

**To: President Robert Niehoff**  
**November 20, 2015**

The African American Alliance of John Carroll University has decided that we will no longer stand by as our needs are overlooked on campus. We have been shown repeatedly by administrative decisions through our years of enrollment, that black students do not matter to John Carroll University. This reality is in direct conflict with the vision, mission, and core values of the university as a Jesuit institution. It has been brought to our attention on many occasions that Ignatians take ethical action to resist the violence that comes from long standing unaddressed issues, and yet as an institution that violence is inflicted upon black students daily.

We acknowledge the fact that the university has made strides recently in making the campus a more inclusive place. However we would also like to acknowledge that surface level changes will not fix our issues. Having "Courageous Conversations" do not make structural changes to the institution. Hiring minority professors who are temporary does not make lasting cultural change to the campus environment. As an institution, the focus of these initiatives continues to be on "diversity", "inclusion", and "social justice". However, classes on social justice do not equate racial justice on campus. We have heard a lot of rhetoric about how Ignatians reflect and respond in times of distress and how that reaction should always be just and fair, however this reactionary attitude is a major piece of the issue we are faced with today. As a campus, we are never proactive. The institution either reacts too late or does not react at all.

When student leaders on campus held an Africa party, where they dressed up in a minstrel-like manner as racist African caricatures, nothing was done to correct that behavior. When "Big Ugly Niggers" was written on a chalkboard in the common lounge of a residence hall, nothing was done to correct this behavior. When students had a party at their house titled "The Jungle" and were all dressed in Dashikis, nothing was done to correct this behavior. When a student said the word "nigger" on a campus bus on the way to homecoming, and was reported, nothing was done to correct this behavior. When someone ran into a black student's room, called them a nigger, and ran out, nothing was done to correct this behavior. When our posters and advertisements are vandalized on a regular basis, nothing is ever done to correct this behavior. Faculty and students alike make racist comments to black students on a daily basis, and when these students report these incidents most times, nothing is done to correct this behavior.

These incidents and many like them are never addressed on campus, showing black students how little they are worth to the institution. It is clear to us, by John Carroll University's actions that you believe these behaviors do not need to be corrected and are accepted as campus norms. We are taking a stand today to say that we are not numbers. We are not here simply to fill the diversity quotas and pose for photos. We are living, breathing individuals who deserve to feel safe and comfortable in this space. We will no longer listen to administration talk about how "diverse and inclusive" we are as a campus as black students are not included in their thoughts and actions.

Therefore, we have come together to require that the institution implement immediate and structural changes that will help alleviate the excruciating amount of racism and harassment felt by black students on this campus daily. To be transparent and hold John Carroll University accountable these demands will be made public on November 20, 2015. We expect a response to this letter by 5 pm on Monday, November 23. If we are not contacted by this time to work on remedying these campus issues we will take appropriate non-violent actions. You may respond to us at [aaajcu@gmail.com](mailto:aaajcu@gmail.com). Once these demands are implemented, we as students can return to doing what we came to this campus for, learning and thriving.

“It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win.”

Assata Shakur

Signed,

The African American Alliance  
John Carroll University

## A List Of Demands

**We demand** to be holistically included in the fabric of John Carroll University. To be thought of as a part of the student body and treated as such. To be recognized and respected as individuals on campus, not simply numbers to fill the institutions diversity requirements.

**We demand** to be heard on campus. Many of the problems we face as black students on campus stem from the simple fact that our issues have repeatedly been ignored by the institution.

**We demand** that the school implement specific procedures for the Bias Reporting System (i.e. first report: warning, second report: parent contact and course requirement; third report: a monetary fine). This shall also include informing the campus community about all incidents on campus and proactively investigating all reports to the system. Reports to the system shall be made public in the form of easily accessible data reports. Rules for alcohol and marijuana have written and immediate consequences, issues of bias and racism should as well.

**We demand** that a student-led diversity committee be created and implemented on campus. This committee shall act as a liaison between Cultural Organizations and the Student Union. This committee shall be in place to guide programming to be culturally sensitive, as well as have a voting right in passing a bill.

**We demand** that black students have an actual role and direct involvement in the hiring of faculty and staff. The student-led diversity committee shall be included in the interviews and decision making process. This also includes requiring the Dean of the College of Business and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to make the Faculty Council hire more black professors and staff members. Seeing as we are an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer, we expect the school to honor that commitment.

**We demand** that diversity training be required that focuses solely on race for faculty, staff and student leaders. These trainings are to be provided by an organization not affiliated with John Carroll University and endorsed by the student-led diversity committee.

**We demand** the implementation of a position in the counseling center for a black counselor who's main purpose and role is to focus on issues black students deal with.

**We demand** that John Carroll University increase funding for programs that support black students on campus. This means increased funding for the Pathways For Success Program and the return of the book voucher for participants. This also means implementing an increase in funding for the operation, programming and development of cultural organizations with a portion of this funding coming directly from student activity fees.

**We demand** that the school enhance the representation of black studies and culture in the core curriculum and class listings, as well as actually offer all classes that are listed in the bulletin related to black issues and history, but are rarely offered.

**We demand** that there be a black cultural center on campus available to black students at all times.