

# Attachments

From the Wofford College news desk, June 2020:

## STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD AND ENSUING PROTESTS

Dear Wofford College Department of English Alumni:

I wanted to share with you the statement below, which was written and distributed by members of the Department of English on June 6, 2020. At the end, you will find links to resources for action and information. You should also feel free to reach out to faculty if you have questions or comments.

Dr. John Ware, chairman

Statement signed by: Taifha Alexander, assistant dean, Department of Diversity and Inclusion; and English Professors Alan Chalmers, Chris Dinkins, Natalie Grinnell, Kimberly Hall, Sally Hitchmough, Jim Neighbors, Kim Rostan, George Singleton, Carey Voeller, John Ware, Patrick Whitfill, Carol Wilson.

As faculty members who teach in the Department of English at Wofford, we write to express our collective outrage and anguish over the horrific murder of George Floyd by four Minneapolis Police officers, the recent murders of Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery, and the not so recent, but still salient police killings of Freddie Gray, Philando Castille, Laquan McDonald, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice -- and so many others. George Floyd's death is only the most recent case in a four hundred year history of violence against Black people, other people of color and indigenous peoples in the US. We acknowledge this terrible history and see its continuing effects in, among other things, violence at the hands of federal and local law enforcement, white people weaponizing their privilege against people of color, discriminatory housing policies, massive wealth inequality, and disproportionate suffering in public health, as the current COVID-19 crisis has reinforced clearly.

We work in a context with a complex racial history. As a predominantly white institution, whose "Main" building was built by enslaved people; who educated (white) people for 110 years before admitting its first student of color; whose annual cost to attend is more than twice the average annual household income of the majority-minority city in which it has been located since 1854 and in which 45.7% of children live below the federal poverty level; whose tennis courts, Greek village, Senior housing, and the offices that house co-curricular high-impact practices all sit on land that was once a thriving, vibrant community of color, Wofford College has a complicated relationship with Spartanburg. We commit ourselves to acknowledging these land and labor histories in our classes and in our interactions with students, faculty, staff and the larger Spartanburg community. We believe that Wofford cannot achieve beneficial, equitable, and inclusive relationships without publicly acknowledging that racial inequity is our immediate reality, not simply our historical past. The college must facilitate healing on campus and in our community through real, measurable reparation and transformation—beginning with identifying and addressing systemic, long-term and daily practices that perpetuate white supremacy.

As scholars who work with language and literature, we are especially aware of the way words shape current events. Words are power. We recognize racism is woven into the literature we teach and the language we speak, and we are committed to addressing them in our work. For example, terms like "looters" and "rioters" are being used to undermine or discredit the current protest movement without taking into account their histories. Looting was practiced by white Europeans against Africans for centuries; what became known as American land was looted; rioting is a behavior that can be read as a powerful language to elicit real social change. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "a riot is the language of the unheard". We reject efforts that seek to restore stability and maintain the status quo over seeking justice.

We commit ourselves to developing ways of teaching that are anti-racist:

- We will ensure our syllabi promote equitable language and policies.
- We will commit to diversifying content in our courses.

- We will cultivate safe spaces in our classroom in which all who are present are affirmed.
- We will work to dismantle racist structures in our classrooms, department, on campus and in our communities.
- We will listen to and uplift voices of color.
- 

Our concern about the effect of these events, this moment, and the cycle of racial violence on our students and colleagues at Wofford College is shared by other Wofford academic and administrative departments, including:

- [Wofford College Campus Union](#)
- [Studio Art/Art History/Theater](#)
- [Sociology and Anthropology](#)
- [The Career Center at Wofford](#)
- Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures
- Student Athlete Advisory Council.

### What You Can Do Now

Attend the Anti-Racism Teach-In Series:

— An Autonomous Black Student Alliance (BSA) Soul Session

Date/Time: 6/10/2020 1pm; Location: Zoom; Cost: Free.

Details: This Wofford BSA sponsored session is for Black identifying Wofford students to support and fellowship with one another as we practice uplifting, community practices.

Please RSVP with this link: <https://bit.ly/WocoAntiRacism101>

— Anti-Racism 101: An Anti-Racist Toolkit

Date/Time: 6/11/2020 1 pm; Location: Zoom; Cost: Free

Details: Are you asking yourself what can you do?? Want to support Black organizers and communities of color in their fight against racial iniquity? Are you inappropriately leaning on your friends of color to help educate you on issues of racial injustice?? Then this Anti-Racism 101 session is for you. Join Dr. Jim Neighbors, Associate Professor for the Department of English and Co-Coordinator of the African/African-American Studies Program, and Erin Keith, a Georgetown Law Grad and Policy Attorney with the Detroit Justice Center on a panel moderated by Dr. Camille Bethea, Associate Professor of Spanish and Chair of the Modern Languages Department. During this session attendees will engage in the deliberate and intentional act of decolonizing contemporary understandings of equity, inclusion and allyship to develop effective methods in disrupting systems of injustice through anti-racist behaviors and actions in attendee's daily, every day lives.

\*Prerequisite to attend Anti-Racism 101: This session is open to all attendees with a willingness and commitment to understand that their dominant identity can be used to center and uplift marginalized voices as equal partners in disrupting racist, oppressive systems of inequity wherever present in contemporary American society.

\*Anti-Racism Resources can be found here: [https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1BRIF2\\_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QqirITwCTugSfKie5Fs/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1BRIF2_zhNe86SGgHa6-VIBO-QqirITwCTugSfKie5Fs/mobilebasic)

Anti-Racist Toolkit Zoom Meeting ID: 932 3107 3050

Password: BLM

Please RSVP with this link - <https://bit.ly/WocoAntiRacism101>

For more information, contact Taifha Alexander, Assistant Dean of Students for Diversity and Leadership Development at [alexandertn@wofford.edu](mailto:alexandertn@wofford.edu) or 864-597-4066

## List of 50 Grievances, Demands by Student Anti-Racism Coalition

### Statement of Purpose:

Black students especially, but also Indigenous and other students of color (BIPOC), have historically faced institutional, structural and personal racism and prejudice at Wofford College and within the college community. These problems continue today. Concerns expressed by BIPOC to college leadership repeatedly fall on deaf ears and result in inaction. A statement is not enough -- we demand that Wofford admit and address the anti-Black history that has led to systemic racism, oppression, and egregious lack of representation -- and then take the necessary steps to correct it.

This document encompasses what we envision to create a more just and equitable Wofford. The testimonies at the bottom of this document are not singular stories. They are the daily stories of Black and students of color on this campus. Our institution is currently failing BIPOC students in such blatant ways that many regret choosing to attend Wofford. Meeting these demands not

only benefits us, as students, but you, as administrators of the College. Until these demands are met, Wofford is not a place that we would recommend BIPOC students attend.

We call on President Samhat, the Board of Trustees, The President's Cabinet, and the Wofford community past and present to implement the demands listed below. This is an opportunity to go further than a reiteration of Wofford's commitment to diversity. This is an opportunity to listen to what your students are telling you and to take meaningful action.

- 1. We feel that faculty, administration, and staff who have been discriminatory or racist have not been appropriately disciplined. Therefore, we have a lack of trust in a fair and just administration and related policies. As it currently stands, we believe that the college's policy on bias-incidents does not do enough to reprimand violations on behalf of tenured faculty. Repeated cases have only resulted in meetings with the faculty member and very little or meaningless reparations.
- 2. We feel that the college exclusively relies on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to address matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion, when the mission should be shared by all college leaders, departments, and employees.
- 3. We feel that all faculty and staff who engage with students need anti-racist and anti-bias training.
- Currently, the responsibility of teaching anti-racism courses and discussions repeatedly fall on the same departments, specifically Sociology/Anthropology and English.
- 4. We feel that there needs to be more courses and modules across all disciplines that teach the legacy of racial violence and discrimination. Furthermore, we believe all Wofford students should graduate knowing about Wofford's, the region's, and our nation's history of race and racism.
- 5. We believe that not teaching students about the injustices BIPOC face as a result of systemic racism and structural violence (e.g. colonialism, slavery, segregation, urban renewal, etc.) is an erasure of history that reproduces white supremacy.
- 6. We feel that it is a failure on behalf of the entire College environment that our percentage of BIPOC students falls below regional and national demographics, comparatively: <https://www.wofford.edu/Wofford.edu/Documents/Diversity-and-Inclusion/DiversityReport.pdf>
- 7. We feel that it is a failure on behalf of the entire College environment that our percentage of all minority students falls at 19% or 333 students as of Fall 2019, when national population trends are more than double that percentage. (<https://www.wofford.edu/about/fast-facts>; <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/RHI225218>)
- 8. We feel that the percentage of BIPOC in the faculty, professional staff, and administration should, at least, be comparable to the percentage of BIPOC students. (<https://www.wofford.edu/Wofford.edu/Documents/Diversity-and-Inclusion/DiversityReport.pdf>.)
- 9. We feel that the demographics of the college leadership -- the Board of Trustees and the President's Cabinet -- do not reflect the diversity that Wofford should be striving to have at all levels: leaders, employees, and students.
- 10. We feel that it is inappropriate to have buildings on campus named after Carlisle, Shipp, and Wightman who all owned enslaved people. It is unacceptable and disrespectful to force students to reside in buildings named after people who did not believe in the humanity of Black people.
- 11. We feel that having only one room on the entire campus named after Black people does not adequately represent the contributions that the Black community has had at Wofford. The Gray-Jones room is in a remote location and many students rarely visit this room nor do they know the history of its namesake. We feel that Gray's and Jones's accomplishments as the first Black students at Wofford should be better acknowledged.
- 12. We feel that the "Back of the College" memorial, as well as the small brick 'dedication' to the enslaved builders of Main, are placed in obscure or hidden locations so as to render them practically invisible. We believe the histories of the once thriving Black community and the lives of the enslaved builders of Main should be displayed prominently.
- 13. We feel that double standards exist on Wofford's campus as it relates to NPHC Fraternities and white fraternities. While white fraternities are open for social gatherings weekend after weekend, NPHC fraternities face significant deterrents placed by Wofford administration to hosting social events on campus. NPHC organizations are subject to administrative policies that grant permission for parties only every 3 months or so.
- 14. We feel that there is a lack of understanding about the significance of having the Divine Nine organizations on Wofford's campus and why the presence of all of the Divine Nine organizations on campus would be essential to creating a more positive and welcoming space for Black and Brown students. NPHC organizations not only help create a family among students, they provide diversity to the school as well. Wofford's vision has diversity and inclusion in the forefront; however, there are no NPHC sororities on campus and there is a pattern of organizations being present on campus then disappearing because of sustainability issues.
- 15. We feel as if there is a significant lack of support from the administration and faculty for the effort of inviting NPHC organizations onto campus. We understand the challenges these organizations face in deciding to commit to Wofford. But we feel Wofford administration needs to be much more deliberate and vocal about its commitment to welcoming them here.
- 16. We feel that Wofford's Greek life is notoriously exclusionary and members discriminate against non-white students; we feel that this behavior is unacceptable and must be addressed.
- 
- Short term demands to be achieved within the next academic year (2020-2021):
- 
- 17. We demand that Wofford hire an independent external consultant to assess the racial climate at Wofford and provide recommendations for the college to become antiracist.
- 18. We demand that policies and procedures for reporting bias incidents be reviewed, especially as it relates to processes for tenured faculty.

- 19. We demand that all administrators, faculty, staff and advisors be required to take at least annual anti-racist and anti-bias training.
- 20. We demand that the President's Cabinet take anti-bias and anti-racism training annually.
- 21. We demand that the Board of Trustees take anti-bias and anti-racism training annually.
- 22. We demand that Campus Safety take specific police-oriented anti-bias and anti-racism continuing education, with specific requirements in the form of hours or courses that must be completed every semester.
- 23. We demand that the Offices of Marketing and Communication and Admission/Financial Aid receive education on tokenism and actively recruit BIPOC in hiring processes. We demand that both offices, which are critical to the recruitment and retention of BIPOC students, receive anti-bias and anti-racism training.
- 24. We demand that the Office of Diversity and Inclusion's overall budget and staff be expanded to include four (4) professional, full-time staff members.
- 25. We demand that a student Bias-Response Council, similar to the judicial or honor council, be added to the bias-incident response team process. We demand that this council should be involved in the adjudication of any bias incident report, whether it be student, faculty, or staff.
- 26. We demand that specific, transparent and thoroughly communicated remedies for racist, discriminatory or exclusionist behavior by faculty be established. Any faculty who violate their responsibility to their students or Wofford's code of conduct be subject to a disciplinary process that results in measurable improvement in their behavior. This disciplinary process could be staggered based on the number and/or severity of offenses so that those who demonstrate a pattern of behavior or create an unsafe learning environment can be adequately reprimanded.
- 27. We demand that at least four full class periods of FYI course instruction be devoted to Wofford's racial history, and that substantial anti-racism and anti-bias education be incorporated into FYI curriculum.
- 28. We demand that the Wofford Ambassador program hires BIPOC students at a rate that represents regional racial trends, provides all Ambassadors anti-bias and anti-racist training, and instructs all Ambassadors in Wofford's exclusionist/racist and Back of the College history to be incorporated into all campus tours.
- 29. We demand that the AMS/NPHC House be renamed to better represent the Black students and provide them with a space that is their own, just as the IFC and Panhellenic chapters have. We demand that this house be reserved specifically for WWC, WMC, BSA, and NPHC organizations.
- 30. We demand equitable treatment of all organizations that occupy houses at the Greek Village on behalf of the Office of Campus Life and Student Development and administration.
- 31. We demand that a new policy or procedure be implemented outside of a bias incident report that would fine Greek and other organizations for excluding non-white students at their social functions. Additionally, we demand mandatory anti-racism and anti-bias training at least annually for all members of IFC & Panhellenic organizations.
- 32. We demand positions be added to the IFC and Panhellenic Council to specifically address diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, we demand that every individual Greek organization appoint a similar position or committee within their chapter to work towards anti-racism.
- 33. We demand that Albert Gray '71 and Douglas Jones '69 be properly honored for being the first African-American students to enroll and graduate, respectively, by each becoming namesakes of their own building on campus. Buildings or names in their honor should be located central to active student life.
- 34. We demand that Janice B. Means '73 be properly honored for becoming the first African-American woman to graduate from Wofford by becoming the namesake of her own building, central and active to student life, on campus.
- 35. We demand that the names of offensively named buildings -- Carlisle, Shipp, and Wightman -- be changed. (Name suggestions: Gray Hall, Jones Hall, Means Hall).
- 36. We demand that the Back of the College memorial be moved to a more prominent location on campus.
- 37. We demand that the memorial to the enslaved builders of Old Main be moved to a more prominent location in Old Main.
- 38. We demand that at least one-third of all future hires for professional staff and full-time faculty be of color.
- 
- 
- Long-term demands -- to be achieved by the 2021-2022 academic year:
- 
- 39. We demand the College publicly acknowledge it's shameful history regarding racism and its relationship to the African American community in Spartanburg, as well as the Indigenous peoples whose land this once was. We suggest that a land and labor history of Wofford be stated at every formal college occasion, including acknowledging: former presidents Carlisle, Shipp, and Wightman owned slaves; the Black neighborhood's demolition to make way for new construction, including the Jerry Richardson Indoor stadium and the Greek Village; the Cherokee / Tsalaguwetiyi and Catawba people who once lived where Wofford is now located; use of enslaved people's labor to build the college.
- 40. We demand that a Chief Diversity Officer or a Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion be created as a cabinet-level position. We demand the addition of four General Education requirement courses that address race relations, racial inequities, racial history, etc. Examples may include any of the courses under the African/African American Studies (AAAS) program.
- 41. We demand that existing academic departments develop their course curriculum by inserting issues of diversity and racial justice into existing courses.
- 42. We demand that there is a coordinating position created for someone who is qualified to cater to the sustainability of NPHC organizations.

- 43. We demand at least one anti-racism course be added to all academic departments (for example, a course on the Racial Wealth Equity Gap could be offered in the Finance dept.) and be consistently taught by professors who are qualified to do so.

- 

- Ongoing: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/RHI225218>; <https://www.wofford.edu/about/fast-facts>

- 

- 44. We demand that the percentage of Black students reflect national population trends, which stand at 13.4%, or 230 Black students as of Fall 2019 data.

- 45. We demand that the percentage of all students of color reflect national population trends, which stand at 41.8%, or 719 students of color as of Fall 2019 data.

- 46. We demand that the percentage of Black full-time teaching faculty reflect national population trends, which stand at 13.4% or 19 faculty as of Fall 2019 data.

- 47. We demand that the percentage of full-time teaching faculty of color reflect national population trends, which stand at 41.8% or 61 faculty as of Fall 2019 data.

- 48. We demand that the college leadership follow suit with the previous demands in increasing BIPOC members on the Board of Trustees and the President's Cabinet.

- 49. We demand the implementation of a two-year post-doc fellowship program that has 10 open positions every academic year to attract young scholars to gain professional experience at Wofford and expand the faculty's understanding of what a scholar looks like.

- 50. We demand all organizations within The Divine Nine be rechartered or chartered by 2025. The Divine Nine consist of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Kappa Alpha Psi (already chartered), Omega Psi Phi Fraternity (already chartered), Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (previously chartered, needs to be rechartered), Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, and Iota Phi Theta Fraternity.

- 

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this list of Grievances and Demands, please do not hesitate in reaching out to us at [coalitionwofford@gmail.com](mailto:coalitionwofford@gmail.com)

Signed: Bali Channa '20, Bryson Coleman '21, Omar K. Elmore '20, Jurnee Jones '21, Margaret Roach '21, Destiny Shippy '22, Naya Taylor '21.

The Wofford Anti-Racism Coalition is a group of students that self-organized after the current Wofford College President, Dr. Nayef Samhat, penned an ambiguously indirect message to the entire Wofford Community that left Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and our allies feeling unheard, unimportant, misrepresented, and angry because the message failed to call out or directly address centuries of police brutality, white supremacy, or systemic oppression and the ways those mechanisms operate on Wofford's campus. Our original plan was to create an email template for any member of the Wofford community to utilize to email President Samhat and College Leadership in disdain of the original, tepid statement. Following President Samhat's second message that was more successful at articulating a message of anti-racism at Wofford, we decided our time and efforts would be directed towards requesting actions that address the anti-Black history at Wofford that has led to systemic racism, oppression, and egregious lack of representation. The Grievances & Demands we published are the product of that work, and what we envision to be a more just and racially equitable Wofford.