

A Response by Karen Whitney, Vice Chancellor of Student Life & Diversity and Chief Diversity Officer IUPUI, to the document "[Through Our Eyes: The State of the Black Student at IUPUI](#)" presented during the November 2, 2006 Town Hall Meeting

November 6, 2006

Dear Mr. Dorsey,

Campus administration has reviewed your November 2, 2006 report: [Through Our Eyes: The State of the Black Student at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis](#). Your request for results is reasonable, and we are committed to working with you and with other students, staff and faculty to respond. Below we have outlined initiatives and time lines of efforts leading to an improved campus.

Thank you for taking the initiative to bring these issues to our attention by having students share their stories and experiences at IUPUI. We know intrinsically and from our diverse history as a nation that it takes courage to stand up for what you believe are inequities and to ask for change. Together, we can make a stronger IUPUI campus where all students are supported in achieving their dreams.

We acknowledge that IUPUI has challenges to overcome in diversity (campus self-reporting website: www.iupui.edu/administration/chancellorsnews/state_of_diversity_06.pdf), but we do not now, nor will we ever sanction discrimination at IUPUI. We are prepared to respond immediately to the issues raised in the student's stories. Lillian Charleston, Affirmative Action Officer, will meet with any students who have experienced instances of discrimination in order to explore, investigate and resolve their issues in a timely manner. Ms. Charleston may be reached at:

Lillian Charleston
Affirmative Action Officer
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Given the short time frame, my response to the issues raised in the report will be brief. Rather than offering full solutions, this letter should be received as our open invitation to work together to design the best solutions for our future.

1. Improve Communication:

On Friday, Dr. Charles Bantz, Chancellor, invited representatives of the Black Student Union to meet with him upon his return to discuss future actions upon his return to campus. (Analysis November 2006, progress reports January 2007, March 2007 and May 2007)

Amy Warner, Interim Vice Chancellor of External Affairs, will reinstate the Black Student Resource Guide under the direction of Kimberly Stewart-Brinston, Director of Multicultural Outreach Enrollment Services and Nicole Oglesby, Director of Campus & Community Programs. (Analysis November 2006, publication production December 2006)

Dr. Rebecca Porter, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Services; Troy Brown, Director of Communications & Marketing; Dr. John Jones Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life; and Marguerite Watkins, Assistant Affirmative Action Officer will convene a group of undergraduate and graduate students to discuss the publication of events, policies and procedures that affect student life. (Analysis November 2006, policy statement December 2006)

2. Improve Respect:

Dr. Uday Sukhatme, Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculties; Dr. John Jones, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life; and Lillian Charleston, Affirmative Action Officer, will convene a group of students and faculty to define an action plan to improve the campus climate for minority students. (Initial discussion December 2006, analysis January 2007, recommendations March 2007, implementation May 2007)

Dr. Uday Sukhatme and Robert Martin, Vice Chancellor of Administration and Finance will work with Faculty Council and Staff Council to institute workplace diversity and civility training for individuals employed on the IUPUI campus (Initial discussion December 2006, analysis February 2007, recommendations April 2007, implementation June 2007)

3. Improve Support:

Last year, Chancellor Bantz approved \$499,000 Commitment to Excellence (CTE) base funding to the School of Liberal Arts to hire three new full-time faculty in African American and African Diaspora studies and to support student recruitment and retention. Searches for these faculty positions are in progress. This initiative alone should lead to a much stronger African American Studies program.

In September 2006, Dr. Uday Sukhatme, developed a faculty recruitment fund of \$500,000 to attract underrepresented faculty to the IUPUI campus. This program is currently available to all schools at IUPUI. Dr. Sherree Wilson, Special Assistant to the Chancellor and Dr. Natasha Flowers, Director of the Office for

Multicultural Professional Development are scheduled to give workshops to probe ideas for increasing the number of applications from minority candidates for faculty positions

Nicole Oglesby, Director of Campus & Community Programs will explore how to increase the number of campus administrators, Deans and Directors attending minority students programs. (Initial Discussion November 2006, Implemented December 2006)

4. Increase Cultural Competency:

Dr. Sherree Wilson and Dr. Nancy Chism, Professor School of Education, will be invited to convene an advisory group of students, faculty, and staff to explore how best to organize our campus-wide efforts to increase the cultural competency among IUPUI employees.

Dr. Robert White, Dean of the School of Liberal Arts, will explore how a more complete Black history could be infused into the undergraduate curriculum, to include the development of an academic credential. (Initial Discussion January 2007, Analysis March 2007, Report June 2007).

My plan as Campus Diversity Officer & Vice Chancellor for Student Life and Diversity includes establishment of an office that will advocate for black student affairs. (Initial Discussion January 2007, Analysis March 2007, Implementation June 2007).

5. Increased Funding:

Michelle Verduzco, Director of Campus & Community Life and Nathan Kohley, President of the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) will convene a USG ad-hoc committee to develop a proposal for additional funds to support new programs and events of interest to Black students. The programming and activity proposal should be submitted by December 2006 for spring 2007 programming. (Initial Discussion November 2006, Program Proposal December 2006, Program Funding secured January 2007, Programming launched February 2007).

On behalf of the campus administration, thank you again for sharing the painful stories of incidents you have experienced on campus. No one deserves to be treated with disrespect; and we are committed to improving conditions for minorities on this campus - together. There are many other important issues that your report raises which my office will continue to review further over time.

Let us plan to meet next week for your feedback on this proposal and action items. If possible it would be quite helpful if we could meet this Wednesday, please let me know the times that could work with your schedule. If meeting on Wednesday is not possible

then please send me several dates and times when you are available so we may schedule a meeting.

I look forward to our collaboration for the betterment of the IUPUI campus community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karen Whitney
Vice Chancellor For Student Life and Diversity
Campus Diversity Officer
Dean of Students
Adjunct Assistant Professor, IU School of Education