

# Organizers of protests release list of demands

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Three students who are advocating for TCU to be a more inclusive campus met with the chancellor and other administrators to discuss a list of demands they want the university to adopt.

These include online sensitivity training for the entire campus, lowering the flag to half-staff when an unarmed person of color is shot and killed by a police officer and creating a zero-tolerance policy for all hate speech and micro-aggressions.

"I think the meeting went really well," said Diona Willis, a senior political science major who is one of the organizers. "It seemed as though the individuals that were there were in favor of what we are doing and very supportive and looking forward to trying to figure out ways they can help in their position and role at TCU."

Willis, along with seniors Shanel Alexander, political science, and Emily Laff, journalism and a managing editor for TCU 360, organized the meeting and developed the list of demands. The students have helped to organize the recent silent protests when the national anthem is played at football games.

In addition to Chancellor Victor Boschini, Kathy Cavins-Tull, vice chancellor for student affairs; Provost Nowell Donovan; Darron Turner, associate chancellor for student affairs; athletics director Chris Del Conte; Aisha Torrey-Sawyer, director of the Neeley Academic Advising Center; and Darryl Wyrick, a coordinator for Student Development Services, attended the meeting.

Brad Lucas, associate professor in the department of English, was there as an adviser to the students.

"The students had some good ideas and some of them can be implemented right away. Others need to be examined in the context of our university," Cavins-Tull wrote in an email. "We have always worked with our students, faculty and staff to make changes on our campus. We have some work to do, but we'll gladly do it with our students, faculty and staff."

The list consists of 14 demands that the organizers said they hope to be implemented by the university.

Willis said everyone was not in agreement on all of the demands.

"Our 13th demand is 'We demand the flag be lowered where people of color in the nation are murdered by people who are supposed to protect and serve,'" Willis said. "They just didn't like this idea at all. It's very difficult to go to a school that doesn't recognize or make it seem as though they care when people who look like me are being killed on camera senselessly without any regard."

She said there was also hesitance about defining hate speech. That demand would "revise the Code of Conduct to reflect a zero-tolerance policy for racially insensitive and hateful speech," as stated in the list of demands.

"There is a clear distinction between micro-aggressions and hate speech," Willis said. "But they think it is such a gray area it would be difficult to [implement] and it would tamper with the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech."

One demand that did seem to get support, she said, was the third, which states, "All faculty, staff and students attend a sensitivity training with a trained professional during orientation that focuses not only on racial and anti-Semitic intolerance but also micro-aggressions in order to maintain diversity and inclusion."

The organizers said the administrators suggested an online sensitivity training similar to the sexual assault online training first-year students are required to take, but they said an in-person sensitivity training would be more effective.

Willis, Alexander and Laff said they plan to meet with Cavins-Tull to start working on implementing some of these demands for this semester at a later date.

Here is the full list of demands to view.

List of Demands by Tamera Hyatte on Scribd

*Editor's note: While Emily Laff is a managing editor for TCU 360, she has no editorial oversight for this topic.*

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To Whom It May Concern:

When one decides on an institution of higher education they have two options: a student can go where they are most comfortable or dive into a world where they never imagined being and hope for the best. As a minority student, being comfortable means attending a school where almost everyone looks like you, an HBCU. We as students of color are at a constant disadvantage and at TCU we should not be. With scholarships like Community Scholars, minority students from the area get the opportunity to attend TCU, but not without receiving denigrating stares from other students, derogatory comments, and low expectations from other peers. Feeling a sense of alienation along with trying to maintain a high grade point average and remain involved on campus creates unnecessary burdens that can hurt students in the long run. To encourage the inclusiveness of our campus and to change attitudes towards minorities on this campus, we have a thorough list of demands that we want to see implemented.

Students of all colors have recognized the disadvantages that certain groups have experienced on this so called, "inclusive" campus and frankly we are tired of it. The mission of TCU is "To educate individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community," but how is this enforced? Students and faculty go around campus spewing micro-aggressions and expecting students of color to pretend that what has been done is acceptable. Being that this is 2016, change is long overdue.

We are prepared to provide more information and work with administration directly on the implementation of these demands. With an open line of communication, resolutions can and will be made. It is our duty as students to recognize our feelings toward the powers that be and work to implement change. We have put lots of thought into the demands and are passionate about change, we can only hope that you, and fellow members of administration will be just as open to the change as we are.

The demands listed below are in no particular order. If we do not hear something regarding our demands within 20 days, various forms of escalation will take place until some if not all of our demands are met.

Signed,

Black Students and Allies of TCU

## **Mission Statement:**

It is our goal to elevate the people of color on Texas Christian University's campus by promoting empathy through cultural education, and creating truly ethical leaders in the global community by ensuring that black people are fairly represented and heard by administration.

## **What we want to accomplish:**

We have started by compiling a list of demands crafted with careful consideration based on concerns voiced on TCU's campus and campuses around the nation. However, that is just the beginning. Through these demands as well as creating a video message that finally voices the many (often ignored or unheard) grievances that people of color have on TCU's campus, we plan on shifting the issue of race from "dialogue" to tangible action. We will stop at nothing to ensure that the cultural presence of black people on this campus is acknowledged and appreciated. Most of all we seek to educate this campus of the cultural origin and struggles that make black people who they are--and actively work to shift people's ignorance to awareness.

## **Executive Summary**

1. We demand that TCU revise the Code of Conduct to reflect a zero-tolerance policy for racially insensitive and hateful speech. This will include developing and implementing protocol that will appropriately handle instances of hate speech as well as hate crimes involving TCU students. To do this we propose that a student led Diversity/Inclusion/Accountability board be created to focus on all issues of racial insensitivity on campus. The board will focus on initiating campus-wide conversation on diversity and inclusion on TCU's campus as well as holding students, faculty and staff accountable for insensitivity.
2. We demand that TCU increase faculty of color by at least 10%, in addition the retention rate these faculty members will remain above 75%. (to reflect the population of Texas)
3. We demand that all TCU faculty, staff, and students attend a sensitivity training with a trained professional during orientation that focuses not only on racial and anti-Semitic intolerance but also micro-aggressions in order to maintain diversity and inclusion.
4. We demand accurate annual reports that reflect TCU's progress in terms of increasing diversity, not solely based on locations but also race in incoming classes as well as the diversity of all faculty and staff.

5. We demand a spark of meaningful dialogue- administrators and student media outlets must use existing communication channels to start, continue, and deepen our discussion of racism and ethnocentrism through conversations during orientation and throughout the core curriculum. In the core curriculum, focusing on the Cultural Awareness as being exclusively for the awareness of world cultures and people.
6. We demand a 100 million dollar endowment to further support minority students, and make TCU a more fiscally feasible option through non-athletic scholarships offered to low-income high schools not included within the realm of Community Scholars, and the creation of a multicultural center that is for students and by students.
7. We demand that a department of diverse studies are created along with an Ethnic Studies course that will be a core curriculum requirement for all students. We also demand a rigorous reevaluation of the courses that currently fulfill the core curriculum's diversity requirement, led by a board comprised of faculty of color who would be compensated for this service.
8. We demand that TCU create a Greek-life diversity task force to implementing a mandatory cultural sensitivity training, with a trained professional, for all students considering Greek life.
9. We demand housing for members of both the Multicultural Greek Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council, as they are a vital part of diversity on this campus.
10. We demand the establishment an Asian American studies major and a Native American studies major, because they are representative of people both in the state of Texas and beyond.
11. We demand a university-funded speaker series, that focuses on diversity and how we can better implement and celebrate it on campus.
12. We demand that TCU hire a Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion in charge of overseeing the curriculums and projects set forth in this document.
13. We demand that the flag be lowered when people of color around the nation are murdered by people who are supposed to protect and serve.
14. We demand that the students involved in the implementation of these demands, and the faculty and staff supporting them, do not suffer negative repercussions as they engage in this process of systematic and cultural change.