

# **BLACK STUDENT UNION**

**Kansas State University**

Bryan Davis  
**President**  
Taj Brimmer  
**Vice President**



Brandon L. Clark  
**Advisor**  
Bryon K. Williams  
**Advisor**

To the Kansas State University Community:

The K-State Black Student Union became aware of a member of the Kansas State University portraying themselves in “black-face” and using language that is unbecoming of a person who lives in modern society. It is our understanding that this student is no longer enrolled at the university, but it is our belief that the university needs to take the stance that she is no longer welcomed back at any future date. It is also our strong belief that this is not an isolated incident or the views of one individual, but representative of a portion of Kansas State University. We as a university have been here before. The racist comments on Yik Yak, the issues involving our student newspaper, and other incidents have been happening for years. Our university’s climate survey has also pointed to the fact we have a long way to go when it comes to race relations.

We also want the university to understand that the K-State Black Student Union is not a reactionary organization. We have been working to preemptively stop racism at this campus since the organization’s creation. This has especially been true the last few years. One needs to look no further than our programming efforts like the “Cats for Inclusion Campaign,” a partnership with the Staley School of Leadership Studies that works to foster community conversations around race, and teach students how to take anti-racist stances in society. We have been working with Student Governing Association in order to create a Diversity Student 2025 initiative, with the hopes that the university begins to take structural racism seriously. Our anger is not reactionary, but born from the frustration that we feel in our efforts not being taken seriously by a large amount of students and staff at this institution.

We recognize that our administration has been putting forth efforts with our organization to address some of these issues. We know that the university’s Campus Climate Response Team (CCRT) has been working tirelessly throughout the day to find solutions to this current issue. Just today, Dr. Pat Bosco, Vice President for Student Life, spent an hour of his day talking through possible solutions, and showing a genuine and authentic care. Allies such as Dr. Bosco, Amy Button Renz, Brandon Kliever and many others have always given us the courage to continue to push our agenda for equity and social justice forward.

The university adheres to our principals of community. These principals are at face value strong, philosophical stances on campus inclusion. However, it is our belief that the principals of community are now an impotent response to the issues of the day. As we see it, they do not lead to any practical solutions to these issues as they happen. We believe that the university must take more practical and pragmatic approaches to addressing diversity and inclusion if we are ever going to progress as an institution. Here are the things we believe need to happen in order to start creating social justice on our campus:

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- **Multicultural Student Center** – The University must be more intentional about creating space for our multicultural students on this campus. Every facet of our organization must understand that we cannot move the needle on diversity and multiculturalism until we address the structural support that has been nonexistent to this point. Our students, faculty, alumni, and supporters can no longer ignore the need for this building.
  - **Need Based Student Scholarships** – Our multicultural students have been disproportionately affected by the outrageous increases in tuition and fees. Our multicultural students are expected to perform with less resources than our counterparts, less academic support than our counterparts, and a less inviting climate than our counterparts. University costs should not continue to be the burden that it is. Our university has a large first generation population and most students depend on financial aid. All students should be in support of the need for this program.
  - **Anti – racism policy in the student code of conduct** – We must be serious about our response to campus racism. A zero tolerance policy must be taken by our organization in matters such as these. If these actions truly do not represent the organization, then measures need to be put into place that keep them from happening.
  - **Required Cultural Competency Course** – The K-State 8 must be expanded. There needs to be a requirement for a cultural competency course. This course must have intentional conversations about race, gender, and sexual preference as it relates to equity and justice. This is not a replacement for Global Issues and Perspectives or the Human Diversity requirements. This course should be required in addition to those important areas.

We find these solutions to be practical. However, we know that many in the K-State community will view them as radical and extreme. If that is the case, then that says more about the university's commitment (or lack thereof) to true institutional change. We are ready to work with anyone to bring these solutions into effect. We are also ready to do it alone. The decision is in the hands of this K-State Family.

Unapologetically B.L.A.C.K.,

The K-State Black Student Union  
Bryan Davis, President  
Unapologetically B.L.A.C.K.  
Building Leaders and Continuing Knowledge

September 16, 2016

Bryan Davis  
Black Student Union  
Kansas State University

Dear Mr. Davis:

Faculty Senate Leadership met this morning to consider recent events, and in particular the solutions you proposed on Twitter last night.

- We agree with you that a Multicultural Student Center would be beneficial for K-State. We are aware that plans have been made for such a Center and we hope the University will be able to provide something suitable in a reasonable timeframe.
- I have advocated for an increase in Need-Based Scholarships for some time. We believe these would be beneficial for the University both in terms of improving diversity and in terms of increasing our graduation rate. We will continue to advocate for increases in Need-Based Scholarships.
- Faculty Senate Leadership agrees that an explicit Anti-Racism Policy would be appropriate for the Principles of Community. The Faculty Senate Committee on University Planning announced at our last Senate meeting that they would discuss updating the Principles of Community. The committee chair, Spencer Wood, will be sure this issue is introduced during that discussion at their meeting on Thursday, October 6. He would be happy for you to attend this meeting. Please contact him at [sdwood@ksu.edu](mailto:sdwood@ksu.edu) for the precise time and location.
- We agree that improving cultural competency is important for K-State students. This issue was already a topic of discussion in my college (Arts & Sciences), and perhaps other colleges as well. There has been discussion about whether this goal is best accomplished by adding another course to the K-State 8. Since students can, and often do, wait to fulfill requirements until senior year, perhaps we would be better served by adding this content to K-State First, or some other mechanism to be sure students develop their cultural competency early in their time at K-State? Or perhaps not, and we should expand the K-State 8 as proposed. On behalf of Teresa Hartman, the committee chair, we invite you to come to the October 4 meeting of the Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Committee, at 3:30 in room 204 of the Union, to discuss options. We are committed to our students developing cultural competency, and we want to find the best way to

## **Attachment 4**

accomplish this goal. Please contact Faculty Senate Administrative Assistant Candace LaBerge, [candaceb@ksu.edu](mailto:candaceb@ksu.edu), to let us know if you will be able to attend. If you wish someone else to attend in your place, or to bring an additional person with you for the discussion, that would be fine. Do please let us know who is planning to attend.

Faculty Senate Leadership was pleased to see such a thoughtful response to such a thoughtless incident. We look forward to working with you to improve the climate of social justice on our campus.

Sincerely,

Andrew G. Bennett  
Faculty Senate President.

xc: Taj Brimmer, Brandon Clark, Bryon Williams, Zelia Wiley, Travis Gill, April Mason, Pat Bosco, Faculty Senate Leadership Council