

First Reading: April 11, 2017  
Second Reading: April 18, 2017  
Pass: YES; 19-10-1  
Fail:  
Other:

Resolution 6-17-S      Resolution to Support Reparations

**PURPOSE:** For the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University to acknowledge that there is a debt that will never be paid.

**WHEREAS:** The University of Wisconsin-Madison has recently passed legislation in the best interest of its black students, and Western Kentucky University needs to be doing more to provide for the needs of its marginalized student population, and

**WHEREAS:** The current achievement gap between majority and underrepresented students has roots that date back to enslavement<sup>1</sup> and during enslavement Black people were legally barred from the most basic forms of education including literacy.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Post-Civil War and the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, black people have been trapped into segregated institutions that are underfunded,<sup>3</sup> and

**WHEREAS:** Western Kentucky University remains out of reach for a disproportionate amount of students of color compared to non-minority students and financial aid is not sufficiently covering the basic needs of students attending public universities and colleges. Furthermore, since the admissions criteria clearly state that standardized test scores are required for admission, it is very likely that this criterion affects the applicant pool. Also, a sizable body of research indicates that the use of standardized test scores as admissions criteria restricts the college opportunities for needy students, helping higher education perpetuate inequality, and

**WHEREAS:** At Western Kentucky University, people of color are underrepresented among tenured faculty members, deans, provosts and presidents and this sends a message to students of color that they are undervalued at our University. To their white counterparts, their expectation is that people of color work at the lowest levels of the organizations they lead, and

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ftp.iza.org/dp6192.pdf>)

<sup>2</sup> <https://policy.m4bl.org/reparations/>

**WHEREAS:** Standardized tests perpetuate and uphold white supremacy. It is clear from research that students and families do not understand what this means, and that the use of test scores in admissions is a defining attribute of the institution and prominent piece of our image. Additionally, the “arms race” for merit aid only bars the low-income and minority students from attending Western Kentucky University. Indeed, attempts to address systemic, structural barriers for minority access to higher education are criticized as undermining merit-based admission requirements.

**THEREFORE:** Be it resolved that the Student Government Association of Western Kentucky University support Reparations for Black Students at WKU. We call for a special task force be established by the University to assess the feasibility of test-optional admissions and geographically-weighted admissions. Admissions criteria at Western Kentucky are subject to policies put forth by the Board of Regents, and thus this task force should work with both internal and external stakeholders to develop its assessment.

We demand reparations for the systemic denial of access to high quality educational opportunities in the form of full and free access for all black people (including undocumented, currently and formerly incarcerated people) to Western Kentucky University.

**AUTHOR:** Andrea Ambam, Senator  
Brian Anderson, Senator

**SPONSOR:** MyCampusToo

**CONTACTS:** Tyriek Mack, Student Council Representative, University of Wisconsin- Madison