

University of Missouri, Columbia, AAUP Resolution on the Social Justice Centers

Whereas the Gaines-Oldham Black Cultural Center, LGBTQ Resource Center, Multicultural Center, Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center, and Women's Center (hereafter: Social Justice Centers, or Centers) have for decades served MU student communities on campus, especially underrepresented and marginalized students for whom these centers have acted both physically and emotionally as places of refuge in moments of crisis on campus;

Whereas the coordinators and staff of the Social Justice Centers have built trust through experiences, struggles, and identities shared with the students they serve;

Whereas the coordinators of these centers have acted as crucial support for students when they have been in the midst of any crisis, personal or collective;

Whereas the coordinators make our entire campus more inclusive and welcoming, providing training and resources to many members of our community, including students, staff, faculty and administrators;

Whereas each Social Justice Center's leadership cohort has developed institutional knowledge and expertise in empowering specific student constituencies and ensuring their personal and academic well-being;

Whereas the Center coordinators have played a particularly crucial role in supporting student communities as they navigated COVID-19 pandemic-related hardships;

Whereas the Social Justice Centers both individually and collectively advance the University's core values of Discovery, Respect, Responsibility, and Excellence, both in their daily activities and through major campus-wide initiatives;

Whereas neither the coordinators of these Centers—nor students, faculty and staff—were consulted in advance of a proposed restructuring of the Social Justice Centers' organizational model and personnel needs;

Whereas students, faculty, and staff have expressed detailed concerns about the nature, scope, and progress of any restructuring initiatives pertaining to the Centers, drawing particular attention to the threat represented by the potential loss through leadership changes of the operational continuity, interpersonal relationships, and trust on which the Centers' current success is predicated;

Whereas these concerns were met by spokespersons for the University and for the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity with misleading characterizations of public statements made at Department of Social Justice meetings (as attested by *Missourian* reporting), and

Whereas, furthermore, the “restructuring” initiative resembles, both in substance and process, other failures by senior administrators to work publicly to secure input from faculty, staff, and students according to both the spirit and letter of the principle of shared governance,

Be it resolved that the University of Missouri chapter of the American Association of University Professors calls upon the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity to:

- Immediately cease all administrative restructuring operations and personnel decisions pertaining to the Social Justice Centers,
- Retain all 5 Center Coordinator positions,
- Initiate dialogue with students and staff harmed by the proposed restructuring, with the aim of earning student trust,
- Visit each Center individually, to learn from staff and students about the unique work it does and the unique constituency or constituencies it serves, and
- Begin an open-ended public consultation with students, staff, and faculty on all aspects of the proposed restructuring, including the fundamental question of whether or not restructuring is needed at all.