

Dear President Jones and Ohio Wesleyan University Administration,

As marginalized students from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities at a primarily white institution, we constantly experience issues of racism, discrimination, and oppression on our campus. Although the recent events of hate in Hayes Hall is being handled by our Dean of Students and Assistant Dean of Multicultural Affairs, bias-related incidents are all too common at Ohio Wesleyan. Though not always reported, numerous marginalized students have been victims of bias-related incidents on campus. We recognize that incidents are unreported not because students do not care, but because students do not believe that their experiences will be taken seriously by OWU's administration. Students that have been victims of bias-related incidents do not speak out due to fear and feelings of insignificance.

From our perspective, we feel that there is a severe lack of support, on the institution's part, for creating a campus where diversity can flourish. Marginalized students need to be recognized in terms of equity and justice, not just diversity and inclusion. The ways in which this can be done are outlined in our list of actionable items. As it stands, we feel as though we are merely a number at this university which allegedly prides itself for its diversity. Pride in diversity at OWU is mainly talked about amongst administrators or utilized in marketing materials, but it is not actually felt by current students who feel that this creates a false appearance of diversity.

Students who have experienced issues of racism, discrimination, and oppression have already discussed these experiences with Assistant Dean Charles Kellom, Chaplain Jon Powers, Vice President for Student Engagement and Success Dwayne Todd, and many others. But those were mere conversations, without leading to any actions toward structural support, advocacy, or increased safety for marginalized students on campus. We are calling for the University to make greater strides towards substantive actions in supporting marginalized groups on campus. This support needs to begin with our administration recognizing that there are positive and negative reactions towards enlarging diverse groups and providing more support to those groups. It is necessary to address events specifically and not vaguely. It is necessary to recognize that students experience bias-related incidents on a daily basis. It is necessary for the University to sponsor and organize programming surrounding topics on diversity, equity and inclusion and not rely on students to organize these programs. It is necessary that the administration constantly seek feedback from students. And it is necessary that our administration, faculty, and staff receive adequate education and training on how to create inclusive spaces and use inclusive language.

We, as marginalized students should not be held solely responsible to educate our oppressors about the importance of our cultures and identities. We understand that change does not happen overnight; however, this does not mean that the University must rely on student groups to facilitate and continue conversations and events that bring other cultures and groups into campus year after year. Because we are here for only four years, we are constantly faced with the challenge of creating effective long-term change. However, we will continue to ask for effective, tangible, and continuous change for all current and future marginalized OWU students. Therefore, we are requesting that the University take immediate action towards the issues that we face. We are open to meeting with President Jones and/or Provost Dr. Charles Stinemetz to further discuss and explain our actionable items.

Sincerely,

Cindy Huynh, Sarah Mattick *Class of 2019*

Daniela Black *Class of 2020*

Benji Acuña *Class of 2021*