

June 8, 2020

Dear President Leshin,

We are alumni of WPI. We appreciate your public call to support the Black Lives Matter movement. We feel that WPI's response and actions need to be stronger and do not address the failures of the Institution. Directing students towards existing resources is not enough when racial inequities lead to loss of life. WPI's existing culture does not create an academic environment for students of color to thrive; furthermore, it has created traumatizing experiences for students. We care about the experience of students that attend WPI and want to see active change on our campus. WPI needs to accept, integrate, and celebrate the culture behind its diversity statistics.

The issues our campus and the nation face come from many sources, primarily ignorance, inaction, and active malice. To combat these, we are advocating for a radical transformation of our curriculum and policies. Combined, these efforts should help address and reduce interpersonal and institutional racism. Since cultures and policies that create racism can be learned, they can be unlearned.

We urge WPI to continue to work towards increasing visible diversity across the campus. Over the past five years, the total undergraduate African American population at WPI has averaged around 2.62 percent. This is unacceptable. President Leshin, we know you understand the importance of diversity, as shown in your and WPI's efforts to incorporate more women in the student body population. We want you and the administration to now devote more time, effort, and financial resources towards increasing and retaining African American representation at WPI.

We also call for concrete changes in our campus' curriculum, extracurricular activities, staff, and policies. We have spoken with alumni from graduating classes ranging from 1986 to 2020 and outlined the most frequent concerns below. These items originate from real, heartbreaking, recent experiences that highlight WPI's painful failure to support its students. They also stem from changes that have proven effective in the fight against racism. These alumni helped us organize these vital items to delineate between time-sensitive and long-term changes.

**Immediate implementation:**

The items below represent actions that we believe should have already been incorporated and those we would like to see added as soon as possible.

1. Improve transparency on campus statistics:
  - a. List data on the demographics of incoming & graduating students
  - b. Information on the retention of students specifically by demographics
  - c. Break down of minority groups that make up both faculty and staff.
  - d. Include percentages to illustrate better insights along with raw data
2. Mandatory Anti-racism/tolerance training to WPI community:
  - a. Diversity statement integrated into WPI handbook and curriculum

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- b. Mandatory yearly training for all faculty and staff including CA/RA/PA training
  - c. Mandatory classes for first year, senior year, and incoming transfer students
3. Mandatory de-escalation and bias training for campus police
4. Create Student DEI Council
5. Imagery of African American contributors to STEM including inventors, engineers, and scientists on campus
6. Ongoing open forums for difficult but needed conversations
7. Increased budget for POC support
8. Permanent series on racism
9. Yearly "Take Back the Narrative" Night
10. Update landing page on institution's website for resources and pledge of commitments
11. System for reporting faculty and campus police
12. Concrete, transparent responses from WPI on actions taken in response

**Intermediate implementation:**

1. Move the Office of Multicultural Affairs to a location that is visible and accessible to all in the WPI community
2. Increased spending to support POC
  - a. Increased scholarships and proactive support
3. Increased African American/Black representation in the WPI community:
  - a. All faculty
  - b. Staff, especially staff interfacing with students regularly (i.e. SDCC, Residential Services, ODS)
  - c. Administration
  - d. Board of Trustees
  - e. Students
4. Open dialogue for transparency around Campus Police methods and student expectations
5. Mental health support from counselors with experience in racially based conflicts
6. Research-based inclusion of courses on Black History, Racism, Contributions of Black engineers
7. Community engagement, political activism, and partnerships with local black businesses
8. Involvement with local legislation

We urge WPI to act on these with urgency and tact, to ensure timely and effective implementation. As alumni, we want to see our alma mater enable students to prosper and hope this letter brings to light the areas where WPI can improve. It is the institution's duty to create an environment where all students are empowered to succeed. We believe this can be accomplished by fostering diversity, equity and inclusion among students, faculty and staff while emphasizing the importance of cultivating a welcoming culture.

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As evidence of the need for these changes, we will now share personal experiences from alumni of WPI by year.

2013

On Halloween, a student and their friends were dressed for a costume party but were stopped and interrogated by cops who told them that they fit the description of perpetrators of a nearby robbery. The robbery was actually done by five white men. This student wishes they had a resource to file a complaint against the police who stopped them, and a place to share their experience of unjust police behavior (2013).

2016

One student quit a life-long, well-loved sport when faced with race discrimination. This student felt unaccepted by the same school that used this student's image on public media (2016). A student remained on their varsity team even though they and another student of color on the team experienced alienation from their peers through exclusion from team events (2016). A student who experienced WPI's transition from EMSEP to Connections felt that the transition was handled poorly, found it hard to be informed of Connections resources, and felt like they were left to fend for themselves (2016). A student with >95/100 point average work communicated properly with their professor that their commute would make them late to their final presentation, but was still given a B due to being late. When this student asked for help from WPI, they were told to just talk to the professor and handle it alone (2016). A student felt that their faculty advisors were not invested in their success and described WPI as "a really difficult experience as a person of color" (2016).

2017

A student went uninformed that they wouldn't graduate on time, even though they "put their heart and soul" into multiple organizations like SPARC. Even after asking for help, they felt like they were pushed aside (2017).

2018

A student's peers used the word n\*\*\*\*\* to describe two students of color in the room and hip-hop music (2018). A student was walking home to their dorm dressed in dark clothing and was stopped under suspicion by WPI police for no reason. They found their WPI ID luckily but feared what would have happened if they hadn't had it on their person. This student has noticed an increase in the number of Black students on campus, but no improvement in support for such students (2018). After switching majors, a student spent their last two years without an official advisor even after months of reaching out (2018). A student undergoing a sexual assault charge was faced with blatant assumption of guilt regardless of clear lack of evidence and contrary character witness testimony (2018). A student has been told about female friends who experienced sexual assault and had the Dean automatically side with the accused man, leaving a trail of pain for women and black men specifically (2018). A student who was an elected executive on SGA was in a group chat where a photo of a black child was shared. The group responded with memes, joking about what percent coco the baby was. The student called their behavior out as a microaggression but was met with defensive and accusatory responses. The student sought private counsel from the advisor and after getting little initial sympathy, got a mediation session arranged. This turned into four against one, with the others expressing defensive white guilt, and the student losing respect for her team. The student resigned and emailed President Leshin for a meeting, who defaulted to project inclusion and

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resulted in little to no immediate action or impact. This student sees this as “my defining moment at WPI despite it being a terrible one that comes to mind when I think about WPI four years later” (2018). A student described graduating as having to “claw across that stage. I got across, but not because of WPI’s help” (2018).

2020

A student was told by another student that they were only admitted to fill a diversity quota (2020). A student in IMGD shared how students in the required social issues class felt that it was not executed well. They felt that students didn’t connect with the purpose of the class, much less learn or change their views (2020). A student went to their professor for help in a difficult major and was met with assumptions that they were too dumb to understand and to pursue another major (2020).

2021

A current student said, “Please, don’t let this be a trend. Please do the uncomfortable work” (2021).

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President Leshin, please use your position of leadership to take actions and heal the wounds that racism at WPI has created. We believe these transformations will provide the necessary support for all of WPI’s students to excel not only as well-educated graduates, but also as more compassionate members of society.

We have faith that WPI will act in true goat fashion, leading the charge against racism with significant, effective, and radical improvements.

Sincerely,

Lailah Thompson, Class of 2016  
Anne Harris, Class of 2016  
Veda Booth, Class of 2018  
Rita Bagala, Class of 2018  
Nde Nkimbeng, Class of 2018  
Princesa Cloutier, Class of 2016  
Amani Campbell, Class of 2020  
Hary Teklegiorgis, Class of 2018  
Natalie Correa, Class of 2017  
Naomi Otoo, Class of 2018  
Marlon Matthews, Class of 2018  
Celina Aherrera, Class of 2016  
Monolina Binny, Class of 2014  
Ebenezer Ampiah, Class of 2018  
Juan Torres Betancur, Class of 2016  
Susan Brennan, Class of 2013  
Luis Delatorre, Class of 2019  
Estefania Trinidad, Class of 2018  
Sebastian Vergara, Class of 2015  
Julie Mazza, Class of 2016

Alima Kargbo, Class of 2018  
Miriam Becker, Class of 2016  
Hasson Harris Wilcher, Class of 2017  
Brandon King, Class of 2018  
Matthew Noyes, Class of 2015  
Luis Delatorre, Class of 2019  
Katherine Nugai, Class of 2018  
Alison Hebert, Class of 2018  
Trae Jennette, Class of 2015  
Daniela Ruiz Jennette, Class of 2015  
Carlie Alfaro, Class of 2018  
Jagannath Ramesh, Class of 2018  
Zulean Cruz- Diaz, Class of 2017  
Jasmine Feliciano, Class of 2018  
Quontay Turner, Class of 2011  
Huda Gad, Class of 2017  
Rachael Heard, Class of 2017  
Oluwajomiloju Olaode, Class of 2017  
Denzel Amevor, Class of 2015  
Sarah Martin, Class of 2018

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Brynn Cardozo, Class of 2016  
Connor Mastropoll, Class of 2018  
Jacqueline Garcia, Class of 2019  
Vanessa Beutel, Class of 2018  
Peter Salem, Class of 2016  
Frank Oglesby, Class of 2013  
Gina Gonzalez, Class of 2018  
Audrey Allen, Class of 2017  
Adrianna Davis, Class of 2013  
Caitlin Lopez, Class of 2018  
Justice Williams, Class of 2017  
Larry Nieves, Class of 2016  
Hannah Navarro, Class of 2017  
Hannah Navarro, Class of 2017  
Collette (Bora) D'Errico, Class of 2016  
Sarah St. Pierre, Class of 2019  
Charles Wentzell, Class of 2016  
Mbolle Akume, Class of 2020  
Shravan Murlidaran, Class of 2019  
Mervyn Larrier, Class of 2018  
Tasnim Rahman, Class of 2018  
Adam Hanna, Class of 2016  
Jeremy Ridore, Class of 2013  
Gabriela Meza, Class of 2017  
Gregory Tersoff, Class of 2014  
Ashley Valdez, Class of 2017  
Sarah Martin, Class of 2018  
Chandler Lyles, Class of 2016  
Melissa Cowan, Class of 2014  
Amy Toscano, Class of 2018  
Tim O'Neil, Class of 2014  
Ivette Cariño, Class of 2015  
Dominique Chen, Class of 2020  
Liz Pellegrini, Class of 2016  
Katherine Judge, Class of 2013  
Amber Munderville, Class of 2017  
Alaina Blanker, Class of 2014  
Naida Colakhodzic, Class of 2014  
Bonham Pierce, Class of 2016  
Margaret Hester, Class of 2014  
Matthew Hill, Class of 2018  
Kelsey Stergiou, Class of 2015  
Rachel Santarsiero, Class of 2018  
Kylie Juarez, Class of 2019  
Jagannath Ramesh, Class of 2018  
Christine Lujuo, Class of 2019  
Eileen Wrabel, Class of 2014  
Christine Zarate, Class of 2020  
Jess Norman, Class of 2018  
Jagannath Ramesh, Class of 2018  
Isabella Schiavone, Class of 2017  
Catherine Sevigny, Class of 2015  
Virginia Adams, Class of 2019  
Kayla Sica, Class of 2018  
Kathy Suqui, Class of 2018  
Kyra Bresnahan, Class of 2020  
Synella Gonzales, Class of 2019  
Justin Shanahan, Class of 2018  
Francesca Ferrero, Class of 2019  
Alexandra Flores, Class of 2020  
Nadjia Edwards, Class of 2016  
Halsey Vandenberg, Class of 2016  
Rose Lewis, Class of 2019  
Rachel Burton, Class of 2017  
Sarah Brown, Class of 2019  
Caroline Murphy, Class of 2020  
Katherine Hedberg Klose, Class of 2016  
Samantha Orosz, Class of 2017  
Isaac Donkoh-Halm, Class of 2020  
Patrick Trant, Class of 2018  
Dean O'Donnell, Class of 1986  
Joshua O'Connor, Class of 2016  
Tom Farro, Class of 2017  
Kelly Zhang, Class of 2018  
Kelly Carlson, Class of 2018  
Anne McLoughlin, Class of 2017  
Kellen Randall, Class of 2019  
Abigail Roane, Class of 2019  
Doreen Manning, Class of 2019  
Jess Cheu, Class of 2018  
Taylor Thompson, Class of 2019  
Sierra Palmer, Class of 2020  
Darius Kazemi, Class of 2005  
Sarah Pavis, Class of 2006  
Allison Van Fechtmann, Class of 2017  
Ava Karet, Class of 2019  
Emily McWilliam, Class of 2014  
Andrew Haveles, Class of 2015  
Caeli Tegan, Class of 2018  
Eric Stein, Class of 2009  
Roman Gutierrez, Class of 2015  
Emilee Kaufman, Class of 2013  
Adam Garcia, Class of 2018  
Laurie Mazza, Class of 2018  
Christian Roy, Class of 2008  
Francesca Carletto-Leon, Class of 2016  
Ben Sandofsky, Class of 2004  
Lauren fraser, Class of 2018

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Max Li, Class of 2017  
Mary Kate Bindas, Class of 2016  
Steven Franca Jr, Class of 2019  
Erin Heinle, Class of 2019  
Madison Michaud, Class of 2019  
Derek Heard, Class of 1990  
Kristen Antunes, Class of 2020  
Olivia Verdone, Class of 2019  
Natalie Green, Class of 2020  
Derek Heard, Class of 1990  
Jeremy Filteau, Class of 2018  
Debora Jackson, Class of 1989, 2000  
Jasmine Higuera Castillo, Class of 2014  
Raeshawn Kennedy, Class of 2016  
Leinal Sejour, Class of 2013  
Shamiah McDonald, Class of 2015  
Obi Ofokansi, Class of 2016  
Abha Kulkarni, Class of 2017  
Mario Reed, Class of 2013  
Jessica McKniff, Class of 2012  
Maura Kelly, Class of 2010  
Sarah Putnam, Class of 2017  
Olivia Durand, Class of 2014  
Jaclyn Hepworth, Class of 2011  
Liz Callahan, Class of 2020  
Kyle Lafontant, Class of 2015  
Rachel Kennedy, Class of 2016  
Jose Velez, Class of 2016  
Claire Sylvestre, Class of 2013  
Cindy Lin, Class of 2013  
Livia Motz, Class of 2013  
Jessica Caccioppoli, Class of 2016  
Alexa Hiznay, Class of 2016  
Ariel Goldner, Class of 2019  
Heather Spencer, Class of 2016  
Sydney Packard, Class of 2020  
Amelia Halliday, Class of 2011  
Kristin Pic, Class of 2017  
Abby DaBoll-Lavoie, Class of 2016  
Lauren Francis, Class of 2020  
Laura Pumphrey, Class of 2015  
Emma MacIntyre, Class of 2018  
Olivia Jones, Class of 2019  
Keith Guay, Class of 2016  
Jasmine Carrion, Class of 2015  
Rachel Ooyama-Searls, Class of 2017  
Benjamin Parent, Class of 2017  
Sarah Thayer, Class of 2014  
Ryan Dennis, Class of 2017

Stephanie Cappelli, Class of 2018  
Audrey Gorgone, Class of 2014  
Branden Diniz, Class of 2016  
Kaija Roy, Class of 2016  
Kimberly Ornell, Class of 2019 Ph.D.  
Jason Lowder, Class of 2018  
Leonela Sabrina Vega Loaisa, Class of 2018  
Cecilia Schroeder, Class of 2020  
Haylea Northcott, Class of 2019  
Jennifer Headman, Class of 2001  
Emily DiRuzza, Class of 2018  
Rhaine Sziy, Class of 2014  
Philippe Kelley, Class of 2016  
Amelia Mattesen, Class of 2018  
Matthew Lenthall, Class of 2018  
Aaron Jaeger, Class of 2017  
Hannah Sattler, Class of 2017  
Jessica Antoine, Class of 2020  
Travis Norris, Class of 2018  
Mollie Myers, Class of 2016  
Beth Lacarra, Class of 2015  
Jordan Myers, Class of 2020  
Abby McAdams, Class of 2018  
Angela Nagelin, Class of 2015  
Joe Crimi, Class of 2018  
Ian MacGregor, Class of 2019  
Kyla Nichols, Class of 2017  
Janelle Drake, Class of 2011  
Anthony Ward, Class of 2016  
Paige Myatt, Class of 2017  
Eric Solorzano, Class of 2020  
Angela Jimenez, Class of 2016  
Azeem Suhaimi, Class of 2017  
Alexander Kafantis, Class of 2014  
Sam Kuhlwein, Class of 2012  
Alexa Davis, Class of 2020  
James Zheng, Class of 2018  
Michael Ambrose, Class of 2019  
Kevin Burns, Class of 2014  
Alexander Sunde-Brown, Class of 2015/2016  
Hunter Caouette, Class of 2021  
Madeline Barnard, Class of 2021  
Rachel Plante, Class of 2018  
Sarah O'Neil, Class of 2020  
Holly Gagnon, Class of 2019  
Elizabeth Quevillon, Class of 2019  
Sneha Shastry, Class of 2015  
Nathan Dennler, Class of 2019  
Anna Valdez, Class of 2017

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Alicia Aquino, Class of 2017  
Thomas Vagnini, Class of 2020  
Marisa Sposato, Class of 2018  
William Beatty, Class of 2017  
KiJana Haney, Class of 2016  
Mitra Marvasti-Sitterly, Class of 2016  
Brigitte Perera, Class of 2016  
Emily Martin, Class of 2017  
Sebastian Vergara, Class of 2015  
Zachary Stewart, Class of 2015  
Sunny Nguyen, Class of 2016  
Daniel Cammarata, Class of 2018  
David Scott, Class of 2015  
Alena Grilla, Class of 2017  
Lydia George, Class of 2015  
Lauren Wojtkun, Class of 2002  
Angel A. Rivera, Class of Professor  
Athena Casarotto, Class of 2015  
Rachel Aston, Class of 2020  
Giovanna Chabot (Olson), Class of 2014  
Clyde-Blaise Niba, Class of 2017  
Danielle Dechaine, Class of 2014  
Andrew Iovanna, Class of 2015  
Brittney Pachucki, Class of 2017  
Christine Deidrich, Class of 2019  
Jennifer Payano, Class of 2019  
Vinay Pai, Class of 2015  
Brandon Hoghaug, Class of 2018  
Taylor Briseno, Class of 2014  
Tim Neilan, Class of 2016  
Seth Andreasson, Class of 2020  
Julie Tevenan, Class of 2016  
Madeline Burris, Class of 2014  
Grace Berry, Class of 2015  
Angela Calvi, Class of 2019  
Aïda Waller, Class of 2015  
Rachel Rynazewski, Class of 2018  
Maya Rhinehart, Class of 2015

Eli Skeggs, Class of 2018  
Kate Rielly, Class of 2017  
Allison Indyk, Class of 2015  
Kayli Kacoyannakis, Class of 2015  
Victor Hu, Class of 2016  
Christian Acosta, Class of 2013  
Cara Berner, Class of 2016  
Nicolette Yee, Class of 2015  
Gina E. Ryan, Class of 2019  
Lucia Shumaker, Class of 2015  
Jessie Ciulla, Class of 2016  
Anna Civitarese, Class of 2015  
Nicole Bebrin, Class of 2015  
Stephanie Puckett, Class of 2017  
John Amante, Class of 2015  
Meg Cantwell, Class of 2015  
Peyton Delgorio, Class of 2017  
Emily Dunham, Class of 2016  
Kyle Young, Class of 2017  
April Solon, Class of 2017  
Brittany Lewis, Class of 2019  
Karen Fitch, Class of 2016  
Marissa Bennett, Class of 2018/2020  
Daniel Gonzalez, Class of 2015  
Amanda Sullivan, Class of 2018  
Daniel Sturman, Class of 2017  
Kevin Specht, Class of 2017  
Marisa Warner, Class of 2015  
Hannah Thompson, Class of 2017  
Reed Gontarek, Class of 2016  
Kathryn Byorkman Gauthier, Class of 2012  
Tara Sharp, Class of 2017  
Alison LeFlore, Class of 2009  
Ashley Smith, Class of 2016  
Matheus Pereira, Class of 2016  
Jacqueline O'Connor, Class of 2017  
Davianna Vasconcelos, Class of 2019