

To the UW-Eau Claire student, faculty, and staff community—

The past three weeks of the Spring semester have been met with many changes—some exciting and some challenging. We have heard from students, faculty, and staff alike in regards to concerns pertaining to the current merger of our Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and Blugold Beginnings (BB). In addition to this, we recognize the concerns raised regarding the restructuring of offices, such as the Gender and Sexuality Resource Center (GSRC), as well as the Activities, Involvement, and Leadership office (AIL).

While this process has offered positive potential, we recognize that these restructuring situations should have been handled better. The timeline has been far too fast for our campus community to have ample time to provide feedback and digest these changes. To put it bluntly, there has been a lack of communication with the necessary groups. We share the belief that this campus must close the opportunity gap and commit to supporting students of color. However, we know that the first step to supporting students of marginalized identities comes with not assuming what is best for them but, rather, communicating and asking them directly. This sentiment holds true for our faculty and staff as well.

What we ask of our administration—on behalf of students, faculty, and staff—is communication. Without adequate consultation from our campus community, we inadvertently lose human narratives and invalidate experiences. Before these projects continue to move forward, we would like to request the opportunity for intentional conversation with students, faculty, and staff. Without these conversations, we continue to uphold the privilege attached to our status as a predominantly white institution.

Student Body President Jaden Mikoulinskii and campus Shared Governance leadership met with Chancellor Schmidt to discuss campus concerns relating to our office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Student Affairs. Further conversation has been started with a small coalition of students, faculty, and staff, alongside campus leadership. To supplement these ongoing conversations, we also request further campus dialogue, including:

- Crucial conversations with key interest groups, including students who both overlap in involvement and employment in the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Blugold Beginnings.
- Small group conversations with students, faculty, and staff advocates regarding the totality of these situations. This comes with the recognition that retaining and supporting both faculty and staff is critical to student retention.
- Campus forums—if appropriate and possible in light of COVID-19.
- An anonymous survey option for the campus community to provide feedback on these changes.
- Continued deliberation and connection with the three entities of shared governance, including their general assemblies.

Our campus has committed to the promotion of innovative change in the name of equity through EDI strategic planning efforts. We are making progress each day, albeit with many unintended sacrifices and consequences. There are many merits to prioritizing retention and working to lessen staff burnout. In moving forward, we support initiatives that further our institution and support retention, so long as they are not at the expense of our faculty, staff, and students.

With Urgency,  
The UW-Eau Claire Student Senate