



## UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

September 8, 2020

Dear Members of the University of Washington BSU Executive Committee and to all the students and community members you represent,

Thank you for your willingness to engage with us as we strive to be responsive to the concerns you have shared. We know that it has not always been easy, and we appreciate your patience as we have mobilized to put into place concrete plans. We recognize that you and your families have borne the brunt of the recent overlapping pandemics of COVID-19 and the economic dislocations related to it. You have also witnessed the ongoing police violence against Black people, which reflects harms that are much deeper and longstanding than COVID, evoking and highlighting the painful history of systemic racism that has been with us since the founding of our country and indeed, since the founding of our university, which rests on land that was part of the ancestral home of the Coast Salish peoples.

We appreciate the difficult conditions under which you've struggled to focus on and continue your education. We acknowledge that we can and must do more to support you and to create the kinds of institutional changes needed to build a more inclusive environment that will lead to more equitable outcomes in education and beyond for our Black and BIPOC students. We must also do more to create supportive and empowering environments for our Black and BIPOC faculty, who not only personally bear witness to the violence and injustice, but work so hard to support those students who are most affected by them while also carrying out the teaching, research and service that is so critical to building a more just society.

To this end, we commit to continuing to work with you, and with all our students, faculty and staff on the actions outlined below and we will report on progress to those goals through our Race and Equity Initiative Steering Committee and the Board of Regents Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

We have much work to do. We will no doubt encounter obstacles along the way, but together I have faith in our community to lead the way to the day that we can honestly say "with liberty and justice for all."

In solidarity,

Handwritten signature of Ana Mari Cauce in black ink.

Ana Mari Cauce  
President  
Professor of Psychology

Handwritten signature of Mark A. Richards in black ink.

Mark A. Richards  
Provost and Executive Vice President  
for Academic Affairs  
Professor of Earth and Space Sciences

Below are our responses to the following demands:

1. Break all ties with SPD and other local law enforcement agencies
2. Disarm and Divest from UWPD
3. Allocate funds to Black RSO's and the American Ethnic Studies Department
4. Hire more Black Faculty
5. Increase the Diversity requirement and make African Studies a major
6. Remove statues and monuments of racist figures
7. Fund and expand mental health resources for all UW students

### **Campus Safety and Policing**

*We are committed to re-imagining a more holistic approach to campus safety that minimizes armed police presence on our Seattle campus.*

Our goal is to limit UWPD response to those situations where there is the threat of, or realistic possibility of, imminent harm. By allowing members of our community to make police reports online or to unarmed Public Safety responders, an initial analysis suggests that we can significantly reduce armed police response and armed police interactions on campus. We will initiate such a program no later than October 1st, with the goal of having it implemented robustly by the end of Winter Quarter.

We will also begin work on developing a team of responders, with at least some mental health training, to respond to calls for non-crime related safety, such as for welfare checks on individuals or for responding to community members in non-crime related distress. We will appoint a group of experts from around campus to recommend guidelines, training and protocols for such responders this Fall, with the goal of having implementation plans in place by Fall 2021.

By the end of this Fall Quarter, we will have reduced the size of our police force by at least 20% from what it was in 2019. We will continue to make strategic budget and personnel reductions without compromising the safety of campus. We will reduce the size of police patrols in routine situations to no more than five officers across all of campus (main and health science campuses) at any given time, with a primary emphasis on the perimeter of campus.

We will also examine whether we can limit the number police needed to secure campus even further through the use of strategically placed security cameras in areas outside or inside of buildings that are more likely targets for theft, in a manner similar to peer institutions such as the University of Michigan, University of Minnesota and the University of Virginia. No final decisions will be made about such a program without further research and extensive consultation with Faculty Senate, ASUW, GPSS and the broader community. With opportunity for broader community input, we will also evaluate the desirability of further organizational changes that can support our goal of a more holistic approach to safety.

We pledge not to contract with the Seattle Police Department for security on our campus for football games or any other events on campus. As a public university with an open campus, SPD officers have the right to come onto outdoor areas of our campus, as do any other individuals. However, except in urgent situations, on-duty SPD members do not enter our classrooms, residence halls or other buildings without explicit permission. At the present time and for the foreseeable future, we have no plans to enter into any contracts whatsoever with SPD and will not do so without extensive consultation.

We will, however, continue to have non-contractual relationships with SPD that allow UWPD to take a more prominent role in handling safety situations in the broader University District and north of 45th, where many of our students reside and many of our faculty and staff work. These relationships reduce the presence of SPD in these areas. We will also continue to work with SPD on solving or preventing crimes that have taken place, or that we have good reason to believe will take place on our campus, or that affect our students, faculty and staff.

### **Funds for Black RSOs**

*We are committed to helping secure additional funding for BSU and/or other Black RSOs.*

Students, through ASUW, GPSS and other entities make decisions, independent from the UW administration, about how funds are allocated to Registered Student Organizations.

After listening to BSU about your concerns and needs, we established the Black Opportunity Fund to fund strategic priorities that meet immediate and ongoing needs of our Black students and faculty. An advisory committee comprised of students, faculty and staff will make recommendations to the Vice President for Minority Affairs & Diversity on the allocation of available funds.

### **Hire More Black Faculty**

*We are committed to further supporting our Schools, Colleges and Departments in recruiting more Black faculty, and more faculty from BIPOC populations and to engaging in key hiring initiatives that are expected to expand diversity amongst our faculty.*

Provost Richards has already begun work to launch two complementary hiring initiatives. The first will focus on hiring more faculty whose teaching, research and service include areas directly related to social and racial inequities and/or racism and its various manifestations through history and into the present. Examples include how racism affects health and the health care system, why environmental degradation disproportionately affects communities of color, the role of race in the criminal justice system, and how the marketplace fails underserved communities. A companion initiative will focus on hiring faculty in the STEM disciplines with a proven history of supporting and mentoring BIPOC students and/or conducting research or significantly participating in programs and activities that are aimed at increasing diversity in the

STEM fields. These efforts will be supported by new and redirected campus resources to support recruitment (and retention) of faculty contributing in these areas.

The UW will also be hosting a program (funded by the National Science Foundation and the Washington Research Foundation) involving a consortium of the nation's top research universities to identify, recruit and promote outstanding BIPOC Ph.D. students to the faculty ranks.

In addition to these initiatives, which we expect to attract more Black and BIPOC faculty to apply for our positions, we will provide search committees with training on implicit biases that affect hiring and promotion. We are also making progress toward better tracking and analysis of the racial, ethnic and gender demographics of our faculty (and staff), which will allow us to better understand where we are failing and succeeding.

### **Increase the Diversity Requirement**

*We support a re-examination of the diversity requirement with the goal of both increasing the number of credits required and giving it a clearer focus on BIPOC populations, systemic inequities and social justice.*

At present, most courses that fulfill the diversity requirement include a focus on inequities “such as those associated with race, ethnicity, class, sex and gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ability, religion, creed, age, and socioeconomic status and course activities should encourage thinking critically about topics such as power, inequality, marginality, and social movements.” However, they can also include a focus on cross-cultural analysis and communication that is not specific to groups that have been historically marginalized or oppressed, or that emphasize dynamics of power and exclusion.

At the University of Washington, scholastic policy, including graduation requirements, is legislatively enacted through the Faculty Senate and voting faculty. We will encourage the Faculty Senate, which represents all three campuses, to take up this challenge.

### **American Ethnic Studies and an African American Studies Major**

*We fully support and endorse the study of African American, Chicano/a, Asian American/Pacific Islander and American Indian participation in the shaping of the cultural, literary, social, historical, economic and political character of this country and acknowledge that such perspectives have been all too often ignored or marginalized in the academic canon. Moreover, we believe that this course of study is critical not only to a complete education, but to an informed and engaged citizenry.*

The Department of American Ethnic Studies will be launching a search for an Assistant Professor of African American Studies that has already been approved by the College of Arts and Sciences and will commence this Fall. We are encouraged by student interest and enrollment in both

American Ethnic Studies courses and those related to race/ethnicity in other departments, some of which are cross-listed with AES. Sustained student interest and enrollment growth in these areas of studies will lead to additional hires. In general, sustained student demand is the most important factor that drives hiring, and as such resource allocation, in most fields.

We respect the autonomy of the American Ethnic Studies department and the College of Arts and Sciences to make the determination as to whether an African American Studies major is desirable or feasible.

### **Remove Statues and Monuments of Racist Figures**

*We support a re-examination of campus symbols, figures or names that are connected with racism, past or present. We also believe it is important to consider additional opportunities for symbols or namings that more fully recognize BIPOC contributions to our community, especially to our state and university.*

This Fall we will convene a task force to conduct this re-examination, with a special emphasis on those symbols, figures or names that are in public spaces where our students, faculty and staff convene on a regular basis. We acknowledge that the figures, symbols and names on our campus play a role in shaping the environment for members of our community and play a role in making that environment one that it, or is not, welcoming to all. I will be asking the task force to complete their analysis and recommendations on how to move forward by the end of Winter Quarter.

In June, we commissioned a group of faculty experts to recommend wording for a plaque or other such display that would provide a broader context on the life and impact of George Washington, who our state and university are both named for. This would include an explicit acknowledgement of his role as a slave holder.

### **Fund and Expand Mental Health Resources for all UW Students**

*We are fully committed to providing funds to support the expansion of mental health resources for UW students*

Over the last year, we have made considerable progress in support of the mental health needs of our students. We are currently in the process of merging our two mental health units (Hall Health Mental Health and the Student Counseling Center) into one seamless operation. This will make it easier for students to access mental health services and reduce confusion. Additionally, this Fall we will be supplementing our mental health support with an online counseling service that will be accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Counseling will be available in six different languages and will be available to enrolled UW students who are on campus or who are studying remotely anywhere in the world. This is a new investment by the UW and will dramatically increase accessibility and reduce wait times for students.