

Action Items Toward Racial Equity at UNT

Town Hall on Black Lives Matter, UNT, June 8, 2020

Submitted by UNeTe: Latinx Faculty and Staff Alliance
and LMAS: Latina/o Mexican American Studies

“What we teach at every school right now—what we consider to be the standard humanities and social science curriculum—is actually grounded in white supremacy, but is masked as objectivity. Ethnic studies is charged with filling in the immense gap left by our Eurocentric education systems.” Lorgia Garcia-Peña, interview in the *Boston Review*, 2 June 2020¹

UNeTe and LMAS urge the University of North Texas to respond concretely and swiftly to the inequities made glaringly clear by ongoing police and structural violence against Black people in the United States. Recent uprisings across the nation and the world demand change. Given that universities are institutions originally built on Eurocentric values and to promote white supremacist heteropatriarchies, we insist on radical change to our existing structures and reject the status quo. As a student stated during Friday’s Town Hall, “If you’re not willing to be radical with your solutions, nothing will work.” **Institutional and structural change must take place to create the conditions for hearts to change.**

UNeTe and LMAS submit these **five action items** to the University of North Texas as a starting point toward real change.

1. Provide funds and support to develop an academic program in **Black Studies by December 2020.**
2. In accord with the demands submitted by the Black Student Union in November 2019: **By the academic year 2021-2022 the University of North Texas increases the percentage of Black, Brown, and other marginalized identities among the faculty and staff campus-wide to match the demographic representation of our student population.**
3. Provide at least one additional **Full-time Staff Position by August 2020 to Assist with Diversity and Inclusion in-person and/or Zoom Training** across campus (distinct from state required compliance training).
4. Enhance **Discretionary Funding and Decision-Making for the Vice President for Equity and Diversity and the Vice Provost for Faculty Success by December 2020 to be used to: 1) support BIPOC groups for faculty and staff, 2) invest in the recruitment and retention of BIPOC faculty and staff, and 3) offer additional support to BIPOC faculty and staff who serve on a wide-variety of search committees and other service roles that help foster an environment toward racial equity at UNT.**
5. **Reduce Funding for the UNT Police and Channel those funds to Counseling Services and the Multicultural Center by August 2020.** In the midst of a public health crisis and a Supreme Court decision about DACA that inequitably impact populations of color, supporting our students with these services must be made a top priority. Campus police must investigate actions by white supremacist groups on campus, publicly report incidents of activity, and publicly report results of investigations.

We request that the President and Provost convene a meeting with relevant cabinet members and faculty of color every semester to monitor and improve the university’s progress toward racial and ethnic equity.

¹ Epigraph is a quote from “Decolonizing the University,” an interview with Lorgia García-Peña <http://bostonreview.net/race/lorgia-garcia-pena-mordecai-lyon-decolonize-university?fbclid=IwAR3pDKSsRY8T1eZvIRITZiqvoEKA1SLMpBuiJ6ZEX79bbXazAvrefOacZI>