



Written by [James Murphy](#) on June 26, 2020

Princeton Students Demand School Pay Slavery Reparations, Abolish Police Force

More than 400 current students and alumni from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University in New Jersey have signed a [letter](#) to the school's administration demanding, among other things, that the school pay slavery reparations and abolish the school's police force.



The new demands come amid the continued national uproar that began when Minneapolis criminal George Floyd was killed in police custody after video showed former officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on Floyd's neck.

In the letter — dated June 23 — which was addressed to the Board of Trustees, President Christopher Eisgruber, Acting Dean Mark Watson, and Deans Cecilia Rouse, Miguel Centeno, Karen McGuinness, and Elisabeth Donohue, the students and former students demanded that the school act against what they call “the slow and sudden violence that robs Black people of life.”

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The letter excoriates the school for failing to properly prepare its students for the job of addressing “white supremacy” and dismantling what they refer to as an “oppressive” and “racist” system.

“For many years, students and alumni of this program have decried its lack of attention to anti-Black racism in favor of multiculturalism and the many ways public policies — both domestic and international — have been built upon a foundation of white supremacy. Now, more than ever, we ask ourselves: Does this school prepare its students to dismantle racist and oppressive systems? And, is this institution truly inclusive for Black students, faculty and staff?” the letter asks.

It concludes: “Without hesitation, the answer to both questions is still a resounding no.”

Only two days previously, Eisgruber — the university's president — tasked the school's University Cabinet, a group of senior academic and administrative leaders, “to identify specific actions in their areas of responsibility to confront racism.”

“Confronting the realities and legacy of racism, both in our own community and in the world at large, requires commitment in every level of our institution,” Eisgruber wrote. “This will be an ongoing effort, one that will require our collective attention and the input of our students, faculty, staff and alumni.”

Eisgruber directed the University Cabinet to report back to him by August 21, but that's not quick enough for the students and alumni of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. “Black Lives Matter,” the letter concludes. “And it's time this school did something concrete to prove it.”

The students of the Wilson school laid out a list of seven demands, which they believe would finally



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address the so-called systemic racism at Princeton:

Pay Reparations

The students and alumni point out that the school's first nine presidents and 16 out of 23 founding trustees engaged in the slave trade. They demand that \$1.3 billion of the school's \$26 billion endowment be used to pay reparations to the descendants of every enslaved person owned by those founding fathers of the university. How those descendants are identified is not specified.

Divest From Prison Industrial Complex

The letter writers demand that Princeton prove it has no investment in private prisons and permanently divest itself from any involvement with the prison system.

Abolish the Police

They demand that the university dismantle its police force since "American policing was designed to oppress Black communities."

Implement an Anti-racist Curriculum

Although the letter doesn't clearly express what this means, they nevertheless demand it be done by the fall term in 2021.

Increase Black Faculty, Lecturers, and Practitioners

This one is self explanatory — a straightforward demand for racial quotas in hiring at the university.

Establish a Center for Anti-racist Policy

The letter writers "demand the school establish and generously fund" such a center. This demand seems a little self-serving since many of the signers of the letter would probably apply for jobs at the new center.

Increase Black Student Enrollment

Another straightforward demand, which would include lowering some of the school's academic requirements and requiring applicants to complete a "diversity statement."

Kowtowing to these kind of strong-armed tactics and demands would be exactly the wrong thing for Princeton to do. Yet, they most likely will do just that and bow to at least some of the group's demands.

In the end, true racism is a matter of the human heart — a sin akin to dishonesty, theft, and murder. True racism has nothing to do with politics or how "the system" is set up. Until we start seeing each other as individuals and not members of one race or another, racism will not end. Ridiculous demands such as these from the students and alumni of the Wilson School at Princeton won't help end racism — they'll only encourage actual racists that their wicked and misguided beliefs are right.

Photo of Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs: Yi YANG / iStock Editorial / Getty Images Plus

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