



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON ANTI-RACISM, EQUITY & INCLUSION

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 16, 2020 | 3:00 p.m.

Zoom Webinar

Members Participating: Rawan Abhari, Tom Block, Brandon Bowden, Cortez Brown, Billy Close, Katrinell Davis, Kyle Doney, Michelle Douglas, Miles Feacher, Craig Filar, Stacey Hardin, Robinson Herrera, Roxanne Hughes, April Jackson, Nastassia Janvier, Cassandra Jenkins, Maxine Jones, Hannah Kelsey, Samantha Kunin, Bruce Lamont, Stefany Moncada, Maxine Montgomery, Malik Osborne, Alana Rosenzweig, Nan Rothstein, Kevin Rutois, Jay Terry, Greg Washington, Allisson Yu

I. Call to Order and Welcome

Maxine Montgomery, Chair

Chair Maxine Montgomery called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Jimmy Cole conducted the roll call and confirmed a quorum.

II. Approval of Minutes

August 19, 2020, Organizational Session

Task Force Member Maxine Jones moved to approve the August 19, 2020 Organizational Session minutes. Task Force Member Alan Rosenzweig seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

III. Public Comment

No participants requested to make public comment.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

Recruitment, Retention, and Diversity Training Subcommittee

Michelle Douglas

Michelle Douglas described the three primary focus areas to be the source of work: 1) student recruitment and retention structures to reflect population in Florida, 2) faculty and staff recruitment with emphasis on underrepresented groups, and 3) education and training. She described the work of the subcommittee, including discussions of terminology, available datasets, education tools, faculty recruitment tools, search committee training, NCBI training. She also shared that the subcommittee is scheduling expert presenters.

Campus Climate

Brandon Bowden

Brandon Bowden reviewed the six objectives of the Campus Climate subcommittee. He shared that 2013 Campus Climate survey results have been secured and shared with the subcommittee and is now publicly available. The subcommittee will consider a future campus climate survey, possible listening sessions, and what to do with the data. The subcommittee will explore education and community engagement programs. The subcommittee will explore increase understanding and partnership with the FSU Police Department. The subcommittee will work with the History Department to determine possible collective effort for an education module. The subcommittee will consider additional objectives if necessary.

Historical Legacy

Maxine Jones

Maxine Jones described the deliberations of the subcommittee including the need to collect data to tell the inclusive and diverse story of FSU and the local community. This information should be available and accessible. This effort will be in partnership with other ongoing projects. This will be an ongoing and permanent feature of the university. The subcommittee will review the recommendations of the 2017-18 President's Panel on Namings and Recognitions and current and previous naming policies. The subcommittee will explore partnerships to document and share the stories and history. The subcommittee will hear expert presentations.

V. ACC Core Committee Update

Ashton Henderson

Ashton Henderson provided an overview of the Atlantic Coast Conference Committee for Racial and Social Justice (ACC CORE). The vision is to lead in college athletics by promoting and instilling racial and social justice and equity for all. The ACC CORE goals and outcomes are: 1) mandatory diversity and inclusion training for student-athletes, athletic departments, and conference staff, 2) creation of ACC Unity Symbol as a visual representation of solidarity among the ACC's 15 institutions, and 3) ACC Unity Statement to be read prior to every league contest.

VI. New Business

Maxine Montgomery, Chair

Maxine Montgomery described the available information from the 2017-18 President's Panel on Namings and Recognitions. She also described the available datasets on faculty, staff, and student populations to inform the work of the Task Force. She highlighted the importance of considering other ongoing, similar efforts as collaborative opportunities to the Task Force. She described cross-over issues between subcommittees, specifically law enforcement agency engagements and campus climate surveys. She shared that President Thrasher called her to reinforce his support of the Task Force. She encouraged subcommittees to consider short-term and long-term goals with an effort to move quickly on recommendations as appropriate.

VII. Task Force Member Open Forum

Cassandra Jenkins discussed considering outside constituent groups as part of the campus climate work of the Task Force.

Rawan Abhari discussed possibilities for engagement with the President's Search Committee.

Maxine Montgomery discussed strategies to support implementation of recommendations including requesting resources to support initiatives.

Cassandra Jenkins discussed engaging with the President's Search Committee to share criteria to be considered for selection.

Nastassia Janvier discussed her work on campus with students including concerns about tangible impacts of the Task Force.

Cortez Brown discussed increasing partnership with the University Board of Trustees. Maxine Montgomery suggested discussing the sustainability of the Task Force after his retirement.

Cassandra Jenkins discussed suggestions for sharing recommendations of characteristics and skills for presidential candidates.

Rawan Abhari discussed the need for anti-racism experience in presidential candidates.

Robinson Herrera discussed the importance of diversity on the President's Search Committee.

Billy Close discussed the importance of continued efforts in working with policy-makers, policy-enforcers, Deans, Vice Presidents, and others to implement the recommendations of the Task Force.

Jay Terry discussed the Board of Governors Regulation 1.002 on presidential search committees.

Miles Feacher discussed the need for transparency in governing bodies.

VIII. Adjourn

Maxine Montgomery adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

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Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 1:54 PM

Dear Members of the Taskforce:

Here are some important points to consider.

FSU needs to move beyond the use of Joe Seminole as mascot, regardless of what deal it has with the Seminole Tribe of Florida. UNCONQUERED is only adding fuel to the fire. Also, when Sherman Alexie visited FSU a few years ago he pointed out something that still resonates more than ever today. Is FSU ready to deal with a legacy that will place it in the history books on the wrong side of history and be a last footnote to being the last institution to get rid of its offensive mascot? We need this matter resolved sooner rather than later. "Othering" one group is still a terrible misstep. Other professional and college teams have acted quickly, why haven't we?

Under president Weatherall, FSU went through a brief and unconstructive period of rebranding which saw lots of poor uses of resources like the placement of so many statues on campus. FSU doubled down on the mascot. Many of us believe this was not the right move. Surely, it will take a lot resources to recalibrate real efforts to get FSU on the right track. This is an important moment as we begin the search for leadership to take FSU forward and into the right side of history books.

This needs immediate attention alongside other pressing matters including setting in place a system by which it hires and retains faculty of color, in particular LatinX faculty. Departments need to network and combine energies to recruit a more diverse faculty across all fields at the university. Faculty diversity is still lagging far behind student representation.

We need to continue to create an inclusive and diverse atmosphere on campus that goes merely beyond window dressing. Action needs to take place. Offer faculty and students a chance to get together on a regular basis by bringing speakers and setting up regular events that will open the doors for committees and departments to make real changes in hiring and retention and help students of color finally see their world represented at the front of their classrooms.

Thank you for your time and attention

Monday, September 28, 2020 at 4:07 PM

Dear Sirs and Madams:

I have been following events related to the changes in building names, removal of statues, etc and find this very disturbing. If you look at the group instigating all these activities you will find that their main goal is not racial equality but destruction of our way of life. We all want equality but don't want Marxist(strong word) ideology being promoted to our students.

As long as this situation continues at FSU I don't plan to support any activity connected to the University.

Please take my name off your roles.

I welcome a reply.

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October 14, 2020 Task Force Meeting | Public Input File

Carlos

Ps: look up Students for a Democratic Society, the organization that is active in promoting the changes at FSU.

Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 12:25 PM

Hello,

I reviewed the meeting PowerPoint from the recent meeting and it seems that Doak Campbell was left out of the discussion on names and recognition for the Subcommittee on Historical Legacy and that it will only be looking at how to incorporate the history of Native peoples, and not actually the issue of cultural appropriation.

Please see email below,

Dear President Thrasher,

My name is and I am a 2015 graduate of Florida State University. Like many FSU graduates and through my own privilege, I was woefully ignorant of Doak Campbell's disturbing legacy of a segregationist. This summer, in light of the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and tragically many other Black lives and our nation's continued reckoning with systemic racism and violence against Black lives, this legacy came under rightful examination. I was encouraged when it was stated on June 22nd that the stadium's name would be under review, as it we should not be giving a place of honor and recognition to someone who held and supported racist policies and practices. At this point, it is October 8th, and I have been unable to find any updates or information in regards to the progress or status of the review of the stadium name, which is deeply disappointing. The lack of information and transparency sends a message that a review was named in order to give a pretense of action without any follow through and a hope that the issue is forgotten. While that may be true, of some, I have not forgotten and will not forget.

There is obviously much more work that the university needs to do in terms of racial justice and equity work, especially considering the harmful cultural appropriation we engage in regards to the culture of indigenous peoples, however this seems like an incredibly simple and easy step to take, especially as multiple universities and even a professional football team have taken steps to rename or change harmful images. As an alumna, it is incredibly saddening and disappointing to see that Florida State has not been a leader in this work and in action. Yes, the task force was created but even that step was a follow in terms of steps other universities and businesses had taken and not a lead, it instead took a disappointing time to be announced. I expect more from my university. If you could please provide me and the general public with an update in regards to this review, that would be greatly appreciated.

Additionally, I strongly believe that our use of the Seminole name, our logo, and many of our practices (watching, tomahawk chop, etc) are harmful towards indigenous peoples and should be reviewed as well. Our "special relationship" with the Seminole tribe seems to be one primarily of financial gain for a few members, is not true to the legacy or culture of the Seminole people as a whole, and ends up with a whole lot of non-Native people displaying the logo of a native person all over their bodies and property. I, myself was an active participant in this during my time at

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October 14, 2020 Task Force Meeting | Public Input File

Florida State, and now recognize the harmful impact and the cultural appropriation in those actions. You can visit <https://illuminatives.org> for more information and research in regards to the use of Native peoples as names, logos, symbols, or mascots.

Thank you for your time

Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 10:14 PM

Hello FSU Task Force

Related to the FSU mascot, regarding the goal of education, please see the attached journal article that summarizes the research findings on the psychosocial effects of Native American mascots.

Article:

Laurel R. Davis-Delano , Joseph P. Gone & Stephanie A. Fryberg (2020): The psychosocial effects of Native American mascots: a comprehensive review of empirical research findings, Race Ethnicity and Education

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2020.1772221>

This University Claims to be a champion of diversity and yet lacks it where it matters the most. If you look at the administration that this university has, you could honestly count on one hand how many POC staff are in high ranking important positions.

Individuals like Miguel Hernández being offered the associate dean position at UC Irvine. Or Dr. Tadarrryl Starke who was offered a significantly better position in another institution. To further emphasize this, this is of no fault of their own. Florida State University does not have an open ladder to climb for POC staff.

I have continuously inserted myself in leadership positions, attempting to represent and speak up for BIPOC students on our campus. Unfortunately, to them I am just a face they can put on their social media to try to prove to themselves that they care about minority students on this campus. Organizations at FSU will welcome poc and give them a seat at the table but then continuously silence their voice. They will talk about how much they value diversity and inclusion but tip-toe around race issues because they might be too “political” or “controversial”. I have learned from my experience that implementing change from the inside will never be possible. Not at FSU. These organizations do not care about actionable change, they only care about seeming “woke”. Organizations care more about white feelings than the experiences of BIPOC minority experiences. Student '20

During the 60's and 70's, FSU students organized and participated in political activism on a variety of issues, including free speech, the Vietnam War, civil rights, the status of women, environmental concerns, and labor rights. The depth and commitment of student and faculty activism led some to label Florida State, "Berkeley of the South". Similarly to then, the university is currently living through tumultuous times. Their reputation and values are being challenged. The present student outcry and social media campaigns are testaments that students can and will bring change to FSU. The university should be proud of the students calling them out. They are doing it because they love this university and they want to make it better. Do what is expected of a Top 20 institution. Listen, plan, and act. Student '22

My (white) business professor asked me to meet him in his office one morning to "discuss my upcoming presentation." During the meeting, he made what I believed to be small talk at first, but quickly turned it into an all-encompassing interview: "So where are you from?" "No, but like outside of Miami, where are you really from?" "So how many languages can you speak?" "Did your family immigrate here?" I felt so objectified and uncomfortable. Towards the end, I tried to switch to talking about my presentation but he did not even care to hear about my topic. He dismissed me to attend to something else and said "I'm sure it will be fine." Student '21

The first day of spring 2020 I tried to introduce myself to my white finance professor. He spent the whole class listing off the names of students in the classroom he had from previous classes. The girls in front of me had common names (and were white) and when they introduced themselves he behaved normally. I have a more unique and ethnic sounding name. I introduced myself to him and he said "I'm not gonna remember that". i was so shocked i just didn't react. I went to his office hours the next day and tried to reintroduce myself and discuss with him how it made me feel and why it was so insulting. He told me I was too sensitive and he was offended. I was upset. if he could remember the names of precious students why couldn't he try with mine? The whole situation made me so annoyed that I just stopped attending class in person and watched his online lectures. no professor should ever make a student so uncomfortable that they don't want to go to class. Student '21

“Dear President Thrasher,

Please understand that the removal and renaming of certain monuments on campus is not out of evil. People are simply asking you to remove something that constantly reminds them of oppression towards a specific race. This is honestly the bare minimum seeing as how we are constantly trying to be placed in a box due to society.”

I heard a member of Sigma Pi say George Floyd's life shouldn't be a big deal because he was "only $\frac{3}{5}$ ths of a person". Comments like this shouldn't be tolerated.

“I am mixed race (part East Asian, I don’t want to go into specifics in order to retain anonymity). In my graduate program, I had a white faculty member ask me what my parents do for a living. She was shocked when I said they were both only high school graduates and I am a first generation college student. She said, “Oh, well I thought they might’ve already gotten a college education, based on your background.” I replied to her, “My background?”. She stated, “Yes, you are Asian, aren’t you?”. The atrocious myth of the “model minority” can lead to some hurtful racist microaggressions. Faculty members need to be properly trained on racial microaggressions.”

“I experienced racism throughout my entire undergraduate studies. I was repeatedly denied entry into Greek life events, called racial slurs on campus, and felt uncomfortable as the only POC when discussing race relations and being told that racism isn’t real. I’ve witnessed FSU students yell transphobic slurs and make inappropriate comments about gender minorities. I was told if I didn’t like my treatment at FSU to go to FAMU to be with “my people” on multiple occasions. FSU is not the inclusive environment it is painted out to be. I don’t know a single POC or gender minority who hasn’t experienced discrimination because of FSU students. Hate speech and entitlement thrive on campus especially in Greek life and the athletic departments. There is a lot to be done to make FSU a good environment. Being a PWI does not mean that those students in the majority can attack the minorities.”

“While walking alone back to deGraff hall one night, I was harassed by a group of white men. These men called me several slurs including the "n" word. Since I was alone, I didn't engage and just speed walked the rest of the way. Thankfully, I was able to make it back to my dorm physically safe although visibly shaken.”

“Change needs to happen and if you are not on the side of change you are on the side of oppression, violence, and hate.”

“Please make your campus more diverse”

“Please remove eppes’ name from the building, the statue and doak. It’s time to re-evaluate why we have these landmarks for people who have historically had racist attitudes.”

“Change is needed.”

“Let the voices be heard. Cease to silence those who have not been. Let their stories come to light. Give them justice.”

“The change of name of Eppes hall and Doak stadium is integral for FSU to move forward in proving that it is a welcoming and actively anti-racist campus.”

“As a Latina, I have had many uncomfortable experiences on campus. I’ve been called foreign more times than I can count. People ask when did I move to the United States, even though I was born here. There are always jokes about ICE. Sometimes, I don’t feel comfortable speaking my native language on campus because people have gone out of their way to make sure I know that “in this country, we speak English”. FSU mentions how inclusive their campus is but that’s not true. They are quick to get minority students on campus but after that they don’t seem to care what happens to us. There is no support for minority students. I feel like I’m constantly trying to prove that I belong here.”

“FSU IP should be more diverse. Although we’re studying abroad in a white country, it doesn’t mean that black history month cannot be celebrated within the FSU IP buildings. As a POC studying abroad in Florence last semester, it was clear that the program lacked diversity not only in students, but also in the faculty and staff. As February went by, there was no mention of black history or culture. Your African American students should be celebrated even if they are outside of America. There wasn’t even a whisper about black history month, there were only two black students during the entire spring semester. We deserve to be celebrated and acknowledged.”

“I’m a Latinx student and my freshman year was right during the 2018 elections (DeSantis and Gillum) and one morning I was excited to go to the College of Medicine research building to meet with a professor. On my way, as I crossed Landis Green, the Republican table began booing me and yelling “go back home! go back to your country!” And laughing. I was humiliated but I kept walking. When I met the professor conducting the project I was interested in, he said “well aren’t you a spicy little thing?” And as he showed me the lab he made several remarks about how “Latinas are so hot headed” and that he was surprised a “Latina like you would be so into biology”. I have never felt so disheartened in my entire life and when I told another professor about the experience, he said I was overreacting and needed to learn to “accept my reality”. I’ve kept my mouth shut ever since.”

“I was walking home one night on Landis Green in the beginning of my FSU undergrad career with friends. There were many people out that night, one white man passed me and said “Go back to your country.” I said “I was born here!” I am a proud Latina woman, proud of her brown skin. I also heard on multiple occasions from fellow students and peers that my “English was very good.” All of these incidents range from 2014-2016. That pushed me to do multiple presentations on micro aggressions and related subjects for class projects, so that my peers would know that that is not a compliment, especially to someone born in America. While students come to FSU with their own biases and beliefs, it is our duty as a Florida State community to ensure these students leave with a well-rounded education, one that includes subjects and themes such as social justice, multiculturalism, and other related topics. We currently have some things in place, but we could always do more. We can always do better. So let’s do better.”

“As a recent FSU graduate, although I deeply appreciate the time I had here, it would be wrong to ignore the xenophobia I have witnessed and experienced firsthand as a Hispanic student. when present in white spaces I have been asked, “where is your name from” “but where are you REALLY from” “say something in spanish” and even been said that i am not understanding someone as well because my first language is Spanish instead of English. Most conversations would center around my ethnicity or my name which made me feel like i was labeled as a Hispanic immigrant and nothing more. These microaggressions led me to avoid white spaces altogether in order to feel more safe and validated. I’ve had other Latinx peers experience being called Mexican although there are not, as well as being told that they are “pretty for a -insert country they are from- girl” by white FSU students. These actions made me as well as my friends feel like we don’t belong in this institution and don’t deserve being here as much as these white students. We urge you to listen to our needs, plan accordingly, and take action.”

“Hi, I’m a Black woman at FSU. My experience is not uncommon. When we’re studying race in the classroom they all stare at you. However, when it comes to any other space their eyes shift and your opinion and knowledge are invalid. I have sensed more than a couple times some white classmates underestimating Black and other POC’s knowledge then once asserting our knowledge and our right to be here, turned annoyed. One of the more offensive things that happens when you’re Black at FSU is if you’re seen at an academic lecture outside of the classroom nonblack students would assume you’re from FAMU. I think the saddest is that I don’t want this account (Dear Florida State) to disappear. I don’t trust the university to have the best interest of its students of color.”

“The Student Conduct & Community Standards office needs to be re-evaluated and monitored. It is an oppressive system that seeks to educate students, but instead, punishes them and limits their realm of growth opportunities at FSU. The individuals working in that office also need serious training & diversity and inclusion work, because they lack at meeting their minority students where they are. I'm hopeful that K.C. White's appointment will help because from my conversations with her, she really seems to care about students.”

“I’ve been heavily discriminated against for my disabilities.
Faculty are not trained enough nor do some have empathy
towards students at all.”

“FSU is a source of a lot of pain and trauma. This place has made me question my self-worth and made me feel like being white is better. It’s taken a lot to overcome a lot of internalized racism and self-hatred gained my freshman and sophomore year.”

“I have attended this university for 5 years and while I’m lucky to be in this institution, I’m disappointed by the amount of silence coming from President Thrasher and the whole university. It makes me disgusted that the university fails to recognize anything for their students until there is bad PR circulating. President Thrasher’s silence shows he doesn’t care about black students, faculty members, and staff but only to show off that the school isn’t racist. Look at the Facebook groups and see what your students think of minorities and others. The school does nothing to protect students of color but too much to protect white students. If you really care about our voices, invite more than one person of color to these boards. Be present when there are discussions on racism on campus. Students and faculty and staff are just as valuable (heck even more valuable) than Boosters and the Board of Trustees because we make the school. Students of color made the school into a top 20 school and by not being active and immediately setting out statements against racism (and actually saying you support black lives and saying the names of victims of police brutality), this is all performative and Thrasher should resign immediately to make room for someone who will make things better and more welcoming for people of color at FSU.”

“As a white student, I’ve been praised for doing work that’s expected of me, while others of BIPOC go above and beyond and don’t receive any recognition at all. Racism is real and I see that I. And you say you see it. This school is founded off of racism and I clearly see that through the disparities between students on campus as well as the relationship or lack there of there is between FSU and FAMU. You lack to see it. You all should no better. Do your own research. Look at history. The Eppes statue needs to be removed, rename Eppes Hall, rename Doak Stadium. These are just the first steps if you wanna say you want to have an inclusive campus environment.”

“You know it the minute you walk on campus. This is their game. This is their world. If you don’t live in it by their terms; if you don’t play it how they want you to play it; you’re done. Constantly belittled, ignored; with our opinions discarded.”

“In order to ensure a safe and equitable environment for all of its students, FSU must no longer glorify those who enslaved and oppressed others, and/or perpetuated systemic racism.

Continuing to do so would constitute a failure on the part of the administration and of the campus community to respect students and community members of color, particularly Black students.

They cannot feel safe and welcome in the presence of images honoring those who profited from the dehumanization and brutalization of those who came before them.

As such, the Eppes statue must be removed from campus, as must Eppes Hall and Doak Stadium be renamed. Contrary to the claims of some, this would not be an "erasure" of history or "heritage", but instead an instance of learning from it in order to move forward and begin to heal historical wounds that are still felt to this day.

Racism, past or present, must have no place in the FSU community.”

“I am Venezuelan-American but never grew up around Spanish. I took a beginner's Spanish course first semester and the teacher accused me of trying to get an easy A in her class because of my last name and heritage. She threatened to go to the head of the modern language department and remove me from her course if I did not drop out myself. When I explained to her that my placement test (that I took after I enrolled in my course because no one at orientation said I needed to take a placement test) was higher because I helped international students at my high school, so I knew key words, she laughed and said, "Sure, that's why." She forgot to mention me to the head of the department, so I got to stay in the course. However, I did not feel welcome. Additionally, there was a chapter in the book with words on how to describe people and the right answer to describe LGBT men was supposed to be "flamboyant".”

“I’ve had to deal with hair grabbing by students and professors alike, being called the n-word over parking spot battles, and being told “you’re so pretty for a black girl” in classrooms across this campus. I have had professors think I’m lying about my Hispanic heritage to take advantage of campus services - accusing people of not being about to be both Black and Latinx. People who have called my white partner an “n-word lover” in front of me. I’ve been followed around the bookstore by employees while looking around until my white partner joins me. Professors who have made me stand up in front of the class and share my perspective on race issues because often I am the only Black/Hispanic woman in class. Professors constantly remind me how “eloquent” I am - they are surprised my intelligence and ability to code switch and speak academically, as though they don’t expect it from Black women. I’ve had classmates tell me in class they don’t want to do an assignment on Black people because they can’t relate and the professor has said nothing or laughed in response. I had a professor on our first day of class say he was an “equal-opportunity offender” and when we went to the dean of his college, they said he is tenured and we had to deal with it. Never have I been given resources to deal with these daily

microaggressions. Never have I ever felt safe on this campus. Walking by Eppes everyday is a reminder that this campus is not for me. I want to love FSU but I feel like an outsider here. Neither here nor there - a token and byproduct of an education system who values Black bodies for the diversity factor but never values them as people.”

“My freshman year I attended the Global Scholars showcase in the fall in which students who had volunteered at a non-profit over the summer presented their experience and research they did while abroad. One student I was listening to went to India through Global Scholars and served in a small town close to the China-India border. I guess this student was surprised by how the local people there looked more East Asian than they expected, and so they explained this by saying they weren’t dot Indians and taking their hands and stretching their eyes out to mimic Asian eyes of the people they worked with. Furthermore, I was even more upset when I heard that they worked with a Christian ministry teaching organization to spread Christianity in an area that was primarily Hindu (and the second most popular religion was Islam). Coming into FSU, I thought the Global Scholars program sounded like they were teaching more ethical global volunteering and I was really interested in joining. But after seeing this presentation I was shocked and decided I wanted nothing to do with Global Scholars. How could Global Scholars allow students to volunteer with organizations that try to convert local populations? I couldn’t understand how a student who had

been through Global Scholars and volunteered with local people could openly say and do such things.”

“When basically anywhere in Tallahassee with other FSU students I have heard other students use the N word jokingly or complain about others who confront them about not using the word. It’s so extremely uncomfortable and the fact that so many students believe it is okay to use the N word (hard R and without) is disgusting and makes me ashamed to be associated with FSU. Students and staff should be required to understand the weight of their actions and the history of the oppression of minority groups, especially Black people. Knowing that FSU allows previous segregationist, slave-owning racists to be glorified on campus has made me very uncomfortable and disappointed to be a part of this school.”

“Living in south florida my whole life I was very sheltered from the reality of discrimination. Starting in orientation last summer I was bombarded with uncomfortable questions like “where are you actually from?”, “where were you born though?” as if it was impossible to grasp that I was born in the United States. When I rushed later on in the fall I had never felt so out of place. I was the only one in my group that wasn’t white. If and when they would talk to me it was to ask me about my accent, or if I was in CARE, or other questions that they wouldn’t have asked if I wasn’t latina. Other students would blatantly tell me that I was only accepted to the university to increase diversity as if I didn’t work as hard as everyone else. Boys see me as a way to satisfy some disgusting fetish or fantasy instead of as a person. My roommate suggested I dye my hair blonde so I can “look more american” as if I should not be proud of my heritage. It angers me how ignorant the majority of white students and professors are. Its embarrassing and insulting and pretty much every nonwhite student has been put into an uncomfortable situation solely because of their ethnicity, race, or culture. They give that orientation skit about diversity and acceptance of minority groups and think that all the

problems are solved. FSU has to stop sweeping all these issues under the rug just because we aren't the majority. They should be ashamed that the majority of their students and too many professors don't know how to respect people who are different from them. It was exhausting having to listen to so many offensive arrogant comments all around campus and I know for a fact that my experiences were far from the worst. FSU has to do so much better."

“I want to start by saying I am a white alumni and was a student until a month ago when I dropped my graduate program. My mental health counseling program was discussing BLM at the beginning of class the week that George Floyd died. My Black identifying peers were sharing their experiences when my professor “shifted gears” to continue with her lecture. I emailed her my concern with her glossing over our BLM discussion in a master’s program that claims to have a “multicultural counseling focus”. In addition, I stayed after class (via zoom) to confront her about the situation and to point out a police brutality joke that her guest speaker made - which my professor had laughed at. After asking her why she felt her lecture was more important than the experiences of my Black peers, she said “it’s not my job to make students talk about race.” I responded, “it’s your responsibility.” I later received an email from her saying I was “disrespectful, accusatory, and out of place.” I dropped the program the following week. The professor’s name is Dr. Deborah Osborn in the College of Education. I was a Resident Assistant and an Orientation Leader during my undergraduate experience and I have no doubt that in these two roles, I participated/perpetuated racist ideas as a privileged student in a position of power. However, I am trying to

educate myself and do better for the Black community, while constantly checking my own biases. Whether or not this story gets shared, I felt it necessary to shed light on the racism in the Mental Health Counseling master's program in the College of Education at FSU. Do better, FSU."

I am a second year student who has recently transitioned into the university. Quite honestly, the transition process has been difficult for me. I am a low-income, first generation college student, and a racial minority. The greatest issue I have experienced during my transition stems from the fact that I do not resemble a typical Florida State student. My ethnic ancestry is undeniably evident in my complexion and oftentimes in my accent. While I appreciate my heritage, it has made my adjustment to college even that much more challenging. I come from a high school where the student body is predominantly African American and Hispanic. When deciding to enroll at Florida State, I was aware that I would be attending a primarily white institution. However, I was naive to the overwhelming lack of diversity until arriving on campus. During my short time here, I have been exposed to an environment that is far beyond my realm of experience. A culture shock. In the past year, I have fallen victim to racist remarks and implications on a daily basis. Most commonly, when I walk down the sidewalk, I watch as white students cross the street to another sidewalk. Despite traveling to the same building or in the same general direction. It is almost as if I were to instill fear in them, posing as a threat. When discussing my background in class, peers have assumed that I was admitted into FSU through the CARE program. A seemingly 'easier' way of being admitted. Additionally, I have been subjected to belittling comments such as 'You're articulate for a Hispanic kid' These interactions have made me feel unwelcome on campus and have led me to reflect on myself in a degrading manner. I have found myself wondering, am I worthy of being a student

here? Did the admissions office make the wrong decision in regards to my application? Why am I even here? Student '23

I worked as an RA in Azalea Hall, and we hosted a Board of Trustees meeting in our lobby space. At the time, I worked for two people. One was a white woman, the other a male POC. My supervisors were nervous and, of course, wanted to impress the Board. So, when they asked for help, I offered my time. After we finished setting up, my supervisors encouraged me to stay for the meeting since they knew I was interested in the field of higher education. I sat in the gallery next to one of my supervisors, who was a POC. Every single member of the Board was a white man, except for one woman. One man began to speak over everyone, as if leading the meeting. The woman asked, "did we elect a speaker" to which the man responded, "I elected myself." All the men laughed. I felt disgusted, and at that moment, I realized that my supervisor and I were the only POC in the room. I then turned to My supervisor and said, "every single person on this board is white!" To which he responded, "Does that make you uncomfortable?" I said, "well, yes! They are making decisions about my education." How can we ask these people to make decisions about our education when they can never understand the life experiences of BIPOC students at FSU. Universities were created by and for straight white cis men, and FSU is no exception. After the meeting ended, the Board was supposed to take a tour of the hall. I was under the impression that I would be giving the Board a tour, but instead, my white supervisor gave me the task of handling all of the Board's belongings, which I had to move across campus to their next meeting location. While I did this, one of my white coworkers who had just shown up gave the Board a full tour and received a lunch invitation. Later that day, I approached my white supervisor explaining to her that the media

consistently portrays LatinX women like myself in lines of work that involve menial tasks. I told her that I was the only student leader of color present and that her actions sent a message that I, as a woman of color, was inferior compared to white student leaders. Alumni '19

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individuals refuse to get on elevators, sit next to me on a NoleBus and change even their seats in class due to me being a person of color. As first generation students, we were already nervous about these new college experiences and we should have NEVER had to fear for our safety on this campus. With that being said, I demand that our university makes changes to spread the awareness of these issues going on and do more to prevent it. Implementing new courses, requirements and adding new ways of teaching individuals about combating racism on campus is a must so that new students will never have to experience the things that we have gone through already. Not only does this need to happen but I also demand the removal of the Eppes statue and rename Eppes Hall. By keeping this statue, it shows that Florida State University does not truly care about its minority and especially students of color as it so claims. This statue is disrespectful and hurtful to MANY. FSU needs a change and it needs to happen NOW.”

This University Claims to be a champion of diversity and yet lacks it where it matters the most. If you look at the administration that this university has, you could honestly count on one hand how many POC staff are in high ranking important positions.

Individuals like Miguel Hernández being offered the associate dean position at UC Irvine. Or Dr. Tadarrryl Starke who was offered a significantly better position in another institution. To further emphasize this, this is of no fault of their own. Florida State University does not have an open ladder to climb for POC staff.

I have continuously inserted myself in leadership positions, attempting to represent and speak up for BIPOC students on our campus. Unfortunately, to them I am just a face they can put on their social media to try to prove to themselves that they care about minority students on this campus. Organizations at FSU will welcome poc and give them a seat at the table but then continuously silence their voice. They will talk about how much they value diversity and inclusion but tip-toe around race issues because they might be too “political” or “controversial”. I have learned from my experience that implementing change from the inside will never be possible. Not at FSU. These organizations do not care about actionable change, they only care about seeming “woke”. Organizations care more about white feelings than the experiences of BIPOC minority experiences. Student '20

During the 60's and 70's, FSU students organized and participated in political activism on a variety of issues, including free speech, the Vietnam War, civil rights, the status of women, environmental concerns, and labor rights. The depth and commitment of student and faculty activism led some to label Florida State, "Berkeley of the South". Similarly to then, the university is currently living through tumultuous times. Their reputation and values are being challenged. The present student outcry and social media campaigns are testaments that students can and will bring change to FSU. The university should be proud of the students calling them out. They are doing it because they love this university and they want to make it better. Do what is expected of a Top 20 institution. Listen, plan, and act. Student '22

My (white) business professor asked me to meet him in his office one morning to "discuss my upcoming presentation." During the meeting, he made what I believed to be small talk at first, but quickly turned it into an all-encompassing interview: "So where are you from?" "No, but like outside of Miami, where are you really from?" "So how many languages can you speak?" "Did your family immigrate here?" I felt so objectified and uncomfortable. Towards the end, I tried to switch to talking about my presentation but he did not even care to hear about my topic. He dismissed me to attend to something else and said "I'm sure it will be fine." Student '21

The first day of spring 2020 I tried to introduce myself to my white finance professor. He spent the whole class listing off the names of students in the classroom he had from previous classes. The girls in front of me had common names (and were white) and when they introduced themselves he behaved normally. I have a more unique and ethnic sounding name. I introduced myself to him and he said "I'm not gonna remember that". i was so shocked i just didn't react. I went to his office hours the next day and tried to reintroduce myself and discuss with him how it made me feel and why it was so insulting. He told me I was too sensitive and he was offended. I was upset. if he could remember the names of precious students why couldn't he try with mine? The whole situation made me so annoyed that I just stopped attending class in person and watched his online lectures. no professor should ever make a student so uncomfortable that they don't want to go to class. Student '21

“Dear President Thrasher,

Please understand that the removal and renaming of certain monuments on campus is not out of evil. People are simply asking you to remove something that constantly reminds them of oppression towards a specific race. This is honestly the bare minimum seeing as how we are constantly trying to be placed in a box due to society.”

I heard a member of Sigma Pi say George Floyd's life shouldn't be a big deal because he was "only $\frac{3}{5}$ ths of a person". Comments like this shouldn't be tolerated.

“I am mixed race (part East Asian, I don’t want to go into specifics in order to retain anonymity). In my graduate program, I had a white faculty member ask me what my parents do for a living. She was shocked when I said they were both only high school graduates and I am a first generation college student. She said, “Oh, well I thought they might’ve already gotten a college education, based on your background.” I replied to her, “My background?”. She stated, “Yes, you are Asian, aren’t you?”. The atrocious myth of the “model minority” can lead to some hurtful racist microaggressions. Faculty members need to be properly trained on racial microaggressions.”

“I experienced racism throughout my entire undergraduate studies. I was repeatedly denied entry into Greek life events, called racial slurs on campus, and felt uncomfortable as the only POC when discussing race relations and being told that racism isn’t real. I’ve witnessed FSU students yell transphobic slurs and make inappropriate comments about gender minorities. I was told if I didn’t like my treatment at FSU to go to FAMU to be with “my people” on multiple occasions. FSU is not the inclusive environment it is painted out to be. I don’t know a single POC or gender minority who hasn’t experienced discrimination because of FSU students. Hate speech and entitlement thrive on campus especially in Greek life and the athletic departments. There is a lot to be done to make FSU a good environment. Being a PWI does not mean that those students in the majority can attack the minorities.”

“While walking alone back to deGraff hall one night, I was harassed by a group of white men. These men called me several slurs including the "n" word. Since I was alone, I didn't engage and just speed walked the rest of the way. Thankfully, I was able to make it back to my dorm physically safe although visibly shaken.”

“Change needs to happen and if you are not on the side of change you are on the side of oppression, violence, and hate.”

“Please make your campus more diverse”

“Please remove eppes’ name from the building, the statue and doak. It’s time to re-evaluate why we have these landmarks for people who have historically had racist attitudes.”

“Change is needed.”

“Let the voices be heard. Cease to silence those who have not been. Let their stories come to light. Give them justice.”

“The change of name of Eppes hall and Doak stadium is integral for FSU to move forward in proving that it is a welcoming and actively anti-racist campus.”

“As a Latina, I have had many uncomfortable experiences on campus. I’ve been called foreign more times than I can count. People ask when did I move to the United States, even though I was born here. There are always jokes about ICE. Sometimes, I don’t feel comfortable speaking my native language on campus because people have gone out of their way to make sure I know that “in this country, we speak English”. FSU mentions how inclusive their campus is but that’s not true. They are quick to get minority students on campus but after that they don’t seem to care what happens to us. There is no support for minority students. I feel like I’m constantly trying to prove that I belong here.”

“FSU IP should be more diverse. Although we’re studying abroad in a white country, it doesn’t mean that black history month cannot be celebrated within the FSU IP buildings. As a POC studying abroad in Florence last semester, it was clear that the program lacked diversity not only in students, but also in the faculty and staff. As February went by, there was no mention of black history or culture. Your African American students should be celebrated even if they are outside of America. There wasn’t even a whisper about black history month, there were only two black students during the entire spring semester. We deserve to be celebrated and acknowledged.”

“I’m a Latinx student and my freshman year was right during the 2018 elections (DeSantis and Gillum) and one morning I was excited to go to the College of Medicine research building to meet with a professor. On my way, as I crossed Landis Green, the Republican table began booing me and yelling “go back home! go back to your country!” And laughing. I was humiliated but I kept walking. When I met the professor conducting the project I was interested in, he said “well aren’t you a spicy little thing?” And as he showed me the lab he made several remarks about how “Latinas are so hot headed” and that he was surprised a “Latina like you would be so into biology”. I have never felt so disheartened in my entire life and when I told another professor about the experience, he said I was overreacting and needed to learn to “accept my reality”. I’ve kept my mouth shut ever since.”

“I was walking home one night on Landis Green in the beginning of my FSU undergrad career with friends. There were many people out that night, one white man passed me and said “Go back to your country.” I said “I was born here!” I am a proud Latina woman, proud of her brown skin. I also heard on multiple occasions from fellow students and peers that my “English was very good.” All of these incidents range from 2014-2016. That pushed me to do multiple presentations on micro aggressions and related subjects for class projects, so that my peers would know that that is not a compliment, especially to someone born in America. While students come to FSU with their own biases and beliefs, it is our duty as a Florida State community to ensure these students leave with a well-rounded education, one that includes subjects and themes such as social justice, multiculturalism, and other related topics. We currently have some things in place, but we could always do more. We can always do better. So let’s do better.”

“As a recent FSU graduate, although I deeply appreciate the time I had here, it would be wrong to ignore the xenophobia I have witnessed and experienced firsthand as a Hispanic student. when present in white spaces I have been asked, “where is your name from” “but where are you REALLY from” “say something in spanish” and even been said that i am not understanding someone as well because my first language is Spanish instead of English. Most conversations would center around my ethnicity or my name which made me feel like i was labeled as a Hispanic immigrant and nothing more. These microaggressions led me to avoid white spaces altogether in order to feel more safe and validated. I’ve had other Latinx peers experience being called Mexican although there are not, as well as being told that they are “pretty for a -insert country they are from- girl” by white FSU students. These actions made me as well as my friends feel like we don’t belong in this institution and don’t deserve being here as much as these white students. We urge you to listen to our needs, plan accordingly, and take action.”

“Hi, I’m a Black woman at FSU. My experience is not uncommon. When we’re studying race in the classroom they all stare at you. However, when it comes to any other space their eyes shift and your opinion and knowledge are invalid. I have sensed more than a couple times some white classmates underestimating Black and other POC’s knowledge then once asserting our knowledge and our right to be here, turned annoyed. One of the more offensive things that happens when you’re Black at FSU is if you’re seen at an academic lecture outside of the classroom nonblack students would assume you’re from FAMU. I think the saddest is that I don’t want this account (Dear Florida State) to disappear. I don’t trust the university to have the best interest of its students of color.”

“The Student Conduct & Community Standards office needs to be re-evaluated and monitored. It is an oppressive system that seeks to educate students, but instead, punishes them and limits their realm of growth opportunities at FSU. The individuals working in that office also need serious training & diversity and inclusion work, because they lack at meeting their minority students where they are. I'm hopeful that K.C. White's appointment will help because from my conversations with her, she really seems to care about students.”

“I’ve been heavily discriminated against for my disabilities.
Faculty are not trained enough nor do some have empathy
towards students at all.”

“FSU is a source of a lot of pain and trauma. This place has made me question my self-worth and made me feel like being white is better. It’s taken a lot to overcome a lot of internalized racism and self-hatred gained my freshman and sophomore year.”

“I have attended this university for 5 years and while I’m lucky to be in this institution, I’m disappointed by the amount of silence coming from President Thrasher and the whole university. It makes me disgusted that the university fails to recognize anything for their students until there is bad PR circulating. President Thrasher’s silence shows he doesn’t care about black students, faculty members, and staff but only to show off that the school isn’t racist. Look at the Facebook groups and see what your students think of minorities and others. The school does nothing to protect students of color but too much to protect white students. If you really care about our voices, invite more than one person of color to these boards. Be present when there are discussions on racism on campus. Students and faculty and staff are just as valuable (heck even more valuable) than Boosters and the Board of Trustees because we make the school. Students of color made the school into a top 20 school and by not being active and immediately setting out statements against racism (and actually saying you support black lives and saying the names of victims of police brutality), this is all performative and Thrasher should resign immediately to make room for someone who will make things better and more welcoming for people of color at FSU.”

“As a white student, I’ve been praised for doing work that’s expected of me, while others of BIPOC go above and beyond and don’t receive any recognition at all. Racism is real and I see that I. And you say you see it. This school is founded off of racism and I clearly see that through the disparities between students on campus as well as the relationship or lack there of there is between FSU and FAMU. You lack to see it. You all should no better. Do your own research. Look at history. The Eppes statue needs to be removed, rename Eppes Hall, rename Doak Stadium. These are just the first steps if you wanna say you want to have an inclusive campus environment.”

“You know it the minute you walk on campus. This is their game. This is their world. If you don’t live in it by their terms; if you don’t play it how they want you to play it; you’re done. Constantly belittled, ignored; with our opinions discarded.”

“In order to ensure a safe and equitable environment for all of its students, FSU must no longer glorify those who enslaved and oppressed others, and/or perpetuated systemic racism.

Continuing to do so would constitute a failure on the part of the administration and of the campus community to respect students and community members of color, particularly Black students.

They cannot feel safe and welcome in the presence of images honoring those who profited from the dehumanization and brutalization of those who came before them.

As such, the Eppes statue must be removed from campus, as must Eppes Hall and Doak Stadium be renamed. Contrary to the claims of some, this would not be an "erasure" of history or "heritage", but instead an instance of learning from it in order to move forward and begin to heal historical wounds that are still felt to this day.

Racism, past or present, must have no place in the FSU community.”

“I am Venezuelan-American but never grew up around Spanish. I took a beginner's Spanish course first semester and the teacher accused me of trying to get an easy A in her class because of my last name and heritage. She threatened to go to the head of the modern language department and remove me from her course if I did not drop out myself. When I explained to her that my placement test (that I took after I enrolled in my course because no one at orientation said I needed to take a placement test) was higher because I helped international students at my high school, so I knew key words, she laughed and said, "Sure, that's why." She forgot to mention me to the head of the department, so I got to stay in the course. However, I did not feel welcome. Additionally, there was a chapter in the book with words on how to describe people and the right answer to describe LGBT men was supposed to be "flamboyant".”

“I’ve had to deal with hair grabbing by students and professors alike, being called the n-word over parking spot battles, and being told “you’re so pretty for a black girl” in classrooms across this campus. I have had professors think I’m lying about my Hispanic heritage to take advantage of campus services - accusing people of not being about to be both Black and Latinx. People who have called my white partner an “n-word lover” in front of me. I’ve been followed around the bookstore by employees while looking around until my white partner joins me. Professors who have made me stand up in front of the class and share my perspective on race issues because often I am the only Black/Hispanic woman in class. Professors constantly remind me how “eloquent” I am - they are surprised my intelligence and ability to code switch and speak academically, as though they don’t expect it from Black women. I’ve had classmates tell me in class they don’t want to do an assignment on Black people because they can’t relate and the professor has said nothing or laughed in response. I had a professor on our first day of class say he was an “equal-opportunity offender” and when we went to the dean of his college, they said he is tenured and we had to deal with it. Never have I been given resources to deal with these daily

microaggressions. Never have I ever felt safe on this campus. Walking by Eppes everyday is a reminder that this campus is not for me. I want to love FSU but I feel like an outsider here. Neither here nor there - a token and byproduct of an education system who values Black bodies for the diversity factor but never values them as people.”

“My freshman year I attended the Global Scholars showcase in the fall in which students who had volunteered at a non-profit over the summer presented their experience and research they did while abroad. One student I was listening to went to India through Global Scholars and served in a small town close to the China-India border. I guess this student was surprised by how the local people there looked more East Asian than they expected, and so they explained this by saying they weren’t dot Indians and taking their hands and stretching their eyes out to mimic Asian eyes of the people they worked with. Furthermore, I was even more upset when I heard that they worked with a Christian ministry teaching organization to spread Christianity in an area that was primarily Hindu (and the second most popular religion was Islam). Coming into FSU, I thought the Global Scholars program sounded like they were teaching more ethical global volunteering and I was really interested in joining. But after seeing this presentation I was shocked and decided I wanted nothing to do with Global Scholars. How could Global Scholars allow students to volunteer with organizations that try to convert local populations? I couldn’t understand how a student who had

been through Global Scholars and volunteered with local people could openly say and do such things.”

“When basically anywhere in Tallahassee with other FSU students I have heard other students use the N word jokingly or complain about others who confront them about not using the word. It’s so extremely uncomfortable and the fact that so many students believe it is okay to use the N word (hard R and without) is disgusting and makes me ashamed to be associated with FSU. Students and staff should be required to understand the weight of their actions and the history of the oppression of minority groups, especially Black people. Knowing that FSU allows previous segregationist, slave-owning racists to be glorified on campus has made me very uncomfortable and disappointed to be a part of this school.”

“Living in south florida my whole life I was very sheltered from the reality of discrimination. Starting in orientation last summer I was bombarded with uncomfortable questions like “where are you actually from?”, “where were you born though?” as if it was impossible to grasp that I was born in the United States. When I rushed later on in the fall I had never felt so out of place. I was the only one in my group that wasn’t white. If and when they would talk to me it was to ask me about my accent, or if I was in CARE, or other questions that they wouldn’t have asked if I wasn’t latina. Other students would blatantly tell me that I was only accepted to the university to increase diversity as if I didn’t work as hard as everyone else. Boys see me as a way to satisfy some disgusting fetish or fantasy instead of as a person. My roommate suggested I dye my hair blonde so I can “look more american” as if I should not be proud of my heritage. It angers me how ignorant the majority of white students and professors are. Its embarrassing and insulting and pretty much every nonwhite student has been put into an uncomfortable situation solely because of their ethnicity, race, or culture. They give that orientation skit about diversity and acceptance of minority groups and think that all the

problems are solved. FSU has to stop sweeping all these issues under the rug just because we aren't the majority. They should be ashamed that the majority of their students and too many professors don't know how to respect people who are different from them. It was exhausting having to listen to so many offensive arrogant comments all around campus and I know for a fact that my experiences were far from the worst. FSU has to do so much better."

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