

To: **Elissa Tenny**

President of School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Rose Milkowski

Vice President of Enrollment Management

Jefferson Pinder

Interim Dean of Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs

Additional School of the Art Institute of Chicago Leadership

From: **Nadia Frierson**

Admissions Student Ambassador Coordinator, B.F.A. 2020 Fiber & Material Studies

Nicholas Zepeda

Admissions Student Ambassador Coordinator, B.F.A. 2021 Painting & Drawing and Chicago Scholar

Toni Ivory

Admissions Student Ambassador, B.F.A. 2023 Painting & Drawing, Interdisciplinary Studies

For immediate action, we request:

Establish and schedule a series of meetings with Elissa Tenny (SAIC President), Rose Milkowski (Vice President of Enrollment Management), and Jefferson Pinder (Interim Dean of Faculty and Vice President of Academic Affairs) with Student and Counselor delegates.. Meeting details should be agreed upon by July 1st, with a meeting no later than July 10th with additional results-based meetings on a consistent schedule.

Student delegates: Nadia Frierson, Nicholas Zepeda, and Toni Ivory

Counselor delegates: Jackson Moore, Kate Perryman, and Sheika

AS A COLLECTIVE OF STUDENT WORKERS IN THE ADMISSIONS DEPARTMENT, WE HAVE CONCERNS REGARDING THE INSTITUTION'S COMPLIANCE TO TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY. THIS LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT THE ABILITY FOR SAIC TO DEVELOP CONCRETE ACTIONS TOWARDS ANTI-RACISM IS COMPROMISED.

These concerns are in response to the following:

- A growing collection of over 165 statements collected anonymously regarding individuals' experiences with SAIC via google forms.
- The attached email chain regarding the announcement and passing of Art and Technology Studies Professor Lynika Strozier. This correspondence, as seen on **page 14**, is between students and Christopher Baker (*Department Chair/Professor of Art and Technology studies*), and includes Felice Dublon (*Vice President and Dean of Student Affairs*). It was also sent to the newly appointed Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Director for Academic Affairs: Jefferson Pinder.
- The apology from Elissa Tenny sent on June 28th, 2020 that both acknowledges errors in the announcement of her death the presence of systemic racism at SAIC: "*Given Lynika's passing from complications due to COVID-19, and knowing that the virus disproportionately affects people of color like Lynika, a Black woman, the inconsistent distribution of the message has raised further concerns. Our feelings of grief over the impact of this terrible pandemic and anger that systemic racism make some of us more vulnerable are real, and those feelings were exacerbated by the poor handling of the message. The messaging error was unintentional, and I am sorry.*", but doesn't announce an investigation into those "inconsistencies."

- “Art Institute of Chicago staff are demanding increased transparency, accountability, and racial equity from museum leadership, citing concerns regarding decision-making in regard to a new round of institution-wide layoffs and preparations to reopen in late July. An open letter signed by 186 employees—nearly 30 percent of the museum’s staff—urges that decisions during “this chaotic moment” not be made as they currently are, by a “very small group of the most highly paid staff in the museum with privileged identities.” The letter, which was obtained by ARTnews, was sent last Friday to seven policy heads, including president James Rondeau, deputy director for curatorial affairs Sarah Guernsey, and vice president of museum development Eve Jeffers. **Several of those who signed the letter, which also offers alternatives to layoffs, have since been laid off.**” published via ArtNews on June 27th, 2020.

<https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/art-institute-of-chicago-layoffs-open-letter-1202692804/>

- The following article published by *FNews Magazine* on March 10th, 2020 outlining the events and institutional correspondence surrounding Martin Berger’s use of a racial slur during an SAIC presentation. It includes interviews conducted with students, staff, and faculty that express concerns regarding the relationship between confidentiality and accountability involved in multiple stages of Berger’s promotion: detailing the institution’s public and administrative response. The article shows how this situation continues to inspire a collective distrust in SAIC as an institution.

<https://fnewsmagazine.com/2020/03/when-the-dean-said-a-slur-and-then-got-promoted/>

- Interviews from the linked *FNews Magazine* article detailing the growing feelings of “disappoint[ment] by the lack of accountability” which came from students, faculty, and staff that followed the open forum which occurred on October 22nd, 2019 (*13 months after the delivery of the letter*). Additionally, it states that SAIC sought a third-party moderator despite the letter’s request for moderation and negotiation of event planning from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for said forum. The letter included signatures from 55 individuals.

The letter:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DeQG8AB0nNVI5nshJm15OCRfzucjPGa_DezBnPj7HA8/viewform?edit_requested=true&fbzx=2767069301105330203

- The student-organized petition released on June 13th, 2020 that calls for the resignation of Martin Berger for his use of a racial slur during an SAIC presentation which currently has signatures from 1,537 individuals.

The petition:

<https://www.change.org/p/school-of-the-art-institute-of-chicago-president-elissa-tenny-demand-the-resignation-of-saic-s-martin-berger-after-use-of-the-n-word>

- The apology emailed to all students on June 26th, 2020 from Martin Berger that addresses the petition, open forum, and his use of the racial slur during an SAIC presentation and concludes with a commitment to “ensure funding and implementation of the structural changes that emerge from their [Jefferson Pinder and his presidential antiracist advisory committee] work”. Berger does not explicitly acknowledge the confidentiality surrounding his promotion or prompt an investigation into the individuals involved.
- Our interpreted escalation of concerns from student government that Berger and his team are not satisfying the demands of the student-body are the result of the discussed quality of their past meetings as described by Berger’s statement: *a frank conversation in which they articulated frustration with my and the School’s lack of response to the petition and its underlying concerns*”) be created and released. The petition has continued to gain signatures.

- A case including Former student [redacted] V. former faculty John Phillips, former Dean of Faculty Lisa Wainwright, Former Director of Student Conflict Resolution Amanda Dasilva, current Vice President for Human Resources/Chief Human Resources Officer/Diversity Advisory Group Member Michael Nicolai, current Chair of Faculty Beth Wright, and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago was filed on 06/18/18.

The following statement is included in the case:

“When [redacted] was a student at SAIC in 2015-2016, she was repeatedly subjected to extreme sex discrimination, harassment, sexual violence, retaliation, and other forms of emotional and physical abuse and injury by John Phillips, a member of the faculty at SAIC and [redacted]’s direct advisor. Before he was appointed as [redacted]’s advisor, Phillips had previously sexually victimized other students at SAIC. SAIC officials knew of Phillips’ past actions, and were aware that [redacted] was receiving services from SAIC as a student with disabilities”. The Chicago Suntimes article states:“The school fired Phillips in August 2016”.

Chicago Suntimes article:

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/2018/6/19/18394637/woman-sues-school-of-art-institute-ex-teacher-over-extreme-sex-discrimination>

Case files:

<https://www.docketbird.com/court-documents/Doe-v-School-of-the-Art-Institute-of-Chicago-et-al/COMPLAINT-filed-by-Jane-Doe-Jury-Demand-Filing-fee-400-receipt-number-0752-14601482/ilnd-1:2018-cv-04240-00001>

Lisa Wainwright resigned as Dean of Faculty and is currently employed as a Professor in the Department of Art History, Theory and Criticism to teach the following courses in the Fall 2020 semester:

- ARTHI 4155 - Pop Art and It’s Legacy
- ARTHI 5002 Graduate Survey of Modern and Contemporary Art.
- The *FNews Magazine* article published September 5th, 2018 where Martin Berger is interviewed after filling Wainwright’s former position as Dean of Faculty, and is asked if there is a “plan to address or improve the current policy of student-faculty relationships.” He responds with “I certainly would be open to looking at it.”
<https://fnewsmagazine.com/2018/09/its-a-brand-new-dean/>
<https://fnewsmagazine.com/2018/09/back-to-school-news-briefs/>

The institutional response and content of these correspondences lead us to believe that SAIC is **neglecting and failing** to enforce its policies of transparency and accountability across the institution. In addition to the investigation of involved staff, SAIC should investigate those who engage with policies of sharing the deaths of members of the SAIC community to avoid and punish curatorial practices institution-wide.

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY—ADMISSIONS

1 | SAIC Admissions Should Create the Two Ombudspersons Roles in the SAIC Admissions

Department:

- SAIC should define the *Ombudspersons* roles as a collaborative position consisting of two employees.
- SAIC Admissions should be required to appoint *two currently employed SAIC admissions staff* to fulfill both Ombudspersons roles. Their responsibilities include to coordinate, direct, support, and oversee all admissions student worker relations and responsibilities. Associate Directors of

Admissions are to transfer all responsibilities for the management of all admissions student workers to the Ombudsperson roles.

- SAIC should define the Ombudsperson roles as responsible for coordinating all responsibilities regarding Admissions Student Workers and oversee the Mentorship Program Workers. This includes but is not limited to: Schedules, Interviews, Training, Tour Launch, Tour Relations, Office Projects etc.
- Admissions student workers require that Fallon Thomas and Kaycee Filson be transitioned into the official Ombudspersons positions effective by the beginning of Fall 2020.
- Thomas and Filson will collaboratively re-create the student ambassador handbook, create an official student phone caller handbook, and office assistant handbook. These student worker handbooks will be reviewed for improvement on a semester basis.
- Ombudsperson Fallon Thomas and Ombudsperson Kaycee Filson will directly collaborate and work with Associate Director of Events and On Campus, Undergraduate Admissions Katie Brown.
- Act as a Financial Aid liaison: Ombudsperson will be responsible for walking prospective students directly to the Financial Services Department and assisting in a smooth transition from Admissions to Financial Services. They will be allowed to participate in students' meetings with Financial Aid **upon the students' written consent** and request for all students over the **age of 18**.
- Financial Literacy Handbook: Ombudsperson will be responsible for creating a handbook that outlines the specifics of work-study and investigates how the work-study program works financially, logistically and institutionally.
- Racial Equality Vow: Ombudspersons staff vow to address all forms of discrimination, harassment, and threats of assault involving faculty or students. This includes but is not limited to student workers of other departments.
- The positions will operate with full autonomy. This will be an opportunity to enforce accountability across the student body and faculty supplemented by extensive documentation.

2 | SAIC Admissions Should Create a Mentorship Program as an Extension of the Student Ambassador Program as a Concrete Action Towards Anti-Racism:

- The mentorship program should serve to provide incoming freshmen and transfers with a liaison to follow their educational careers for professional development and community support. The program is a concrete action towards anti-racism as it has the potential to provide Black, Latinx, and other students of color a greater sense of belonging and representation within the institution.
- The Mentorship program should be an extension of the Student Ambassador Program. These mentorship positions should be staffed by SAIC juniors and seniors, Undergraduate students, Graduate students, Alumni, and Faculty.
- The program should serve our Black, Latinx, and all other students of color in both mentees and employment of mentors. The program can exist in various forms; including individual and group contexts.
- **Racial Equality Vow:** Ombudsperson will oversee the mentorship program vows to report discrimination, harassment, and threats of assault involving all faculty and students. The program will

operate with full confidentiality. This will be an additional opportunity to enforce accountability across the student body and faculty supplemented by documentation.

3 | SAIC Should Conduct a Third-Party Investigation into Student and Staff Treatment at SAIC

Events:

- Scheduling: Students are often denied breaks or limited to 15-20 minute lunch breaks during shifts longer than 7.25 hours.
- SAIC Admissions should no longer log Event Hours on paper. Admissions should be formally logging Event Hours the day of the event online.
- The current method of logging hours on paper allows for *for-profit* business practices and has presented many instances of student favoritism.
- We are requesting transparency on the processing and documentation of worked hours during SAIC events.
- We are requesting that any Admissions Student workers who are scheduled to work events immediately after class must be required to take 30 minutes to themselves before clocking in, to eat and recollect themselves.
- SAIC should enforce all staffing protocols according to Illinois work laws, ON ALL WORKING DAYS for ALL EMPLOYEES, including but not limited to special events. We request that all SAIC Event Scheduling be re-designed to ensure that student workers aren't given an excessive number of tours, without opportunity for breaks.

4 | SAIC Should Make Human Resources (HR) accessible to all SAIC Student Workers and Employees:

- We ask that all the SAIC hourly Student Workers and all Employees, have the same level of access to HR, and given the same quality of service and priority as SAIC Employees.
- All Student Workers and SAIC Employees must actively participate in training on "*How-To Communicate with HR.*" All training must be formally documented.
- We ask that following all complaint reports from Student Workers and SAIC Employees have a minimum of 3 follow-up investigations. All complaint reports must conform to confidential practices.
- SAIC should launch the re-development of formal protocol for the protection of students, faculty, and staff mental health and personal confidential information within the workplace. There are concerns that on frequent occasion higher administration has verbally disclosed and discussed confidential information regarding Students and Staff in the workplace. Any inappropriate verbal discussions must be formally documented and time stamped.

ANTI-RACIST INITIATIVES IN ADMISSIONS

5 | SAIC Should Conduct an Official Reassignment of Office Space in the Admissions Department:

- Based on ongoing observations, we have concerns regarding the Processing Team. The Processing staff is one of the lowest paid positions within Admissions, and consists of predominantly Black team members. We believe they appear to be segregated and hidden from staff, faculty, students, and the public. The Processing Team has been forced to work in a dark, windowless closet with only one exit point. They are not even allowed to close their door during their lunch. Student workers are not

introduced to the Processing Team, and are often told to avoid their workspace. Despite working in the same office, many students were not aware of their crucial presence to our Admissions team.

- Student workers currently work in a windowless closet with only one exit. We were asked to relabel the closet as the "Annex", including a printed sign that is taped on the door. It raises our concerns with the treatment of Processing staff.
- There is currently insufficient meeting space, and is resulting in raised concerns of breaches of confidentiality, and presents an emergency hazard.
- We formally request that SAIC Admissions make direct efforts to create adequate space for the Processing Team to work with window access and adequate lighting.
- We formally request that Admissions allocate adequate, dedicated workspace for the Admissions Student Workers beyond the confinement of a closet.

6 | SAIC should allow for an optional interview as part of the admissions process.

- Currently, the portfolio review process allows for counselors to raise their scoring of a students portfolio via an "other" category. This category allows for students to get higher scores for engagement; including attending events. We recognize that, because of COVID-19, students will no longer be able to attend these events. In addition to this category, we ask for more transparency in the admissions process.
- As it stands, the artist statement information found in the incoming freshman page has a description of the website that does not accurately outline what a portfolio reviewer is looking for. SAIC "How to Apply" page: <https://www.saic.edu/admissions/freshmen/how-to-apply>
- SAIC is beginning to no longer consider ACT and SAT scores, and lowered the AP score requirement to accommodate "less affluent communities." This had led us to believe that lowering the threshold for standardized testing is indicative of the acceptance that reading comprehension skills are disproportionately developed due to socioeconomic conditions.
- All of these points lead us to believe that incoming freshman students should have the opportunity to a virtual interview as an additional means of engagement, and an opportunity to communicate their artistic practice and interests beyond a discriminatory academic articulation of the work they produce.

CAMPUS WIDE ANTI-RACIST INITIATIVES

7 | Reform to all Curriculum:

- We ask SAIC to reform all mandatory art history courses to emphasize both historic and contemporary Black, Indigenous and Latinx studies into a substantial portion of the curriculum by Spring 2021.
- For the Fall 2020 semester, there are a total of 79 undergraduate art history courses available via self-service. The art history courses that explicitly focus on a non-white curriculum are as follows:
 - ARTHI 2065 - Introduction to African American Art
 - ARTHI 2206 - Modern and Contemporary Latin American Art
 - ARTHI 2464 - Decorative Arts in China
 - ARTHI 2752 - Anc-Early Mod Native American Art
 - ARTHI 3982 - Asian Identity in Film
 - ARTHI 4472 - India, Women, and Visual Culture
 - ARTHI 4496 - Asian Art Now

There is **1 course on African American Art (1.26% of total), 1 course on Latin American Art (1.26%), 1 course on Native American Art (1.26%), 4 courses on Asian Art (5%)** offered by SAIC for Fall 2020, to an undergraduate population of an estimated **2,984 Undergraduate students**.

Source: <https://www.saic.edu/about/history-and-quick-facts/enrollment>

- Therefore, we believe SAIC should hire more faculty of color to teach more art history courses focused on non-white art, and provide these courses by the Spring 2021 semester.
- In response to a white curriculum existing as the majority (**91%**) of the total art history courses available for undergraduates in conjunction to our collection of anonymous responses, we have concerns that SAIC’s lack of integration into the curriculum results in institutional promotion and indoctrination rooted in white supremacy.
 - Taken from the SAIC Dean of Faculty position letter labeling the Art Institute of Chicago as an Equal Opportunity Employer: “The Art Institute of Chicago does not tolerate unlawful discrimination based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, military or former military status, or any other status protected by federal, state or local law, in its programs and activities, public accommodations or employment practices”.
 - We ask SAIC to pair all initiatives with hiring a third-party to develop mandatory training for all faculty in all departments for all courses that will prepare faculty to practice equal opportunity for evaluation of student work that will occur on-campus, and not a digital platform. We have suggested that this training involve the collaboration of staff and alumni of color. In addition to mandatory training for all staff, SAIC will integrate this training into the Contemporary Practices curriculum. This is to address and correct the practice of labeling a student’s work as inaccessible for evaluation because its content is not representative of the classes’ racial, gender, and/or socioeconomic status. This culture is described and confirmed by over 80% of all of our collected anonymous responses. This has led us to believe that this is enabling the institutional promotion and indoctrination of discrimination.
 - SAIC should hire a third-party to develop a curriculum that will be incorporated into the Academic Spine, to give students a holistic understanding of the history of Chicago’s segregation and its lasting effects. We believe an understanding of Chicago’s history, both in its struggles and successes, is imperative for students to develop a “symbiotic relationship” with the city. This would be an institutional acknowledgement of Chicago’s segregated history, and its lasting effects and disadvantages on its black and latinx populations.

Educational resources for understanding Chicago’s segregated history:
How Redlining Segregated Chicago and America: ·
<https://www.chicagomag.com/city-life/August-2017/How-Redlining-Segregated-Chicago-and-America/>
Residential Segregation and Housing Transportation in Chicago:
https://chiul.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CULTivate-Part-1_Residential-Segregation-and-Housing-Transportation_Full-Draft_FINAL.pdf
 - We are asking for transparency regarding the Dean’s List and ask for accessibility for all students of Sophomore status. There is a collective misunderstanding regarding the Dean’s List and its relationship to Sophomore Seminar courses.

7.1 | Contemporary Practices (CP):

- The CP Department should provide all required materials for projects/authorizations.
- The CP Department should incorporate the mandatory discrimination training referenced in Section 7 into the Core Studio and Research Studio curriculum.

7.2 | Academic Access Program (AAP), TOEFL:

- SAIC AAP courses should not count as elective liberal arts credits, but should instead satisfy FYS requirements. The current practice is discriminatory of students with lower test scores, and restricts students access to further liberal arts electives.
- SAIC's English for International Students courses should not count as elective liberal arts credits, but should instead satisfy FYS requirements. The current practice is discriminatory of students with lower TOEFL scores, and restricts students access to further liberal arts electives.

7.3 | Fashion Department:

- The Fashion Department should allow fashion students the choice of their own models for the fashion show without consulting with the fashion department. Any required consultation regarding their choice of model with the department exists as a restriction to the student's practice.
- The Fashion Department should provide an even ratio of mannequins of varying size and skin tones. We believe this would minimize room for Colorism, Fatphobia and other forms of discrimination based on appearance.

7.4 | Requesting the Immediate Action of the Following Initiatives:

- The most updated statistics of SAIC's race/ethnicity of its faculty that is published on the school's website was posted in 2017. SAIC's most updated statistics of SAIC's race/ethnicity of its students is posted in 2019. SAIC has posted receiving the 2019 HEED award for Excellence in Diversity on the website. There is currently no statistical breakdown of staff race/ethnicity for 2018 or 2019 on the school website. Because of this, we have concerns regarding the unknown changing statistics of non-white faculty.
- In 2016-2017 was 81% white. SAIC needs to invest in long-term initiatives for the recruitment and retention of Black and Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) faculty members, and transparency of faculty diversity.
2016-2017 Quick Facts: Faculty : <https://www.saic.edu/about/history-and-quick-facts/faculty>
2019 Quick Facts: Enrollment: <https://www.saic.edu/about/history-and-quick-facts/enrollment>
2019 HEED

Award: <https://www.saic.edu/news/saic-recognized-excellence-diversity-2019-heed-award>

- We ask that SAIC invest in adjunct instructors/professor's pay and increase the base pay at which they are employed.
- SAIC needs to create initiatives that hold all professors and guest lecturers for all forms of discrimination, including but not limited to racial, gender, and/or socioeconomic. There are concerns that reputation may be impacting the possibility of complaints regarding professors being suppressed or ignored. We ask that an investigation be conducted by a third-party into the related processes, including but not limited to the synthesis of course evaluations.
- SAIC should strongly consider reports of discrimination in course evaluations and complaints to prioritize the public good when conducting lay-offs to invest in an anti-racist body of faculty.

- SAIC should reinforce access to studio space in the form of designated classrooms. The current function exists as a rotating open studio space in the Painting and Drawing department. Many departments do not have access to a designated studio space that does not also function as a classroom during the day. Students who live in the residence halls have access to the 24/7, dedicated studio space. This had led us to believe that all departments should be required to dedicate space as a 24/7 open studio to accommodate students who do not live in the residence halls.

8 | SAIC Should Conduct a Reform of the Collection and Curation of Students for Promotional and Marketing Materials:

- SAIC Marketing staff should reform their approach to including students in marketing materials to eliminate the opportunity for tokenization and lack of proper compensation. Students who appear in promotional or marketing materials should be nominated by faculty and studio department heads based on merit, and should be extended contracts outlining the terms of usage for their image in detail. As it stands, the program allows for discriminatory curatorial practices.

9 | Staff/Contractor Protection Initiatives:

- We are concerned with SAIC's treatment of contracted and hourly staff, especially regarding food service workers, security staff, and custodial staff. SAIC should work with contracted and hourly staff to renegotiate the ethics within their contracts.
- SAIC should create initiatives that allow security guards' complaints to be held to the same standard as faculty and students.

10 | Influence of Negative Course Evaluations

- SAIC should develop initiatives to retrain and remove faculty members who demonstrate discriminatory behaviors, including but not limited to those reported by course evaluations. This discrimination includes but is not limited to racial, gender, and/or socioeconomic.
- More than 5 negative course evaluations should result in a departmental investigation.

ACCESSIBILITY AND RESPECT TO THE STUDENT'S PURSUIT OF FINANCIAL STABILITY THROUGH CONTINUED INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT.

SAIC is a non-profit institution and should prioritize their commitment to the public good and its students over for-profit business practices.

Highly-paid staff should consider taking significant pay reductions, in addition to any that have been already made, to redistribute funds and wealth to SAIC students and to anti-racist reform. These reductions should be announced to all students, with an estimation of how these funds will be redistributed for anti-racist reform and the institution's investment in the potential of its students.

11 | Scholarships and Grants

- SAIC should create Emergency Funds in each department that employs student workers, for grants available to their student workers.
 - Emergency Funds will be funded by the respective departmental budget and be replenished on a semesterly basis.

- SAIC should create a fund in each studio department for grants available to students for supplies.
 - These funds will be funded by the respective departmental budget and be replenished on a semesterly basis.
- SAIC should implement scholarships and grants to cover the cost of the required laptop. Currently, the only available way to secure funding from SAIC is via eRefund, which is not available until after the start of the first semester.
- SAIC should create need-based grants and scholarships for housing.
- SAIC should create additional opportunities for the evaluation of students' financial situations for the processing of aid after admission.
- SAIC should create more opportunities for the reevaluation of students' income and financial stability during personal crises.
- SAIC should generate avenues for admissions counselor advocacy after admission for continued financial aid opportunities.
- SAIC should hire a third-party investigation into the selection of students for FAFSA verification forms requests. There are concerns that this is targeted towards students of low socioeconomic status.

11.1 | The Chicago Scholars Programs:

- SAIC should increase funding for the Chicago Scholars program to allow for continued grants and scholarships for scholars after admission for access to housing and supplies.

11.2 | Respect of Finances:

- SAIC should provide scholarship protection for all Leave of Absences up to three years.
- SAIC should, in the event of a fee being added onto a students' account that was not added last semester, notify the student immediately of the addition of this fee via email and a self-service notification.

11.3 | Additional or Emergency Fund Support:

- SAIC should promote the availability and accessibility of food cards to both prospective and current students. This should be communicated as a resource during campus tours and all orientation processes. At present, the current application and disbursement process are completed at the front desk of Academic Advising. The application process should be made more discrete.
- SAIC should initiate an Emergency Fund for sudden changes in student financial circumstances. This should be non-loan based financial support, available by request in the form of a financial aid appeal.
- SAIC should initiate a Natural Disaster Emergency Fund for students in need of support in the case of natural disasters including but not limited to pandemics, floods, fires, and all other environmental disasters.

12 | Housing Stability:

- SAIC should further invest in housing support for students in the form of grants, scholarships, and work opportunities. Currently, the only form of aid for housing exists as the RA position which is not available to freshmen.
- SAIC should create initiatives for sustainably transitioning students in and out of emergency housing. We ask for more transparency, guidance, and access to emergency housing.

- SAIC should present the opportunity for emergency housing during student orientation.
- SAIC should expand the Safe-Ride service to neighborhoods off-campus, outside of the Loop/Downtown area, to serve students who live south and west of the loop.
- SAIC should immediately honor any request for a change of roommate. If there is not a roommate available for the change, then the student will be allowed to choose between placement in emergency housing until a new roommate is available, or be offered a refund in the event of on-campus housing unavailability. If emergency housing is not immediately available, students are to be allowed to enter a queue for a new roommate, and be asked on a weekly basis if they would like to be removed from the queue until they have secured housing. If a student does not ask to be removed from the queue, then **they will not be removed from the queue.**
- SAIC should invest in hiring social workers in mental health and conflict resolution, designated to work alongside and train the RAs and Res. Life Staff for the management of students. These social workers should intervene with discrimination, domestic violence, and other student disputes.
- SAIC should continue their commitment to **not invest in contracts with the police.**

13 | Work Opportunities:

- SAIC should remove limitations regarding the number of hours worked per week for work-study students. Hourly limitations prevent students from using their work-study jobs to support their education and housing. SAIC does not openly stand for restrictions to a student’s potential in the classroom. Because of this, we are led to believe that it is inconsistent to hold these restrictions in the workplace. These spaces are both crucial to a student’s ability to participate in their education and professional development.
- SAIC should ensure that departments further the use of non-need based work authorizations for all work-study positions. This would allow students to invest their time into the institution while earning financial support for their education and housing.
- SAIC should ensure that all departments with student workers create initiatives such as accessible mentorship to guide and assist with professional development and the enrichment of their student workers.
 - SAIC should release clear guidelines and metrics for these initiatives.
- SAIC should ensure that departments create initiatives to grow the work-study program towards salaried positions; creating additional avenues for employment stability.
- Mandatory introduction between student workers and all department staff.
- SAIC should provide complete transparency and authenticity of the school’s relationship to work-study funding. There are concerns of a misunderstanding of the allotment of work-study eligibility and the disbursement of these funds to both SAIC and its students. There are concerns of a misunderstanding of SAIC’s use of non-need based work authorizations and their relationship to the work-study program.
 - SAIC needs to create and release documentation and materials that fully detail SAIC’s relationship and use of work-study funding to promote transparency.
 - We ask this documentation and materials be published to the website.
 - We ask this documentation and materials be disbursed to all students who are currently eligible for work-study, supervisors for work-study students, and all who qualify in the future.

- SAIC should use this documentation and materials to create mandatory training for all student workers and supervisors from this point onwards.

14 | Wellness Center Reform:

This statement is available on the SAIC website:

<https://www.saic.edu/life-at-saic/wellness-center/counseling-services>

“The mission of Counseling Services at SAIC is to assist students in meeting their emotional, psychological, and mental health needs and to contribute to a campus environment that facilitates the healthy growth and development of students. The service carries out its mission through several essential roles and functions: counseling and psychotherapy, crisis intervention, consultation, care management, and mental health promotion. Counseling **Services is staffed by full-time doctoral-level licensed psychologists, a licensed clinical social worker, a mental health promotion specialist/registered art therapist licensed as a professional counselor, postdoctoral fellows in psychology, and part-time psychotherapists from local doctoral psychology programs working under supervision.**”

- SAIC should comply with the message it advertises on its own website, and restrict all staff providing counseling to be licensed professionals.
- SAIC should require that any and all licensed professional staff members of the Wellness Center provide proof of valid license to students upon request, prior to offering counseling or medical services.
- SAIC should redesign the appointment-making process, in a way that furthers confidentiality and accessibility.
- SAIC should **not hire** any variation of therapists-in-training.
- SAIC should require that all professors accept the accommodations provided by the wellness center. A professor should not have the authority to discriminate against a student regarding their documented disabilities and disadvantages.

15 | COVID-19 Reparations:

- The SAIC Admissions department non-consensually assigned work hours during COVID-19 quarantine and did not allow students to negotiate their work schedules beforehand. Student work hours were not only drastically cut, but all available hours were split equally amongst employees.
- SAIC should provide a \$1,500.00 grant to be given to all student workers. This is a financial compensation for the loss of work opportunities as a result of COVID-19.
- SAIC should reevaluate tuition costs for online courses. We believe that no matter how well a course may be designed to exist online, the additional amenities granted by enrolling in a course located at SAIC is incomparable to that of a virtual space.
- SAIC should give all students 6 free credits in reparations for SAIC's poor handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CLOSING

SAIC should publicly denounce white supremacy, racism, xenophobia, and the implicit and overt discrimination of its Black and Brown students.

Not just in their emails, but in the way it upholds accountability.

In the way it processes reports of discrimination from faculty.

In the way it supports the socioeconomic conditions of its students.

In the way it supports its contracted workers.

In the way it believes students the moment they begin a Title IX report.

In the way it disciplines the offenses in those Title IX reports.

In the way it commits to anti-racist reform long after its extorted for promotional material.

In the way it conducts discipline.

SAIC should enact measures in addition to extensive, mandatory training that enforce and require accountability of all forms of discrimination, harassment, and assault in all departments of the institution: This includes but is not limited to academic, wellness, professional, and administrative.

We will be giving a copy of our collection of anonymous student responses filed via google forms, used to inform this document and those that follow, to Elissa Tenny. In addition to the content of this document, we ask that Elissa Tenny and her administration use this catalogue of student experiences to inform, reform, and reconstruct the institution that has failed these students. We did not expect the absolute terrors described by those who participated but, unfortunately, we were not surprised.

"I've been extremely angry about this and have been vocal about these issues but no one has taken it seriously. It's ridiculous considering how the school/department prides itself on diversity and unlimited creativity. My white peers don't take me seriously when I tell them their favorite faculty is racist. They move on and dismiss it as some rumor. I have white peers that understand but beyond that nothing is done or said to faculty no matter how many times I've broken down in front of them. I feel as though me and the few BIPOC in the department are angry enough to speak up.

I'm a Mexican artist, my name is Frida Benitez and I would like my name to be attached to this."

Frida Benitez, BFA 2021, Fashion, Massey Scholar submitted via the anonymous google form.

We ask that Elissa release her own set of initiatives that she will create in response to the content of the anonymous responses. We would also like to ask Elissa Tenny to schedule meetings with all departments and multicultural groups, and their student workers, to create specific demands of their current needs by Fall 2020. In addition to faculty discrimination in specific departments, our anonymous responses have expressed great concerns in the function, accessibility, and confidentiality of the Wellness Center. There needs to be a major, institution-wide change.

We are tired of reporting. We are tired of being disrespected by our home institution. We are tired of disappointment.

We are in full support of any groups that come after this.

After this message is delivered, additional demands will be collected from the student body, and amended into our requests.

Nadia A. Frierson (*BFA '20*) _____ 06/29/2020

Nicholas Zepeda (*BFA '21*) _____ 06/29/2020

Toni L. Ivory (*BFA '23*) _____ 06/29/2020