

## **“Asks” From the Original Why We Wear Black Movement Now Named the Student Liberation Movement**

URGENT ASKS FOR INCREASED DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT DICKINSON COLLEGE, ON BEHALF OF DICKINSON COLLEGE STUDENTS  
via the Why We Wear Black Movement

January 31, 2016

Chartered in 1783, Dickinson College was intended to be an institution that would foster the educated citizenry that Benjamin Rush knew America needed in order to remain a new nation worthy of its liberties.

A liberty cap, a telescope, and an open bible are symbols of the college’s mission to offer students a useful and progressive education in the **arts** and **sciences**, one grounded in a strong sense of **civic duty**.

While all of us here today not only benefit from a Dickinson education, we believe in a Dickinson education. Unfortunately, there are some values of the college and our community that barely make it off the page.

We are specifically concerned with the state of inclusion on our campus and the measures taken or not yet taken to uphold the values of the college in this respect.

As we share and explore these concerns tonight, we ask everyone in attendance to consider the following questions:

1. Who is a Dickinson experience for?
2. How can we hold one another accountable to Ben Rush’s concept of active citizenry?
3. What is global engagement without engagement across the global perspectives here on our campus?

### **WHY WE WEAR BLACK MOVEMENT: *Name changed to The Student Liberation Movement***

This localized movement is part of a long trajectory of student activism, such as the agency of Esther Popel Shaw, The Congress of African Students’ Manifesto, and the Die-in that occurred last year.

Last semester, Dickinsonians were adamant about sharing their experiences as people of color, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, women, international students, and other underrepresented and marginalized groups on campus.

Their personal stories reflect escalating sentiments of a lack of support from the college, especially in issues pertaining to racial and ethnic identities at Dickinson. In the spirit of national student mobilization demanding social/racial equity, the “Why We Wear Black” organizers intend to hold Dickinson accountable to its students of color.

As the “Why We Wear Black” organizers evaluated peer input from the Call to Action Dialogue, an online space was made to update the community on the process of drafting the demands/concerns/recommendations and ask for possible assistance as we fight for the voices of Dickinson students to be heard.

## **PROCESS**

During the Thanksgiving Dinner last semester, three students stood in the dining hall and held a demonstration in order to bring awareness to the many issues that marginalized students on this campus face. This demonstration was meant to spark a reaction to not only the students, but also staff, faculty and administration.

The next day there was a call to action meeting in ATS where over 700 students, faculty, and staff shared their grievances regarding the campus climate at that time. During the meeting, we asked students to write down their concerns and recommendations to improve inclusion on campus. Over winter break, we went through all of the written concerns and divided them into categories. From there, we researched each topic to complete concise and fully thought out recommendations to present to the appropriate committees during the open forum being held at ATS on the evening of January 31.

### **FOCUSED CONCERNS:**

**Training and Development**  
**Student Campus Resources**  
**Curriculum and Classroom Experience**  
**Faculty Diversity**

#### **A. Training and Development**

First-Year Program  
Staff and faculty training on diversity/inclusivity  
Safety Violence and Sexual assault

We ask that faculty, administrators and officers in student organizations participate in diversity training programs applicable to their respective areas of leadership. This training should educate participants on how to:

- a) Engage students in dialogue across difference.
- b) Facilitate discussions on the intersection of power with race, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, and class.
- c) Coherently respond to and responsibly resolve issues concerning the identity markers above.
- d) Create and maintain an environment of mutual respect and appreciation.
- e) Review their own administrations, departments, committees, and organizations for bias and/or discriminatory practices.

#### **B. Student Campus Resources**

Mental Health Resources  
Staff Diversity  
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

We ask that Dickinson College hire and retain staff of color in the Wellness Center, Biddle House, and Landis House. In addition, we ask for:

- a) Frequent disability awareness training for faculty, where they are provided strategies for classroom instruction. While we understand that this already exists, we think the frequency at which faculty are asked to attend the workshop should be reevaluated to fit the needs of students with disabilities and disability services.
- b) Familiarize all staff members in the Wellness Center, Biddle House and Landis House with anti-oppressive practice in order to thereby assist students struggling with issues of oppression relating to race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, etc.
- c) Develop a program to reduce the stigma on mental illness and otherwise making the Wellness/Counseling Center and other available supportive resources more accessible to students, particularly to students of color.
- d) Gender Neutral Restrooms
  - i) We ask for a minimum of one gender neutral bathroom per building.
  - ii) All single-toilet public restrooms should be made non-gender specific.
  - iii) Signs for dual-gender restrooms should be changed to non-gender specific signs (ie. Library, Kaufman Hall).

## **C. Curriculum**

Distribution Requirements  
Student Experience

We ask that the college make the following changes related to the student academic experience:

- a) Mandate and enforce descriptions of courses in the catalog.
- b) Incorporate civic education in all First-Year Programs (First-Year Seminar).

## **D. Faculty Diversity**

Hiring and Retention Rate

We acknowledge that a lack of diversity in the faculty affects the student experience at Dickinson, and ask that the college make the following changes relating to the hiring and retention rate of diverse faculty:

- a) Institutional membership to the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity by the beginning of Fall 2016.
- b) Continue to pursue funding to receive C3 Post-Doctoral fellows.
- c) We ask that Dickinson require all departments to add a sentence in their job listings encouraging professors of color and women to apply.

In creating these demands, we understand we are not representative of the entire Dickinson community and that these demands will not address all of the needs of the community, but after reading the concerns you all gave to us, we feel these demands were significant in elevating problems of diversity and inclusion that are plaguing our community at this moment.

Sincerely,

The Why We Wear Black Organizers

Jacqueline Amezcua '19

Alyson McAtee '18

Janel Pineda '18

Breahna Pierce '17

Erik Rivera '17

Frieda Adu '16

Bria Antoine '16

Jason Denaburg '16

Alejandro Heredia '16

Jahmel Martin '16

Maretta Sonn '16

The administration took these requests seriously and compiled a list of some of the changes/adjustments that were made following the institutions receipt of student concerns. In

addition, it is necessary to highlight some of the programming, purposely designed to address these important campus issues, that were already in development or operational at the time of receiving this letter.

***Responses to Training and Development Requests:***

- The members of Senior staff had a productive conversation with representatives from the Student Liberation Movement which motivated the college to investigate and implement changes for the Fall 2016 Orientation to deepen the dialogue and learning around diversity and inclusion.
- **(Ongoing)** The Landis Collective continues to administer a required first year diversity & inclusion theme during extended orientation facilitated by the Social Justice Peer Educators. They also provide two additional diversity & inclusion themed programs that students choose from a select menu of programs, events and workshops.
- Fall 2018 the Landis Collective launched the Landis Listens series to provide a space for underserved campus populations to voice their concerns in a SWOT format.
- **(Ongoing)** In Fall 2017 the Popel Shaw Center for Race & Ethnicity (PSC) launched the Did you really just say that? Workshops on resolving cultural conflicts for students and FAS. Over 100 community members participated in fall 2017 and 2018 workshops.
- **(Ongoing)** Vincent Stephens and Donna Bickford facilitated Inclusive Pedagogy: Implicit bias and microaggressions in the classroom workshops in fall 2017 and fall 2018 semesters.
- In fall 2018 Vincent Stephens and Donna Bickford facilitated the Inclusive Pedagogies 2.0: Creating an inclusive syllabus workshop for faculty and staff.
- The Landis Collective responded to a request from ESLC and co-facilitated the workshop “Costumes and Cultural Appropriation Conversation” for faculty and staff. The workshop was complemented by a flowchart regarding selecting culturally sensitive costumes distributed throughout campus.
- **(Ongoing)** The PSC facilitated the Inclusive Leadership Student training (ILST) retreat at the Carlisle Comfort Inn & Suites every semester since fall 2016; to date 108 participants representing 30 clubs, organizations and offices have participated.
- **(Ongoing)** The PSC facilitated the “Developing cultural awareness as a management practice” workshop for staff enrolled in Human Resource Services’ Management Development program annually from fall 2016-fall 2018.
- Dickinson is committed to providing a supportive working and learning environment for all employees and students. Human Resource Services (HRS) uses educational programs, such as, Protecting Our Community and Preventing Workplace Harassment and the Campus Save Act to advance knowledge of these hazards and all employees are required to participate.
- **(Ongoing)** HRS works with departments throughout the year to support their overall goals and developmental needs. They routinely conduct needs assessment for developing specific training programs based on the evolving needs of the campus community.
- **(Ongoing)** Student Life Division staff members offer monthly programming centered on diversity topics that are specifically for faculty and staff. There are also opportunities for faculty and staff to receive training programs, such as Ally Worship, Trans 101, and RAISE.
- **(Ongoing)** The college is deeply invested in increasing campus safety in general, and safety as it relates to sexual assault and misconduct in particular. We have a strong Sexual Harassment and Misconduct policy in place. A fulltime Title IX coordinator and

Assistant Title IX coordinator. In addition, the Presidential Working Group on Sexual Harassment, sexual Misconduct and Title IX was established in Fall 2017 to evaluate the college's Sexual Misconduct Policy to remain in compliance of updated regulations from the Department of Education.

***Responses to Student Campus Resources Requests:***

- **(Ongoing)** The Wellness Center continues to attempt to anticipate student requests for services and establish policies which allow them to keep up with demand. The need for ongoing changes to wellness center policies will continue each year.
- **(Ongoing)** The Wellness Center, like many departments on campus, values hiring diverse candidates. Despite our efforts it remains difficult to attract interest and foster diverse applicants.
- **(Ongoing)** The Wellness Center continues to provide their staff with professional development opportunities geared toward intercultural competency, as well as on-campus and off-campus trainings related to assisting students struggling with issues of oppression relating to race, gender, sexuality, class, disability, etc.
- **(Ongoing)** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) for many years has offered training for new faculty and First-Year Seminar instructors. They continue to meet with individual academic departments to address discipline-specific questions about classroom instruction and relevant disability law.
- In Fall 2015, the Popel Shaw Center began offering weekly walk-in hours to allow opportunities for both students and student groups to request appointments regarding personal and academic issues, as well as meetings with student groups seeking collaboration and/or support.
- In Spring 2016, the Bias Education & Response Team (BERT) added an HR professional to the committee to foster a more unified approach to the college's promotion of bias awareness and reporting procedures. BERT and HR have agreed to integrate the bias awareness information and reporting procedures into new faculty and staff training beginning in summer 2016.
- **(Ongoing)** In spring 2017 BERT created an ongoing process for recruiting two student representatives to serve on BERT annually and in fall 2017 expanded to create space for faculty representatives; thus far four students and five faculty have served in these capacities.
- In Fall 2016, the PSC Advisory Group was established as an interdepartmental and multidisciplinary group of Dickinson faculty, staff and students to foster collaboration and locate opportunities for co-curricular partnerships.
- **(Ongoing)** The PSC advisory group continues to meet on a monthly basis to discuss relevant issues in higher education with the PSC's Director; in fall 2018 the Group welcomed four new members including Maiko Arashiro, Elise Bartosik-Velez, Chris Cox, and Sheela Jane Menon.
- **(Ongoing)** The PSC, BERT, CGSE, ODS and LGBTQ services, have hosted Campus Inclusion Week since September 2016 and have continued offering this week-long series every September, including expanding its content and partners to include Human resources Services, Waidner-Spahr Library, Student Athletic Advisory Committee, WGRC and the President's Commission on Inclusivity.

- **(Ongoing)** In Fall 2016, the Diversity Offices collaborated to offer Campus Inclusion week. The week offered opportunities for students, faculty and staff to commit to making Dickinson more inclusive. This program continues annually.
- The Trans Advocacy Committee recommended all single-toilet public restrooms be made gender inclusive. In Spring 2017, many bathrooms received new signage designating Inclusive Restrooms and Inclusive Bathrooms for 72 locations on campus.

*Responses to Curriculum Requests:*

- **(Ongoing)** The college currently posts all course descriptions and continues to advance efforts to make this information more obvious and descriptive as needed.
- **(Ongoing)** The college continuously attempts to strengthen the curriculum. These efforts led to the creation of a major and department of Africana studies, the certificate in Latin American studies, the major in Latin American, Latino and Caribbean studies (LACL), and the creation of a major in Middle East studies.
- The college has established a new Center for Civic Learning & Action through a \$900,000 grant by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
- Since Fall 2015, the college requires three different types of course work to familiarize students with the ways in which the diversity of human cultures has shaped our world: Languages, U.S. Diversity requirement which was revised to focus explicitly on issues of power and privilege, and Global Diversity.

*Responses to Faculty Diversity:*

- **(Ongoing)** Dickinson joined the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (NCFDD) in Fall 2016. They have also sponsored individual faculty to participate in programming. Many faculty have utilized available resources that this membership provides.
- In fall 2015, the Provost, Chief Diversity Officer, and HR conducted a faculty orientation session for all tenure track searches which focused on: hiring practices and procedures, strategies for building a robust and diverse pool of candidates and avoiding unconscious/implicit bias in the hiring and interviewing processes.
- **(Ongoing)** Faculty search sessions continue and HR developed a session for staff and began offering this program in Spring 2017.
- **(Ongoing)** In collaboration with Liberal Arts Diversity Officers (LADO), Dickinson actively participates in outreach recruitment efforts at research universities that graduate significant numbers of women and people of color, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions.
- **(Ongoing)** Dickinson has an Equal Opportunity Statement and strengthened it for inclusion in all job postings beginning Spring 2016 to show our commitment to hiring diverse faculty and staff.