

Senate statement to accompany signing on to Social Justice Demands

By endorsing the Social Justice Demands presented by Beyond Baldwin, the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences Faculty Senate affirms the ongoing need for racial justice and redress within the UGA and Athens communities. The demands presented build on the work of the UGA NAACP's Arch Accountability Demands, and they are a product of ongoing and sustained conversations among a diversity of UGA student groups, staff, faculty and community organizations during the past several years. The demands have been collectively generated and spearheaded by individuals directly harmed by issues of racism at UGA and in our community. It is important to both listen to the students leading this effort and invite them into the decision-making structures that can affect the necessary change.

While the Presidential Task Force on Race, Ethnicity, and Community and the UGA Planning Committee on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence are steps in the right direction, there remains a need for deeper engagement across the UGA and Athens communities that is inclusive of a more diverse set of voices and experiences. For example, administrators and higher level staff professionals are vastly overrepresented on both of these committees. There is a lack of meaningful representation of community leaders, departmental, operational, and frontline staff, students, and faculty experts in the areas of race, social justice, and community engagement. We must push beyond conventional diversity and inclusion efforts that have yet to produce the scale of change needed to truly uproot the white supremacy woven into higher education and achieve social justice in our community. **We ask that President Morehead, Provost Hu, and Vice Provost Cook meaningfully engage with the students leading the effort by hosting and participating in a public town hall with representatives of Beyond Baldwin and the UGA NAACP to discuss these demands and the concrete steps that will be taken by UGA to acknowledge and redress racism on our campus.**