



May 4, 2023

Blk Pwr Coalition
blkpwrcoalition@gmail.com
~Delivered electronically~

To Members of the Blk Pwr Coalition,

Yesterday morning, more than 200 of you gathered outside my office in Bascom Hall to share the power of your voices. You shared with members of my leadership team and with me your pain, your fear, and your frustration.

You took time and care to record and share your expectations of me and of your university. Thank you. You belong here and I want you to know that we hear you.

I want to again clearly state that I, and my leadership team, strongly and unequivocally condemn racism, including the blatantly racist slurs and sentiments expressed in the video. We recognize and are deeply sorry for the great pain that this disturbing, hateful video has caused. Several university administrators have shared these same sentiments in recent days, and we have heard from so many across campus who want to provide support.

My leadership team and I have reviewed what you shared with us and want to provide an initial response within the timeline you requested. This is, I hope, the first step in an ongoing dialogue with you. We are committed to continue engaging and collaborating with you in good faith to address your concerns. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with a small group to talk through the issues in your petition in further detail so that we can work together to achieve meaningful improvements and results.

Some of your concerns relate to your immediate academic responsibilities, sense of safety, and mental health. I would like to address these specifically, knowing that you are dealing with the emotional impact of this situation at a critical time in the semester and that exams are upon us very soon.

We heard from you yesterday that you are worried about your academics when dealing with this trauma. If you need flexibility in your coursework or in relation to your upcoming exams, your first stop should be your instructors. The Dean of Students Office is also prepared to be a point of contact and to assist you. This is in addition to the other resources that are available, including department chairs and other deans' offices within schools and colleges.

Chancellor Jennifer L. Mnookin

Morgridge Friends Distinguished Chair of Leadership

Bascom Hall University of Wisconsin–Madison 500 Lincoln Drive Madison, WI 53706

Voice/Relay 711: 608-262-9946 Fax: 608-262-8333 Email: chancellor@wisc.edu Web: chancellor.wisc.edu

In the area of mental health support, University Health Services (UHS) currently has eight focused mental health providers who have specific experience working with students of color, in addition to other staff trained and experienced in this area. Recognizing the impact of the video, UHS is currently prioritizing the immediate mental health needs of students who would like to speak to a counselor for support this week.

In addition, mental health counselors will be available at the Multicultural Student Center from now through the end of exam period.

As to the individuals within the racist video, there are numerous legal constraints both on what we can say and what we can do as a public university, even though the video is both hateful and harmful. I know that is not what you want to hear, but we are also bound to obey the law. I can share that the Dean of Students is working closely with others on campus to gather information, to review bias reports, to offer support to affected students, and to consider all possible steps within our power to protect and support our students.

We do care deeply about your safety and well-being. Physical threats toward anyone are unacceptable — if you have experienced such a threat, I urge you to report it to UWPD. The Dean of Students Office is also available to help students navigate situations related to safety and, through its bias reporting process, will follow up on reports and take appropriate next steps, including investigations.

As for your remaining concerns, including those linked to programming, funding, and space, we would like to meet with a small group of you, as noted above, to get your further input and feedback.

Please identify a point of contact, or a small group, for us to work with so that we can schedule a time to meet. We very much want to work with you collaboratively to make our campus community a more welcoming and safer place for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jennifer L. Mnookin".

Jennifer L. Mnookin
Chancellor