

June 23, 2020

President Curtis,

The Black Faculty and Staff Caucus have been meeting the past few weeks. Author Kimberly Jones, in an interview a few weeks ago, explained the protest, riots, and looting during racial distress as follows:

"There's a social contract that we all have, that if you steal or if I steal, then the person who is the authority comes in and fix the situation. But, the person who fixes the situation is killing us. So, the social contract is broken... You broke the contract, when you killed us in the streets..."

Indiana State University has broken the contract with Black faculty, staff, and students. Below we have included a list of how the contract has been broken:

ISU broke the contract by:

1. Emphasizing the number of Black students we have but not providing adequate faculty, staff, or other support services for those students.
2. Dismissing or failing to address concerns of bias and prejudice raised by members of the ISU community.
3. Disbanding an office that was actively fighting for diversity and inclusion concerns and rebuilding it in the image that was more comfortable for White people to look at.
4. Leaving our minoritized students out of the discussions related to their general well-being.
5. Making the ceiling for advancement not much higher than the floor that Black and Brown faculty/staff start at when they join ISU.
6. Treating our International students like they are second class members of the community.
7. Allowing bad behaviors to progress into discriminatory practices or repeated patterns of behavior with no real consequence for the people who perpetrate them.
8. Not addressing a strong fear among non-tenure track faculty and staff of being retaliated against for raising concerns.
9. Not providing a place at the table to discuss our issues, while allowing White minds to discuss what's best for Black and Brown bodies.
10. Pushing out, blackballing (whiteballing), or silencing strong diverse voices that may challenge the system or promote change.
11. Embracing White privilege while assuming they are doing minoritized people a "favor" by allowing us to work for or attend their institution.
12. Promoting those with less experience because they are perceived as less threatening and can be molded into what senior leadership perceive is an acceptable version of Blackness.
13. Having a system of differential punishments for minoritized people versus the majority.
14. Dismissing and not further exploring the reasons that minoritized members of the community (students, faculty, and staff) leave ISU.
15. Allowing students to harass, bully, or browbeat minoritized faculty or staff.
16. Being silent and hoping that larger diversity concerns will blow over when they arise.
17. Allowing for the perpetuation of stereotypes.
18. Assuming that we are "all the same" versus a collective of individuals.
19. Picking who they want to represent us without our input.
20. Promising opportunities that never materialize.
21. Taking over or removing support for successful programs targeted for minoritized students; or disempowering those programs by weaving them into larger University programs in an attempt to make those other programs seem more inclusive.

22. Defining who the "good" and "bad" people of color are to new staff and faculty as a way of keeping us divided.
23. Blaming mental health for how people have been coping under the stress of discrimination.
24. Not allowing minoritized faculty the autonomy to teach and grade their courses in a manner or at a level that they see as fitting for the subject material.
25. Defunding the "diversity series" and other programs specifically designed to educate the ISU community on various diversity topics.
26. Not providing mentoring relationships for minoritized faculty/staff to help them navigate the demands of the institution and professional advancement.
27. Writing in phrases like "Inclusive Excellence" while practicing "Inclusive Negligence."
28. Holding "listening sessions" after an incident that leads to nothing.
29. Conducting climate surveys that are never useful for real change.
30.etc...!

This above list is in no way inclusive, but it does encompass many of the concerns and experiences of the Black faculty and staff. We are requesting a written response from you and leadership about how to repair the broken contract. Below I have included some of our initiatives to repair the broken contract:

1. The creation of a plan that actually addresses the numerous concerns shared by minoritized faculty, staff, and student concerns within the last 5 (five) years.
 - i. Need to focus on social justice
 - ii. Need a clearly defined definition of "diversity"
 - iii. More involvement on speaker series
 - iv. We need to be at the table – representation on the President's Council
 - v. We have to be on the same page
2. The true purpose of the AV Inclusive office has been diluted to one that does not address equity and social justice issues existing on campus
 - i. Office needs to have a more central mission that address the needs of everyone not just faculty and staff
3. Create a clear statement/definition of Diversity.
4. Hire an ombudsperson that support all students without bias.
5. Focus on repeated patterns of racial and/or sexual behavior focused on students by faculty.
 - i. Reports are received and behavior is condoned due to lack of response.
 - ii. Create a panel of diverse affinity members to review complaints and work with HR to find equitable solutions.
 - iii. Create an oversight board with faculty, staff, and alumni.
6. Mandatory training for faculty and staff about cultural awareness and sensitivity.
7. Share information about minoritized hires to connect them to the affinity groups.
8. Recognition of AACC staff and need for special programming dollars.
 - i. Recognize and financial support the ISUccceed and MAPS programs
 - ii. Give oversight of the AACC back to the AACC
 - iii. Lack of understanding of AACC responsibilities as a cultural center
9. Review and enhance efforts undertaken by Josh Powers
10. Bias Reporting mechanism (i.e. IU, Purdue, Ball State)
11. Campus Climate study
 - i. Selection of tool/firm must be selected by members of ISU affinity groups
12. Provide a place at the table for minoritized faculty and staff.

13. Implement social justice into the curriculum and provide required programming for faculty, staff, students, and administrators.
14. Focus University initiatives and programming on social justice and equity.
15. Develop programs that focus on inequities.
 - i. Need more Black faculty
 - ii. Address hostile environment Black faculty have to face upon coming to ISU
16. Create a recruitment plan.
17. Create a retention plan.
18. Involve affinity groups in planning and coordinating.
19. Utilize diverse marketing/recruitment tools (i.e. Ph.D. database).
20. Cease excusing the use of racist and sexist language especially by faculty and staff.
21. Review and correct pay disparity between White and Black staff/faculty.
22. Provide University support of Black faculty and staff.
23. Faculty representation on the Senate – a subcommittee of minoritized faculty who will meet with the executive leaders as well as be recognized at the senate meetings to provide updates on the “state of minoritized faculty.”
24. Black faculty (tenure track and tenured) meetings with the president twice per semester and once in the summer. This is to be ongoing and not for a “moment.”
25. Hire an executive level academic administrator who is Black to represent the faculty at the administrative cabinet meetings.
26. Support and create programs for focused on Black students’ success.

Again, the above is just a starting point. This is how we are beginning the dialogue and taking action to transform broken contracts and oppressive environments. We look forward to your written response and next steps to implement change and a strategic initiative without our academic sphere that will eradicate racism, discrimination, prejudice, and bias.

The Black Faculty and Staff