

Dear Father John Denning, Co-Provosts: Dean Salvucci and Dean Ubertaccio, and Administrators,

As Black students and our families collectively grieve and reckon with the continual police brutality and violence plaguing our nation, along with the increased prevalence of COVID-19 in Black and Brown communities, we are writing this letter to Stonehill College Board of Directors and Administration to wake up and to emphasize our pain and frustration around the lack of response and support thus far. This is not a short term problem, and the lack of attention, messaging, and action around this is troubling, to say the least. Regarding this issue, many higher education institutions have remained silent by not fully addressing how they will act to support not only the Black lives on their campuses but also in their surrounding communities. We are saddened and angered to see that while Stonehill College did write an institutional statement regarding the issue, the statement was released significantly later than other institutions. In addition, it did not include a complete roll out to alumni that states clearly on the institution's stance on the murders and civil unrest and there was no concrete action item to address the inequities on campus or in our wider society.

For too long, we have lived within a system that perpetuates institutional and direct violence against Black people. We reject this anti-Black violence and demand justice. As a first step in engaging in Racial Equity transitions, we challenge Stonehill College to reflect on these questions and ask how they will take action:

- What does our senior leadership and governing body representation look like?
- What do our staff demographics look like?
- Why is our faculty overwhelmingly white? What is the college doing to hire and retain Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) professors?
- What and who does our curriculum represent?
- What educational outcomes do our Black students get?
- Who feels like they belong - *or don't belong* - on our campus?
- What is the lived experience of our Black staff and students at Stonehill College?
- How can the college highlight the myriad success and impacts of Black people and movements in both curriculum and extracurricular activities, outside of traditional and well-known histories of activists other than MLK Jr, and Rosa Parks?

We as Stonehill students, student groups, faculty, and alumni have compiled some initiatives and we are asking that the College commits to implementing these goals.

1. Curriculum and ongoing training on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion must be a priority for all members of the campus community. This should be implemented in two parts. 1) As part of IDAC initiative 13, the college must include not only an introductory conversation during orientation for first-year students, but also a continuing requirement that is woven throughout First-Year Experience focused on racial equity, and leading with courage towards a more just and compassionate world. 2.) Based on IDAC initiative 8, we are asking for a readout of results from the committee on how courses are reviewed to ensure they include topics of race, privilege, and social justice in every major and minor, most specifically required courses. Finally, based on initiatives 1, 6, and 12 student leaders,

senior leadership, faculty, and staff must continue their racial justice education work and professional development, and this must be a required element of all leadership development on campus.

2. We are angry to hear that several of our ethnic studies minors are at risk of termination because there are not enough students who are enrolling in the courses. In order to represent diverse voices and experiences, we need a diversified curriculum with authors, content, and history representing BIPOC experiences for all students to learn from. The institution needs to incorporate ethnic studies more strategically throughout all majors, so that not only students seeking an ethnic studies minor take these classes. This will expand support for the program, but also ensure our students are learning from broad perspectives. Therefore, Stonehill should provide resources and funds to support our existing ethnic studies minors but also intend to create an Africana studies program. For future endeavors, it would be beneficial to also create an ethnic studies department or center. This is important because in order to represent the voices of our BIPOC students we need a diverse curriculum.
3. We find it important to note that only about 4-6% of full-time faculty in universities are Black. This low percentage is obvious at Stonehill College, as there are very few Black Professors. To better educate our entire student body, and better support Black students Stonehill must hire more faculty with diverse backgrounds as well as mental health and academic counselors of color. Following the termination of one of our few Black female professors, we ask the institution to hire Black faculty to continue her legacy of teaching "Racial and Ethnic Diversity" as well as other necessary classes not only in social science fields but **all** fields of study. However, also recognizing that it is damaging to just hire Black faculty to simply represent "diversity". Hiring will not be enough and it is important to work to create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere for all BIPOC students and faculty. Attached below is a petition signed by hundreds of students and alumni who truly want to see this implemented: <http://chng.it/QpdB54mQYb>.
4. Stonehill College must acknowledge the role police violence has had in racial violence and murder. In addition, Stonehill must take steps to redirect funds toward programs, events, and resources centering our BIPOC students and that are specific to racial justice. This could include ensuring that there is no decrease in funding to any BIPOC student groups or initiatives for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. While we understand that due to COVID-19 and enrollment, funding structures will be changing, preserving the continuous support or programming and student support for the BIPOC community must be our first priority. If these programs are implemented/sustained, the BIPOC community may consider attending Stonehill and understand our commitment to Black students, which would allow for the diversification of the student body. Our Campus Police force should release a statement and proactive plan demonstrating their commitment to protecting Black lives and should host a conversation with student leaders in order to better understand the pain we are experiencing and how to best support us.

5. We honor the ongoing work done by our BIPOC student leaders and faculty, the Office of Intercultural Affairs, and other faculty who have been working to advance anti-racism on our campus. For future endeavors, we believe that Intercultural Affairs must be empowered to grow, and shift based on the needs of its students and programs. This center already acts as a safe place for our BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students that supports and promotes their diversity initiatives, but we see an increased need in opportunities for the center to play a key role in shaping institutional policy, to have more support staff (graduate interns), and to have priority in some space reservations and wall space (flyers/art) due to the importance of OIA initiatives.
6. Due to the current violence being committed by both Police departments nationwide, and also by Immigrations and Customs Enforcement through the Department of Homeland Security, we implore the Career Development Center to no longer invite these organizations to campus to recruit students as they have in the past, for career and internship fairs/expos. For some students, this can be dangerous and triggering. If students want to seek out these experiences, they are able to on their own time, but as an institution, we do not support state-sponsored violence against Black and Brown people and do not want these organizations to have a presence on campus.

In conclusion, we as a student and alumni body are committed to standing together with the Black community who continue to suffer from violence, oppression, and exclusion. As Father John said, Stonehill is “an institution anchored by a belief in the inherent dignity of each person,” and therefore we must see the college act on behalf of their mission and their students. Please honor these demands and commit to institutional, structural change in a way that prioritizes and centers the needs of BIPOC students, and will inherently enhance the experiences of all students as it will give us all tools to build a more just and compassionate world. BIPOC students are tired and drained of advocating for these issues! An immediate step is to address these concerns in an open forum where a detailed update on the college’s IDAC initiatives is given. We encourage a dialogue and further discussion around how to make Stonehill a more inclusive campus and appreciate your swift action in responding to these comprehensive changes.

Sincerely,

Stonehill Students and Alumni Standing in Solidarity

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Victoria Pierre ('19)
Jenna Rohlman ('22)

Denis García Reyes ('19)
Geovanny G. Sequeira ('19)
María Toapanta ('22)
Conor Finan ('22)
Olivia Kearns ('22)
Taylor Autiello ('22)
Koden Davis ('22)
Haleigh Arenas ('22)
Katelyn Samios('22)
Vitor DaSilva ('21)
Britney Savage ('23)
Samantha Camuso ('20)
Michael Kennedy ('23)
Erin Harrigan ('23)
Taylor Sprague ('23)
Mae Hickey ('23)
Bridget Gill ('23)
Nick Fantasia ('22)
Brenna Kueter ('21)
Emily Hartford ('23)
Cierra Meurant ('17)
Paige Barnard ('20)
Gillian Daly ('20)
Marytza-Leen Mompont ('19)
Siobhan Dowcett ('21)
Alexandra Froment ('20)
Samantha Noe ('21)
Meredith LoRusso ('21)
Rachel Moon ('23)
Kayleigh Nadal ('23)
Katherine Cappucci ('21)
Sadé Ratliff ('23)
Julianna Fitzpatrick ('20)
Lianza Stephen ('23)
Raquelle Espiricueta ('23)
Jesse Semeniak ('23)
Meggie Wambui ('18)
Nia Campbell ('18)
Keara Jordan ('22)
Rebecca Coache ('22)
Angelina Awad ('19)
Hailey Romero ('23)
Emily Attaya ('21)
Nicholas Chaves ('23)
Erica Bigelow ('18)

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Caroline Brown ('23)
Bridget Fama ('23)
Rachel Weinreb ('21)
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Sophie Kripp ('23)
Emma Kripp ('16)
Danielle Berkman ('16)
Silvianna Zhao ('23)
Michelle Cavalieri ('19)
Matt Haite ('20)
Rulondo Holland ('22)
Hannah Capron ('23)
Taylor Whitehouse ('23)
Claire Farnan ('19)
Gayle Regis ('20)
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Erin Ryan ('16)
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Michaela Sullivan ('19)
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Mackenzie Lachkey ('19)
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Maeve Rondeau ('21)
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Ana Clara Alcantara ('21)
Ben Moskey ('21)
Ryan Lisa ('19)
Matthew Shevlin ('19)
Meghan Ghazal ('19)
Amber Lynn Ferreira ('23)
Leila Buonfiglio ('21)

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Gwyneth Gould ('22)
Michaela Ta ('22)
Kelly Heney('23)
Hannah Phelan ('21)
Cassie Avery ('19)
Emily Manson ('21)
Madison Pimental ('21)
MeiRose Neal ('20)
Emily German ('22)
Lindsay Fabri ('21)
Eliza Lester ('21)
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Rama Aldakhlallah ('20)
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Maeve Staab ('23)
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Danielle Cartier ('21)
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Yasmine Sudhu ('20)
Vy Tran ('23)
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Lauren Boucher ('22)
Milan Friedman ('20)
Abigail Walczak ('17)
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Maxamillion O'Quinn ('22)
Olivia Lanning ('20)

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Darryn Hylton ('23)
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Tatiana Weldon ('17)
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Jenna Elsesser ('16)
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Michael Griffin ('18)
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Zoë Zankowski ('15)
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Madalyn Ryan ('16)
Molly McKittrick ('11)
Kristina Holle ('20)
Tori Ferland ('16)
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Sally Littlefield ('17)
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Samantha Dhaliwal ('20)
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Amanda Granato ('14)
Meghan Gotsell ('15)
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Myles Daigneault ('16)
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