

August 13, 2019

Rebecca Blank, Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-Madison
500 Lincoln Drive
Madison, WI 53719

Dear Chancellor Blank:

We are the Black Leadership Council of Dane County, Wisconsin comprised of local representatives of a variety of state, national, and international organizations with which you are likely very familiar (e.g. NAACP, Urban League, African American Sorority and Fraternities, etc.). We write this letter to urge you to re-admit Mr. Quintez Cephus who was recently exonerated of ALL charges in an alleged case of sexual assault. Many of our members have a close and longstanding relationship with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. We count among us alumni, parents, faculty, and staff. And, we expect that the University will value our sentiments regarding this situation.

Late last month, Mr. Quintez Cephus who was a student-athlete was exonerated by a court of law on charges of 2nd and 3rd degree sexual assault. The University of Wisconsin-Madison expelled Mr. Cephus in March 2018 based on its Student Code of Conduct [UWS 17.09(1)]. We recognize that the university often takes what it deems precautionary measures to ensure the safety of individuals and students as a group. However, once Mr. Cephus was cleared of all charges and had NO record of previous misconduct, it seems the university may be considering exacting additional

punishment for something he did not do. In essence, Mr. Cephus may experience a kind of double jeopardy despite the jury verdict.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident of the university's relationship with Black students. As a campus that is ranked 13

th out of the 14 Big Ten institutions on diversity (only University of Nebraska-Lincoln fares worse), Wisconsin has a LONG way to go on improving campus relationships with the Black community. Several years ago many of us were present when you, Patrick Sims, Everett Mitchell, Lori Berquam, and Sue Riseling, came to the Urban League to discuss the situation with Denzel McDonald who was arrested in class for posting anti-racist graffiti on some campus buildings. At that meeting community members heard of an incident where an African American woman was spat upon and told she didn't belong at UW-Madison. We learned that because the offending student agreed to campus disciplinary policies his identity and the adjudication of his case would not be made public. However, the aggrieved African American woman received no remedy.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison had 593 African American undergraduates and 225 African American graduate students in the 2018-2019 academic year. That is 818 African American students on a campus of 44,411. This incredible racial asymmetry means African American students are hyper-visible on the campus. Almost every African American student can report at least one incident of racial violence—racial epithets, harassments, and threats. Learning that even a legal exoneration will not provide one with a second chance does little to engender the idea that the university has a racially welcoming climate.

You have an opportunity to help Mr. Cephus begin again after what has been the most horrifying ordeal of his young life. The school-year will begin in just a few weeks and knowing the academic calendar better than most you realize how important it is for Mr. Cephus to begin at the start of the semester. We urge you to

give him an opportunity for re-entry immediately so he can begin as soon as the semester commences.

We realize the issue of his continued intercollegiate athletics participation resides at the level of the Big Ten Conference and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). But, he has no opportunity to appeal to either of those bodies without first being enrolled in the university. We trust you will concur with our strong desire to have Mr. Cephus reinstated into the university.

Sincerely,

Members of the Black Leadership Council

Rev. Dr. Marcus Allen,
Pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Ruben Anthony, PhD

CEO and President Urban League of Greater Madison

Kaleem Caire,
CEO, One City Early Learning Center

Carola Gaines
Madison Alumnae Chapter
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Rev. Dr. Alexander Gee
Pastor, Fountain of Life Covenant Church
President, Nehemiah Corporation
Justified Anger Coalition

Greg Jones
President, NAACP
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Richard L. Jones, Esq.
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