

B.R.2021-1

CALLING UPON THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH TO IMPLEMENT A MANDATORY THREE-CREDIT BLACK STUDIES COURSE

STUDENT GOVERNMENT BOARD UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

AUTHORED BY: Board Member Annalise Abraham and President Eric Macadangdang
CO-SPONSORED BY: Executive Vice President Cedric Humphrey, Board Member Tyler Viljaste, and Board Member Kathryn Fleisher

13 OCTOBER 2020

Board Member Abraham introduced the following resolution; which was read for the first time.

~~20 OCTOBER 2020~~

~~Read the second time and voted on.~~

A RESOLUTION

SUPPORTING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MANDATORY 3-CREDIT BLACK STUDIES COURSE

1 WHEREAS, the deaths of countless Black Americans including George Floyd,
2 Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade at the hands of police
3 emphasize the pervasiveness of state-sanctioned violence and systemic
4 racism in the United States;

5 WHEREAS, these murders have resulted in international and local movements
6 calling for institutional commitments to anti-racism;

7 WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh has the obligation to create a safe and
8 welcoming environment for its Black students;

9 WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh does not have a mandated course to
10 educate all students on the topics of race, the Black experience, and the
11 history and modern implications of systemic racism in the United
12 States;

13 WHEREAS, Black history is vital and integral in understanding American history
14 and the history of the city of Pittsburgh;

15 WHEREAS, alumna Sydney Massenberg published a petition¹ calling on the
16 University of Pittsburgh to create a required Black Studies course in order to
17 better educate the entire student body and show its commitment to Black
18 students;

19 WHEREAS, this petition received more than 7,300 signatures from students,
20 alumni, faculty, staff, and other community members;

¹ <https://www.change.org/p/university-of-pittsburgh-administrators-require-that-students-take-a-black-studies-course-at-pitt?redirect=false>

21 WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh Black Senate, in the Black Senate Final
22 Demands², urged the creation of “a mandatory introductory course to touch
23 upon systemic racism, white privilege, and prejudice,” as part of a
24 larger movement to “transform the mission of the focus of our academic
25 curriculum to be inclusive and comprehensive regarding the plight and
26 triumphs of Black people;”

27 WHEREAS, the University of Pittsburgh implemented a 1 credit course titled,
28 “Anti-Black Racism: History, Ideology, and Resistance,” in the late summer of
29 2020;

30 WHEREAS, this one credit course is an intermediate step towards a more
31 comprehensive course that will allow for deeper study and frequent class
32 discussions;

33 WHEREAS, a working group created by the Senate Educational Policies Committee
34 and the Senate Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Discrimination Advocacy
35 Committee submitted a recommendation³ for a required 3 credit Black
36 Studies course; *now, therefore, be it*

37 RESOLVED, on this 13th day of October of the year 2020, that the Student
38 Government Board supports the resolution in support of a required Black
39 Studies course passed by the Faculty Assembly, being based on a joint
40 recommendation from the Senate Educational Policies Committee and the

² <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MbjRi0jERQyySWJW4g5AAi8evCh4KSdGaLs3R4e7NGA/edit>

³ Faculty Assembly Resolution on the creation of a required Black Studies course

41 Senate Equity, Inclusion, and Antidiscrimination Advocacy Committee, and a
42 report by a working group of said committees in conjunction with a number of
43 University of Pittsburgh faculty and undergraduate students, which:

- 44 1. Urges the Office of the Provost, in conversation with faculty, staff,
45 and students, to facilitate the design and implementation of a
46 common three- credit course on Black Studies that all
47 undergraduate students would take in the first two years of their
48 University of Pittsburgh education and that said course will not
49 add to either degree credit requirements or to indebtedness;
- 50 2. Supports a cluster hire of faculty focused on race, structural racism,
51 and anti-racism to position the University of Pittsburgh as a leader
52 in the study of those topics in all relevant disciplines, units, and
53 schools;
- 54 3. Supports the hire of one or more staff for the University Center for
55 Teaching and Learning to specifically assist instructors in
56 facilitating productive discussions about race and racism; and
- 57 4. supports further funding to (from mechanisms such as, but not
58 limited to, the Innovation and Education Awards) incorporate the
59 above-listed topics into other courses or educational experiences,
60 especially for student populations (e.g. graduate and professional
61 students) who will not be required to take the mandatory three-
62 credit course; *and be it further*

63 RESOLVED, that the Student Government Board will continue to advocate for a

64 more comprehensive, inclusive curriculum that benefits all students; *and be*
65 *it finally*

66 RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be effective immediately upon adoption and
67 shall reflect the changes shown in the attached opinion of the Student
68 Government Board.

69 ~~ADOPTED: this 20th day of October in the year 2020, by a vote of [#] for, [#] against,~~
70 ~~and [#] abstentions.~~

Eric Macadangdang, President
University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board