

Dr. Toriello,

For many of your students and graduates the Department of Addictions and Rehabilitation Studies (DARS) is a beacon of pride. That we are not just Pirates, but we have been shaped by some of the most talented and passionate professors on the campus. When it comes to preparing mental health professionals, we believe DARS is the best in the business. As students of color, and Black students in particular, that pride comes with a cost. We have struggled with the lack of representation within the department; the void of Black and Brown professors is striking and does not go unnoticed. For Black male students, the opportunity to share a class with another Black male is beyond rare. These realities may be dismissed as happenstance, but they are avoidable. We believe that the department and the College of Allied Health Sciences can and should do more. The department should conduct wider searches during hiring, competitive pay for posted positions should be offered, and that scholarships and fellowships for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) students should be a priority of the department.

As we work together to see tangible changes within the department, we ask for a realistic and transparent plan of action for the following priorities:

- 1) A comprehensive strategic plan that outlines the “American Racism Advocacy Project”
- 2) Recruiting strategy for professors of BIPOC backgrounds
- 3) Establish scholarship funds and fellowship for undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students of color as appropriate
- 4) A survey of African American alumni on suggestions related to the post published June 8, 2020
- 5) An on-line panel discussion with past and current African American masters and doctoral students

We have full confidence that you and the department are continuing to take actions towards healing American Racism, and are asking that you allow us to share our experiences in hopes of creating more culturally competent, anti-racist counselors-in-training.

Loyal & Bold,

Jarmichael Harris, ECU '10, '15
Akeen L. Hamilton, ECU '10, '12
Dr. Qu'Nesha Sawyer, ECU '14, '18
Dr. Sherrá Watkins, ECU '04, '07, '11, '13
Calvin Bradley, Jr., ECU '12

Omari T. Mitchell, ECU '16

Brittney Black, ECU '15

Tori Thomas, ECU '12, '15

Symfonie N. Mitchell, ECU '14

Dr. Dominique M. Clemmons-James, ECU '16