sublines for 2020-2021.

- *Implementation*

- The Provost makes a public announcement to this effect without any hedging.

- *Resources*

- Transparency and political will

This is the easiest and most straightforward of the demands we have. As you said in your response, the Provost has already indicated these are a priority. And yet, you refuse to actually commit, which is baffling.

Your response also indicated an unclear understanding of what diversity means since you conflate two entirely different issues: We do need more Black and Latinx faculty in **all** departments and we support the desire to ensure that we can complete hires that would increase faculty diversity. However, this is not at all the same thing as adequately supporting Africana Studies (a department that has not had a successful regular search in almost 20 years) and making PRLS whole.

You mention the need to make CIS whole while being content leaving PRLS radically understaffed yet again. This is not what an anti-racist agenda looks like. If you like, we can provide you with data on student and faculty FTEs, FT faculty/student ratios, and any other metric you wish, to show that there are other departments on campus beside CIS (and besides PRLS and AFST) who have a more urgent need for full-time faculty. Your decision to prioritize CIS reveals the administration's values.<sup>16</sup> We are asking you to stand by the Strategic Plan and to value the education PRLS and AFST provide for all our students.

Finally, the consultation process is just that - consultation. The Provost has, in the past, made decisions about lines ahead of this process based on his/her understanding of the College's priorities. This is their right even if it is not truly illustrative of shared governance. It is hypocritical to now invoke a process that has not been fully respected in the past, especially

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<sup>16</sup> To be absolutely clear: this is **not** about the department of Computer and Information Science in particular or any objection to supporting a growing major. You mentioned CIS and we are simply pointing out the assumptions embedded in your response.

when that consultation repeatedly resulted in strong recommendations to allocate lines to PRLS and AFST, recommendations that were ignored.

### **Anti-racist pedagogy**

Dedicate funds beyond the \$10,000 mentioned above for the continued development of critical pedagogies, materials, and trainings for anti-racist instruction in conjunction with external consultation (upon request, the names of the organizations have been provided to Associate Provost Tammy Lewis).<sup>17</sup>

- *Implementation*

- The Provost and Deans will urge and enable departments to conduct a curricular review to identify how to incorporate critical examination of social issues in the field, with the goal of introducing these issues in their lower level courses.
- Create a schedule of faculty workshops, symposia, and external training on antiracist pedagogy and current best practices to create inclusive classrooms and curricula in a variety of fields during 2020-2021.
- Work with the Center for Teaching and Learning to develop a certification process that celebrates pedagogical achievements and creativity in the classroom with a particular emphasis on critical instruction across the curriculum.

- *Resources*

- Funding to support the Center for Teaching and Learning to secure an outside consultant whose expertise is in antiracist pedagogy.

### **Campus Safety**

Although it is asserted that there is no formal relationship between the campus and the NYPD, the past behavior and continued presence of NYPD on campus (informal or otherwise) serves to undermine this premise. Further, the history of NYPD spying and undercover surveillance of Muslim students and other politically active BIPOC students was never addressed with the NYPD; nor was the harm and fear it has caused on campus acknowledged and prioritized by the Administration.<sup>18</sup> We think it is a mistake to underestimate the level of discomfort felt by students, faculty and staff or negative interactions with law enforcement because there is no entity where individuals can report these interactions. Also, there is a need for resources to hire more culturally competent mental health counselors.

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<sup>17</sup> The recent \$10 million grant by the Mellon Foundation to CUNY includes \$2.5 million for pedagogy and for humanities curriculum development. The Implementation Team should have discretion over money that is allocated to Brooklyn College directly (see above) and should be the body responsible for nominating representatives from Brooklyn College to participate in any centralized efforts at CUNY.

<sup>18</sup> Brooklyn College administration assumes that NYPD involvement on campus is a thing of the past. However, the direct connections that current Director of Public Safety, Donald Wenz, has with the NYPD as a retired NYPD Captain, and Peace Officer David Mercado's [documented history](#) of abuse of power and violence let us know there are more nuances you are highly aware of as well.

- *Implementation*

- Identify a location on campus for the NYPD, although no official relationship is claimed, to use the restrooms and eat lunch away from any building, including but not limited to the WEB Building, that is regularly used by students. We recommend the restrooms in the Chiller plant.
- A clear statement to the NYPD and Mayor di Blasio on the harms done by years of NYPD undercover investigation of Muslim students and the ways it compromised student safety, their educational health, and religious freedom on campus (particularly since such investigations are still legal under the settlement of the Rasul case and students continue to worry that the NYPD will do it again) that asks for a public apology from the NYPD.
- Immediate budget review to plan redeploying campus security resources to increasing staff and resources in mental health counseling services and conflict resolution certified employees (not related to law enforcement). This should include training for campus security officers in conflict resolution and the unarming of all armed officers on campus, along with an assessment of conduct of all public safety officials who have had or have active complaints against them.

- *Resources*

- Increase funding to secure culturally competent mental health professionals, and expand the services they provide to students.
- Deploy Donald Wentz and an appropriate academic leader to meet with the local NYPD precinct leader and/or community relations liaison to find an alternate solution for the lunch and restroom needs of law enforcement.
- The will to make a clear statement to the NYPD and the Mayor on the harms done to Brooklyn College students over the years.

You asked us to tell you by August 17 if we wanted to “join the team to create a better, safer, and more just Brooklyn College, one that is worthy of its mission, history, and promise.” We are obviously committed to creating a Brooklyn College that is worthy of its mission, history, and promise. We hope that you will join with us in this effort rather than maintaining the hierarchies that reify the issues we have outlined.

Submitted by,

The Anti-Racist Coalition at Brooklyn College  
August 17, 2020

Posted to the [ARC website](#) on August 17, 2020

August 25, 2020

Dear members of ARC,

Thank you for your thoughtful and detailed August 17, 2020, letter. Our respective positions on the core elements of an anti-racist agenda that we want to advance at Brooklyn College appear to be considerably closer to one another than they were before.

We agree on many specific substantive policy matters. For example, we already agree on the contours of responsibility for the new staff ombudsperson, including the mentoring of staff and enhancing transparency in the processes for promotions and salary increases. We want to ensure that new job postings are readily and publicly available. We also welcome your nominations of staff members for this position. Thank you.

As we have already announced, we agree on the importance of fundraising to support scholarships, public service work, and the development of a pipeline of young scholars, especially those from underrepresented groups. We also agree on creating an account in the Brooklyn College Foundation for Black Faculty and Staff, even if it is at an amount smaller than the minimum for other accounts.

We agree that Africana Studies and PRLS are faculty hiring priorities.<sup>19</sup> As you know, we cannot predict how many fulltime faculty searches our resources in the coming year will permit us to authorize. If the budget is inadequate to fund all priority searches (including PRLS and Africana Studies, four paused searches from last year, and two faculty deaths in CIS), we would rank their relative importance, but not until we completed the consultative process with the Chairs, Deans, and Master Planning. Hopefully, an adequate budget will make ranking unnecessary.

We agree about the importance of targeted fundraising for the development of anti-racist pedagogy and related support. The Center for Teaching and Learning is already working with the Provost to create a schedule of faculty workshops, symposia, and training on anti-racist pedagogy and current best practices for inclusive classrooms and curricula in a variety of fields in the coming year.

We agree to move forward with the NYPD and our own Campus and Community Safety Services. We are heartened to see that ARC wants to identify where on campus it makes the most sense for members of the NYPD to use a restroom. We agree and have already announced that we must critically review the budget of our Community Safety Office and better train our safety personnel in conflict resolution. We also agree we must hire more culturally competent mental health counselors and focus more resources in this area of vital student support.

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<sup>19</sup> On [July 2](#), we wrote, “We will work to increase institutional support for the departments of Africana Studies and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies.” On [July 14](#), we “noted that the departments of Africana Studies and PRLS are critical to the College, and that faculty lines are at the heart of what these departments need to thrive.”

The only place where we do not largely agree is in the creation of the Implementation Team. We both want it to include students, staff, and faculty who are committed to anti-racist work. On [July 8](#), we wrote:

The Implementation Team for Racial Justice, led by Chief Diversity Officer Anthony Brown and Vice President for Student Affairs Ron Jackson, is enhancing representation by asking for two student delegates from the Undergraduate Student Government and Graduate Student Organization, two staff delegates from the Black Faculty and Staff Association and Latino Faculty and Staff, and two faculty delegates from the Faculty of Color Group and Faculty Council. The Implementation Team is especially interested in members of the groups that sent the initial letters joining as delegates.

You have consistently rejected this plan. Your August 17 letter underscores the notion that, unless you are granted all decisional authority and control related to the College's anti-racist agenda, you will not join the Implementation Team.

Despite the fact that ARC is a largely anonymous organization, with no formal leadership or accountability to any part of the Brooklyn College governance structure, ARC demands that it be empowered by the College administration to form an implementation team,<sup>20</sup> appoint all its student, staff, and faculty members,<sup>21</sup> make decisions through a majority vote of those members,<sup>22</sup> determine the College's agenda in this area,<sup>23</sup> "autonomously" control the financial resources related to that agenda,<sup>24</sup> direct who represents the College to CUNY on these matters,<sup>25</sup> and implement its agenda at the College, with no participation by appointed campus leadership except for two representatives relegated to the task of communicating to other members of the administration about delivering the resources necessary for ARC to carry out its initiatives.<sup>26</sup>

We can grant neither the decisional authority nor the control of resources that you demand.

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<sup>20</sup> "The Implementation Team will be formed by ARC." ARC's August 17 letter.

<sup>21</sup> This team will have 8 members: 2 students, 2 faculty, 2 staff, and 2 admin. The student, staff, and faculty members will be named by ARC." *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

<sup>23</sup> "All members" of the ARC-formed implementation team "will be empowered to add agenda items" to its work plan. *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> The ARC-formed implementation team "will have a budget of \$10,000 for 2020-2021 to enable it to autonomously support measures such as anti-racism training." *Id.* Additionally, the ARC-formed implementation team "should have discretion over money that is allocated to Brooklyn College" from the Mellon Foundation to CUNY. *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> The ARC-formed implementation team "should be the body responsible for nominating representatives from Brooklyn College to participate in any centralized efforts at CUNY" related to the Mellon grant. *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> "[T]wo representatives of the President's cabinet ... will be responsible for communicating with senior administration and securing the resources needed to implement initiatives." *Id.*

We are heartened by the extent to which we agree on substantive policy matters and core elements of the anti-racist agenda, and we expect that we will make substantial progress on them in the Fall. But on the matter of your participation on the Implementation Team, we are at an impasse, since we cannot meet the demands that you have identified as a prerequisite to your participation.

At this point, we must move forward on the work of the anti-racist agenda, and we will form an Implementation Team in order to do so. If you have a change of heart and would like to join that Team, we would welcome your participation because your insight and experience would strengthen it. If not, we hope that you will continue to remain involved, and we would welcome any recommendations, ideas, and input you could provide to the Implementation Team.

Whatever you decide, we thank you for your commitment to our shared agenda of improving the College at this crucial moment in history.

Yours truly,

The Brooklyn College administration