

## An Open Actionable Items List to Emory University Rollins School of Public Health

In conjunction with the Black Lives Matter Letter sent to the RSPH Administration on Wednesday, June 3rd, 2020.

To Dean Curran and RSPH Administration,

We, the Black community, should not be burdened with providing Rollins School of Public Health's administration actionable steps and resources to promote change, but we know that we cannot leave 100% of the decision making up to administration. Due to the events of the past week, many Black students and non-Black students are outraged. They are outraged at Rollins School of Public Health administrators' responses regarding racism and activism during the returning student town hall on June 3, 2020. They are outraged with your complete disregard for your Black students' feelings in regard to withholding their letter regarding Black Lives Matter. However, this outrage is not new. Students at Rollins School of Public Health have been addressing the systemic and deep-rooted issues that exist in this community for too long.

Accountability predicates reconciliation and reform. Address implicit biases and change the system from within. Pioneer the change and set an example for schools of public health across the nation. Difficult does not mean impossible. Meeting the following demands will lead Rollins School of Public Health toward an equitable, anti-racist environment.

1. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to use Rollins' Legal Team to offer resources and contribute legal funds to bailout Rollins students who are at the frontline at protests. We also strongly suggest that you donate to one of the following bailout funds: [Atlanta Solidarity Fund](#) and [Athens Freedom Fund](#). Immediately, a donation match campaign should be created on behalf of Rollins School of Public Health. Current students, alumni, and faculty should donate a certain amount, and the school must match contributions 1:1. Donations should be posted online using the hashtags #RollinsForBlackLivesMatter #RacismIsAPublicHealthCrisis #FreeThoseWhoStandForJustice
2. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to change the incoming book for the 2021 Rollins incoming cohort and future cohorts to the "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks" by Rachel Skloot. Additionally, a Book Talk with the author must be held during orientation. This book discusses the human story behind HeLa cells and addresses many fundamental issues to public health including, ethics, race, and genetics in medical research - in terms of privacy, consent, compensation, and many others. Additionally, guidelines must be developed to decide on appropriate books for incoming Rollins students. These guidelines should include a novel that entices a discussion about the history of public health, race, and ethics.
3. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to restructure introductory courses, outside of PUBH500 and PUBH501, to focus on and include at least one discussion-based lecture on the ethical, legal and racial aspects of public health that amplifies Black voices in collaboration with the Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in Atlanta. The core departmental and MPH required classes that will be restructured are - GH500, GH501, BSHE500, BSHE501, EH500, EH501, EPI504, EPI530, BIOS500, HPM500, and HPM501. This lecture will encourage thoughtful, well informed, and critical discussions on how the issues of human rights and social justice are inseparable from public health. It will be led by leading researchers and educators in the social sciences, humanities, and public health from one of the Atlanta University Center Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The selection of the lead researcher or educator must be vetted, maintained, and overseen by a board of students and professors of color.
4. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to make the Cultural Humility workshop during Orientation mandatory for all students. This should focus on unlearning implicit biases, actively being anti-racist, and addressing power and privilege within professional and academic spaces. The workshop should be a priority during orientation and not an afterthought. It will be led by the Director or Associate Director of Community-Engaged Learning and Cultural Humility.
5. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to increase the number of Black-owned restaurants within its partnership and preferred vendor list to allow student organizations to enjoy meals from local restaurants without additional cost.

6. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to provide resources for Black students, and especially Black international students, to be able to properly find equitable housing, jobs, and mental health resources. This will help to mitigate the strife students have to face moving to an unfamiliar city and/or country. These resources must be updated at the start of every academic year and provided to incoming students as a part of their award package. The resources can only be updated, not reduced in quantity.

7. We demand Rollins School of Public Health, to increase the percentage of scholarships and endowment funds that support Black graduate students by 20% by 2022. These scholarships will provide financial assistance to part-time and full-time Black students to help offset tuition costs, student loans, and expenses. The racial wealth gap exists, this will help to fill it.

8. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to incorporate mandatory training for all incoming and returning faculty, staff, and Teaching Assistants on microaggressions in the classroom. This will be led by the Capital City Justice Group, run by Rollins alumna Taylor German, that specializes in creating trainings on race, identity, and equity. They will collaborate with RSPH to develop actionable plans in welcoming and utilizing identity in the classroom for a valuable and active learning experience. The training will be held at the start of each school year.

9. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to provide a reformed cultural humility pedagogy model that professors, adjunct and otherwise, and faculty are annually required to participate in. This model should be tailored around dismantling white saviorism in curricula and how to put an end to neutrality within classroom discussions. The cultural humility pedagogy model must be updated every 2 years to accommodate changing cultural norms, societal norms, and language. It will be reviewed by the Community- Engaged Learning and Cultural Humility Director and Associate Director to ensure its strength.

10. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to require all faculty to include 3 pieces of educational materials, including literature, film, and others, in their syllabi every year to promote Black ideals and voices within the classroom. These educational materials should be updated every 2 years and must be vetted, maintained, and overseen by a board of students and professors of color.

11. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to increase and retain Black faculty by 20% across all departments by 2023-24. RSPH must provide various types of resources and support for the retention of Black faculty by encouraging conversations of race amongst all faculty, building professional networks for Black faculty, paying Black faculty competitively, and providing a collaborative environment with intentionality and engagement.

12. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to provide more transparent and accurate data regarding demographics, and breakdowns by applications - percentage (%) of students that applied; percentage (%) of students that were admitted; percentage (%) of enrolled that completed a degree; percentage (%) of students receiving scholarships; percentage (%) of scholarship money received.

13. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to create an open forum to continue the dialogue between faculty, professors, and students. This will allow clear dialogue and avoid misinterpretation and assumptions about the wellbeing of students. Everyone will have access to this forum and it will be monitored by the department representatives within the Rollins Student Government Association.

14. We demand Rollins School of Public Health to create more space for mental health within the School of Public Health. Seven sessions within CAPS are not enough. This space will include equal representation of Licensed Therapists who specialize in cultural sensitivity, anxiety, depression, and other experiences students may be facing during their two years at RSPH. This service must be offered up to and including 6 months post-graduation free of charge.

Racism is a public health crisis and should be treated as such. We believe abiding by these demands will allow for a better learning experience for all of your students, especially Black students, and ensure equity within the classroom and curricula. Let us be the example.

Sincerely,  
The Black Community at Rollins School of Public Health