

LETTER OF SUPPORT

This is a letter of support for the Whose Diversity collective. We endorse their list of demands to the University of Minnesota and President Eric Kaler. We believe that Whose Diversity has re-energized an essential dialogue around what a sustained commitment to equity and diversity at the University of Minnesota looks like in practice.

In his inaugural address, President Kaler had this to say about the University's commitment to address the clear racial and economic inequalities in our state:

“Any great team, organization, or University, must actively pursue diversity...By 2035 almost half of the citizens in the Twin Cities metro area will be people of color. Yet, today, our state has one of the nation's largest achievement gaps between students of color and white students from kindergarten to twelfth grade, and that extends to a gap in higher education. We all bear responsibility.”

The Whose Diversity? collective has presented a list of demands that, when addressed, would allow the University to intervene in (rather than perpetuate) the patterns that President Kaler references. In addition, the demands carefully outline holistic steps towards progress that would benefit all students, beyond race and class differences. We call on current, former, and future students to watch President Kaler and the University administration closely for concrete changes to policies and practices that would bring to implement this vision.

The Whose University? Campaign 2010-2011 was a broad coalition of students, educators, workers, and community members, came together in 2010-11 to challenge the University of Minnesota's priorities in equal access and resources for underrepresented groups. We were disturbed by continued cutbacks to key supports for students of color and low-income students at the University. This was expressed in wide range of University policies and actions; from the closure of General College, the strategic marginalization of Ethnic Studies programs, the lack of support for student cultural centers in Coffman Memorial Union, and the inhibitive and ever rising tuition costs. The overall negative impact on students of color and low income students was clear at the time. It is also clear that these patterns continue today.

We consider the work of Whose Diversity? to be a student-led democratic action that holds the University accountable to its mission and the community. We endorse their demands with the view that Whose Diversity?, as an autonomous grassroots collective and

not a University sanctioned group, is able to give voice to what others have been too afraid to say aloud.

Signed (on behalf of Whose University),

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Tiffany Williams-Virden University of Minnesota '11

Uriel Rosales Tlatenchi Former Board Member of La Raza

All individuals listed have personally approved and signed this letter. By signing this letter, we also individually endorsed the demands of Whose Diversity? collective as listed at <http://whosediversity.weebly.com> and presented to President Kaler on April 30th, 2013.