

STUDENTS BLACK LIVES MATTER AT UNT TOWN HALL
JUNE 5, 2020
WEB VERSION

President Neal Smatresk: Hello everyone. Today is an important day for the UNT campus. It's a day when we're all going to gather together and try to talk about the tragic and senseless murder of George Floyd and see what we can do to build a better culture here at the University of North Texas. We need to do that by understanding the impact of discrimination and racism in our society and our campus, and hopefully a goal today is how we can work together to prevent yet another horrible incident like this from occurring and to make our campus of better and safer place.

I want you all to know that I haven't done enough — that we collectively haven't done enough — to change our campus, and our community needs to work to overcome institutional racism and to create an equitable experience for our students. I don't often get to hear the stories of our black students firsthand, but what I've read at #BlackatUNT and what I've heard at two recent meetings, one I had just today, really moves me deeply. And it's those personal connections, the stories that I'm hearing, the experiences of our students, that move me to try harder for myself. And I hope that as everyone in this room and everyone in this meeting hears these events that it will move them and help us change our culture.

So, today, I'm here to listen to your testimony, your thoughts and your feelings about your experiences at UNT. I don't have the answers right now, but this is a start. I know I haven't done enough, but this is a start. I know we have to find a better way to be together, and this is our chance to build that culture. Now today, I'm here with Jennifer Cowley, our provost, Elizabeth With, our VP for Student Affairs, Joanne Woodard, our VP for Institutional Equity and Diversity, and Shani Moore, director of our Office of Diversity and Inclusion. I also know our chancellor who is very engaged with these issues is here with us today, and I thank her for coming in and listening to Black Lives Matter at UNT.

Now since this is a webinar, it's a little bit hard to literally listen. So, we have a team from UBSC, and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion is going to be taking your comments and helping to bring our panelists up to speed on what you're saying to bring up the major themes that we're going to hear. I know the format's a little awkward. I wish it was better. I hope that we'll be able to do a live event sometime in August. Each panelist will be scanning the incoming comments and acknowledging them in some way by sharing them back with you, the participants. We're going to try to make sure that all the comments are represented — at least an overview. We're not here to edit or sanitize, other than to make sure comments are publicly acceptable, and we have three topics to go over today. In the next slide, you'll see those topics. They are “How are you feeling?”, “How does this relate to your experience at the University of North Texas?” and “How can we move forward and do better?”

Given how emotionally charged this incident is, I would first like to introduce Shani Moore to discuss how we're going to engage most productively today in this listening session, so that we

can have the best outcomes possible. And for any of you who think we're just listening or we're just talking, the purpose of this is to change a culture. It's not easy. This is going to be a challenge for all of us, but what I'm asking is that we embrace what we hear today with an open heart, and that we move forward together to understand how to mitigate some of the bad experiences our students have had and some of these horrific events that have occurred over the last few weeks. Thank you all very much, and Shani take it away.

Shani Barrax Moore, Director of Diversity and Inclusion: Thank you President Smatresk. So, I'm happy to be your moderator for today's discussion, and before we get started, I just want to level set it by sharing with the community our principles of engagement for this discussion. If we could move to the next slide. So, these conversations are never easy to have, but this is, these are several principles that we use in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to make sure that these conversations are productive. And so you'll notice that there are some things that we want you to suspend, and there are things that we want you to embrace. And this is for yourself and for others. We want you to suspend judgment, denial, guilt, assumptions, distractions — we'd really like you to stay in the moment, side conversations, interruptions and titles. We are all on a level playing field here, and everyone's perspectives are equally credible and valued. And so for the things that we want you to embrace: awareness toward understanding.

You're going to hear some things today and some perspectives that we're going to share with you that may be troubling. Leaning into the discomfort of hearing what you will hear and how it may affect all of us. That critical self-reflection as we think about what roles may we play in creating this environment at UNT. Cognitive dissonance is something that you will often experience as you hear some of these perspectives, and that's really when new perspectives bump up against those perspectives that you've known to be true. So, you'll likely feel some of that today, and that's natural. We want to help to create a safe and brave space and learn about identities and biases.

That's really what this is about today, learning about the identity-based experiences of our students. Vulnerability, willingness to “catch” each other, and that doesn't mean “Aha, I knew you were bad.” It's more, we're all trying on this language for the first time. And so we want to allow people that safe space to try out some of these perspectives. Speaking from the “I” perspective is very important (not for an entire group). And sharing airtime won't be very hard because we have a program for you that allows everybody to speak.

So, without further ado, we would like now to turn this over to our students, our student leaders, because this is really about them. And we really want to hear from them. So, we'd like to introduce to you our student leadership team. We've got a Cameron Combs and Michael Luecke from the Student Government Association and Andrea Ortiz from the Graduate Student Association. So, all of you, please, we welcome your perspectives.

Cameron Combs, Student Government Association Vice President: Hello, my name is Cameron Combs. I am currently serving as Student Government Association vice president, and actually,

last year I started as the President-Elect Student Union. And so, I'm speaking on behalf, as far as being involved in both organizations — and just my experience as a black student on campus.

So, one thing that I will say is that over the past three years of being at UNT (so I'm going into my senior year), I've definitely have been in some sort of, I've seen some sort of racial situation happen every single year. And that's been very disheartening being at this university that something has happened and that it is actually being targeted towards the black community. And so, as my first year being a freshman coming to this this campus and speaking about how we need to be more inclusive and diverse on this campus and how there was a big deal about us asking for a rename of dorm hall or changing, or even adding a new dorm hall or a resident hall or just the actual building on campus to be named after person of color or a woman and how there was the reaction from other staff members, other faculty members, that kind of seemed like “Oh, it wasn't that big of a deal.”

Being at UNT, I definitely have been very blessed, and I haven't had really many situations where it's faced me, but I have had situations where I've heard it from my peers, from my members of my organization. And it's very disheartening just to hear that these things are happening to these students and that nothing is being done. Those students are just being pushed away or that it's being pushed under the rug. Both of those situations — so that situation that happened my freshman year and the situation that happened my sophomore year — so with those situations, both seem to be pushed under the rug, and there was no action behind that. Okay, so how do we, how do we make sure that these students — not even these students — these black students are actually being supported in that, in that they aren't being pushed away. They aren't you know, being just recognized on our campus. Because if we look at it our students, this campus is already diverse.

We always talk about diversity inclusion. You know we're very diverse. We're a very diverse campus, and we did just become an HSI. And so we've been, so we just made that milestone. But as far as the inclusivity, we have not been inclusive of all our students on campus. And since we are here talking about our black students and just speaking on those, they're not being supported in the classroom. Like I said, I have never had, I really have not had that many situations that happened to me, but I've heard of plenty things that happen to other students within their colleges, within just their classroom, within just an organization. You know I think there should be some sort of system where we are able to hold our staff members and our faculty members accountable and that we aren't continuing honestly doing things.

I feel like we're always having discussions, but there's no action that's really happening behind exactly, okay what do we do. Like, how do we actually do something? It's always, “Okay, we need to figure out okay what to do.” We have been doing bad, but it's like okay there's nothing happening, so... And I feel like it shouldn't be the students to figure out every single thing. You know it should be a joint effort of, okay, administration, SGA, BSU, all, you know, your larger organizations, GSC coming together and speaking on “Okay, how do we support all of our students, regardless of what they look like, regardless of what they represent, regardless of

their sexuality?" Whatever It is, how do we represent all of those students? And how do we make sure that they are being comforted on campus? And that's just is a little bit of mine.

Michael Luecke, Student Government Association President: Well, hello everyone. My name is Michael Luecke, and I'm currently serving as the SGA president for this upcoming year. So, a little bit about this. This social issue is one that's very important to me. I'm just saying that a lot of the people that I love, a lot of people on this campus that I know are black, and just seeing and kind of hearing what they go through on a daily basis on this campus is very disheartening. And it's kind of disturbing to say the least. I'm pretty sure by now that all of you have seen the Twitter #BlackatUNT by now. And many students have faced similar issues, issues that are occurring way too frequently on our campus.

But that shouldn't even be happening at all. Whether these issues are be being called the "N word" by a peer to being micro-aggressed by a professor or supervisor or frankly just any racist act toward students of color, specifically, black students on this campus. Our students are just tired, and they're fed up of this demeaning and unprofessional behavior on our campus. I've seen and overheard plenty of conversations, and then I've been a part of many conversations with black students on our campus. And time and time again, they said that they just don't feel safe on our campus and that they are even scared to come back in the fall due to this current climate, in our day and age. Black students are just tired of this university using them as a statistic just to fit their brand of "diversity and inclusion."

I feel like this university needs to do everything in their power to make black students on our campus feel safe and make them feel welcome. For me personally, allyship is free. It doesn't cost money. There is no excuse for me, for anyone, whether that be staff or students, to treat others around them like they're less just due to the color of their skin. While posting a black screen on UNT social media accounts may be fine for you all, I'm tired of seeing UNT take no substantive action to help our black students on this campus. Many students have been reaching out to me over the past few days and have been asking me the university's stance on this matter and what they're planning to do to approach this issue. And honestly, I can't answer them. I don't have a very good and definitive answer to give them. And when black students come to me on this campus and ask what the university is doing to protect them and keep them safe, I once again do not have a good clear, definitive answer that I can get to them. And honestly, it's troubling for a school that serves a majority of minority students that we have not had plans in place in order to make our students of color — specifically our black students — feel safe and secure on this campus.

So, one question that I just want to leave you all with, other than the required diversity and inclusion training, which we all know is not up to par. Just being that you can let the videos play, and you can kind of guess on the question. Who's to say if these people are retaining this information? What are some specific and concrete plans that you as the UNT administration are going to implement in the fall that will make our black students feel safe and welcome on this campus? So, that was just something that I wanted to leave you all with. So, thank you for your time.

Andrea Ortiz, Graduate Student Council Vice President of Marketing and Communications: Hi. My name is Andrea Ortiz. I am currently the Graduate Student Council vice president of marketing and communication. I'm going to mostly read something that I have prepared today because of the nature of what I'm going to share. I'd like to first of all begin by thanking President Smatresk's office for the opportunity to come before you all today, as well as the GSC president Tiffany Miller, who I believe will be joining us shortly, and for her encouragement and support with speaking out today.

First, I'd like to begin with some positives. I want my, I want to underscore that I've been welcomed, encouraged and championed to grow beyond my comfort zone by my advisor, my peers, my faculty, many advisors, peers, faculty and staff here at UNT. I've been given opportunities to develop as a leader, as an advocate and a social change maker in conjunction with receiving training to become a scholar-practitioner. And I've also had the privilege of learning alongside a group of very dynamic, inquisitive and dedicated clinicians in the making. In short, I want to admit that I'm biased. I love UNT. With that, I would be remiss if I didn't share my experience here with you as a Jewish student of color. I have also experienced the following things in my department.

In August, a staff member publicly verbally abused me for asking for clarifications about clinic procedures. Being humiliated in this way with extremely hurtful and terrifying, and considering this is a training clinic, it didn't make a lot of sense to me. When I reported this incident, I was brushed off and dismissed, being told that no one has ever had this problem with her. Ironically, a graduate assistant had publicly informed us during new student orientation that this staff member was known for making students' lives hell if you get on her bad side. Throughout the semester, the same staff member went out of her way to make my life hell. In retrospect, I realize that it was a covert allusion to what became a year filled with retaliation, during which faculty called me a triple cripple, told me that I was unable to learn, discussed my health status publicly with my professors and my clients, and ultimately encouraged me to consider leaving the program to pursue my career goals elsewhere. This felt abusive and wrong coming from the same educators who I trusted and invested my financial time, energy and money into evaluating me in a fair, unbiased and non-retaliatory manner. This feeling became a fact when the same professor, who encouraged me to leave the program, announced that our class would play a game called Secret Hitler at a class winter holiday party because it was a really fun game that everyone loved to play in past classes. As a Jewish student of color, I declined and asked to skip that class so that others could play it if they so wished. The professor demanded on knowing why, so I reluctantly and fearfully informed her of my Jewish heritage and my refusal to acknowledge a person who had committed such a gross atrocity against my ancestors. Things in the work environment in the clinic and classroom quickly became hostile thereafter. I realized this when I began having panic attacks every time I had to receive emails or had to interact with this professor, the abusive staff member and the director who defended them.

In short, it felt like punishment for speaking up. It has been horrendous because there are, these are the same people who will evaluate me and have the power to impact my Ph.D. completion as well as my dream to become a clinical psychologist. In a field where there are extreme noted disparities for people that look like me to receive services, this is an atrocity. When I explicitly asked the director if my position in my program was in jeopardy because of my reports of the abuse, he stared at me blankly and refused to answer my question on two separate occasions. When I took this to the department chair, I got the same response from her — silence.

As your GSC VP of marketing and communications, I wish to communicate the following on behalf of black, international and intersectional students who belong to the graduate student body at UNT. We demand to be included, encouraged and enriched — not tolerated. Diversity and multiculturalism are acts and ideas. Excuse me, they're acts, not ideas. We demand these professors, staff and faculty be publicly held accountable and removed or replaced — or removed and placed on administrative leave until they have completed a verifiable training relating to anti-racism, anti-Semitism and anti-violence. We demand that these professors, staff and faculty be required to complete no less than 10 counseling sessions to help them process their issues with anger and hatred toward blacks, Jews, international students, and/or intersectional students of color or students who belong to other religions or ethnic minority groups. The majority of graduate students at UNT is comprised of international students, many of whom are black or of African descent. We demand that UNT become a standard-bearing institution which blazes a trail toward observable, replicable actions that support black, international and intersectional students, and all students at UNT. We demand that UNT collaborate with organizations that provide on-campus talks, trainings and workshops to help co-facilitate the observable changes.

In conclusion, I would like to say that being intimidated and verbally abused by professors, staff and faculty is unacceptable. And that until UNT is safe and welcoming for all students of all backgrounds, of all colors, of all ethnic and religious groups, it is unsafe for any student. And in conclusion to the perpetrators of the status quo I say this. I want to share a paraphrase of a quote that resonated with me from a film that I watched recently, and it so resonates with the theme of the day. The vulnerable and marginalized remember our indifference and our silence. It is time to speak the truth. We acted too late, and only when our security was threatened did we react. Haters and bigots abuse and threaten with hatred and disdain, and we stand by silently watching it on TV or hearing it in these hallowed halls in passing. We let it happen. People have been unsafe for years, and we have hid behind rhetoric and diplomacy. How dare we. The victims of hate remember. Real peace is not the absence of conflict. It is the presence of justice.

Today, I come to you with the demand to change this university's policy. Never again will I allow anyone — anyone else's political interests or opinions to deter me from doing what I know is morally right. Racism and hate are not political weapons and for those who would use them, their day is over. We will no longer negotiate. We will no longer tolerate it and we will no

longer be afraid. To the haters and the bigots on this campus and around this nation and whoever is watching — it's your turn to be afraid. Thank you.

Shani Barrax Moore: Thank you so much to the students for sharing your perspectives. I think this is a very good way for us to begin this conversation. And let me be the first to say that we hear you. We see you. We acknowledge your perspectives and your lived experiences. And we want to see if there are any other comments in the chat. We have someone say that that's despicable. We have someone saying thank you for sharing your story. And we do thank you all for sharing your story because we know how vulnerable, how much vulnerability that takes for you to share the painful experiences that you have had.

So is there anything else, students, that you would like to add? So if there's nothing students would like to add, there's another comment in the chat:

“In May 2020 I graduated with an M.A. from a different university. I was very skeptical of beginning at UNT due to COVID--19 and racial violence in the U.S. As a Latina, this Town Hall alone gives me confidence in my decision to begin this summer at UNT.”

So the fact that we are having conversations and that we are validating — and I think that's really important, validating — the cumulative experiences of students, I think that is obviously something that many of our prospective students and, we hope, our current students, can appreciate. So at this time, if we don't have anything else in the chat what I'd like to do is begin to read some of the comments that were submitted from our student community. And if we could just go to the next slide please. The comments are around a number of different key areas, so this will provide some guidance for us in terms of what you're about to hear. We have a lot of comments that were submitted from students, much like what was just shared by Andrea. Microaggressions from faculty, staff and administrators. There are students who have shared feeling unsafe on campus, feeling that though the campus is diverse, that it's not inclusive. And so therefore it affects their ability to feel like they really belong fully at this university.

There are some questions that we will pose to leadership where students are interested in knowing what the commitment is from UNT's leadership around these areas, these issues. And then finally we're going to end with some police related inquiries. There were a number of different questions and comments that came through about the incident that occurred on May 29, and we want to make sure that there is an opportunity to hear from our student perspectives on that. While we are doing this we encourage our students to submit your comments in the chat, and we will as we go make sure that those of you that are on the live town hall will also be able to have your perspectives heard. So please continue with the chat as we go through these experiences. And I would just like to say, to the students who just shared, one of the comments that have come through is: “That is the most brave thing I've seen on campus.” So thank you again for sharing your perspectives, and we hear you and we see you. So now I'm going to start with the question theme.

One of the first questions that we ask folks is how are we feeling? And we, again, we encourage our students to continue to share how they're feeling in the chat. So first I want to — and I want to also say that because this is the student Town Hall, we are prioritizing the experiences and perspectives of students. So we will have a Town Hall for employees on Monday, but we want to make sure that student voice is really focused upon here, and all of these are comments from students.

So the first is a positive comment directed toward President Smatresk: “Your email on June first made me feel that my university genuinely cares about everyone equally despite their racial differences. Mentioning what happened to the former black student and expressing your empathy regarding the incident shows how caring you are about every UNT student from all over the world. We all saw how reasonably UNT reacted to some past incidents that led to diminishing the racial equality among the UNT community. I truly appreciate your words and actions to making UNT a safe place for all the students from many different ethnic groups.”

And so here's another comment from one of our UNT students — and these are primarily from our black/African American students. The first comment is: “I feel unheard, angry and mistreated.”

Another comment: “I feel frustrated. I feel angry. I feel despondent. It seems like we keep ending up in the same place as before and not making any significant strides forward. We engage the theory but we aren't doing the practice.”

And finally: “As our president, it's not fair that you amplify the school's diversity and don't speak on the issues that have impact to black students. I am not the only student who has noticed this, and I would like to speak to you about how we can better the situation. If you are supportive of your black and people of color students I would appreciate hearing from you. It has been an extremely rough time for me, and I'd like to feel some sort of relief.” So, President Smatresk, would you like to respond to that?

President Smatresk: Yes, I had to figure out how to unmute myself here. I think if I — I think it just flipped over, so, yes, I'd love to respond to all of those. First of all, I'm a little sad about the format today because it just handles a handful of the questions that I know people have, and we want to make sure that we capture these and we capture all of what you're feeling right now so that we can reflect on it. I think one of the biggest concerns that people have is that a Town Hall isn't action. But what I've got to tell you all is I've been really pondering what it means to have action steps, and what it means to implement plans and what it means to change our culture, and I think they're different.

So the first thing I need to tell you is from my personal experience, I'm deeply concerned that some of the actions we've taken — and there have been a lot since November — don't actually create systemic change, and don't combat institutional racism. And I've been trying to figure out what it is we have to do to get people to genuinely change in their hearts. I spent the last couple days listening to different black student groups and black students. It's harder now

because you have to do it through a Zoom or a phone call. I have actually had a great phone conversation with Jekhari Williams, who as you all know had a run-in with our campus police. In listening to the different stories that I've heard, I understand much better on a personal level how students have felt fear and anger and disrespected, and often, how our students of color have felt marginalized. It hurts to hear it. It's painful. As the leader of this institution, it makes me genuinely sad. I've had some really positive conversations about things we can do to change, but I know the listening exercise that we're doing now does more for me and more for our faculty and staff members, and our administrators, than any training could ever do or any other implementation of an activity.

Joanne will, later — and Elizabeth and Jennifer — will all be able to talk a little bit more about concrete things we've done and are continuing to do to try to create better culture on our campus, and better inclusion. But what I think we have to do is say, you are all influencers. And you're influencing me, and you're influencing other people so that we can begin to understand what the next steps are. And until we can hear what you have to say, I'm worried the next steps won't make the kinds of changes you all need. So again, while I've just talked a lot, I would prefer not to talk. I am really reading your comments and I'm going to absorb them and then we're going to, in August, develop an action plan for how we can move forward and how your voices can help to change our community and change our culture. Thank you.

Shani Barrax Moore: There's another comment that has come in through the chat:

“Considering the horrifying stories at #BlackatUNT, will the university commit to properly funding student support services such as the Division of Equity and Diversity, who literally have only two trainers” — I’m one of them — “instead of UNTPD who brutalizes and harasses black students?”

Another one is: “Hate” — Did you want to respond to that, or? Another one is: “Hate, animosity, disrespect and demoralization should never be a normalcy in life, nor in a university, period.” So those are some of the comments that have come through the chat so far. Would you like to continue with some more, President Smatresk? Would you like to address that one or do you want to continue with some of the comments from about how this affects us at UNT?

President Smatresk: Let me wait until it's flipped over to live. I said it was here to listen. I find your voice is more powerful than any solution. I can come up with on the fly. I want to address every comment that's been made and I want to try to understand them, but right now, it's better if I listen. So keep giving us remarks. Maybe some of the other people in the panel could address them and maybe even some of our students who are here with us could add their voices to reinforce or embellish some of the remarks that have been made.

Shani Barrax Moore: Students, do you have any thoughts on any of those two comments?

Andrea Ortiz: One thing that the Graduate Student Council has discussed is that there are community organizations that were free of charge or for little to no charge will come to campus is up to the Anti-Defamation League, one that is a national and international organization that

specializes in addressing hate and bigotry within organizations and institutions of higher learning. As a lifelong member of the ADL, I'd like to say that's one thing that sticks out for me that they provide training that you where you can have people sort of with a checklist. Like, I went to this training I demonstrated my competency I have a certificate and that's something that could even be implemented as an annual requirement on top of just clicking through a slideshow because I hearing the same people who teach us in my department about multiculturalism and non-bias in the therapy room or some of the same people who are perpetuating it. So we don't know how to practice what we preach. So perhaps in my field as a clinical psychologist I can, I can't just say I'm confident, I have to prove it over time. So we have to have a way to set up with faculty and staff to improve their competency and their commitment to cope multiculturalism or diversity over time otherwise they are undermining the lifeblood and the brand if you will of UNT.

Shani Barrax Moore: Thank you and I just want to make an important distinction that the training that you are referring to that is not diversity and inclusion training. It's our annual compliance training that our Office of Equal Opportunity does and I know a lot of people maybe unclear about the difference between diversity and inclusion and compliance, but what is required for all employees right now is Annual Compliance Training that our Office of Equal Opportunity does. So just wanted to make that clear. OK.

So I'm going to go back to some of the comments that were submitted in advance. And this is about experiences at UNT. So I'll read the comments first and then there's some questions:

"I am a black student at UNT. I feel like UNT uses Black Lives Matter and really all of so called Black Advocacy as a PR stunt. You post little blurbs on social media, then do nothing but stay silent. Only speak out when prompted to by the students."

The next comment: "This relates to my experience at UNT because our president is representing the school and these are not the values, I would like to represent. I'm ashamed to even go to UNT."

Now, there are a lot of comments about microaggressions many comments about microaggressions. So I am going to read through some of these and I want to alert you before I even get into them that the "N word" is used in some of these as it relates to comments that students have heard faculty say. So but so just, it's just a trigger warning.

So the first thing is: "One of the things I've noticed. Is that on one hand the school is absolutely sending the right messages such as teaching about microaggressions, systemic racism in current events. On the other hand, I've seen professors that act out microaggressions on students that are blatantly blind to the racism students were throwing at each other in discussions and not giving enough opportunities to discuss current events. For example, I watched a professor giving African American student grief over her name, which was clearly a native traditional name. The professor told her she had to change her name on Zoom to be accurate or be booted off the call. The student replied how my supposed to change my name? When the other

students asked what the issue is to help the clearly hurt student, the professor basically states never mind and allows the student to remain on the call.”

So these are more microaggressions uh there are a lot of these here. So I'm going to go through these just to level set the conversation so that we understand the frequency with which this is happening across campus:

“Listening to a white female administrator explain how she's passionate about “men of color” and white female staff members talk about how their butts seem bigger cause they found out their 2% African from a DNA test. An English professor shared videos aimed towards black people all semester long and handed us journals to reflect on the videos without any context or discussion. When asked, she said the videos were intended to provoke us. I didn't feel safe in class. I always arrived tense and always left charged. So I stopped showing up. In one video they list the top five issues facing black people which were victim mentality, lack of diversity within our communities, urban terrorism, proliferation of “Baby Mamas” and our support of progressive policies.”

Next example: “Having a professor tell you there is no war on black men, but instead the war is really against straight white males. Having a professor tell me my braids were unprofessional and took points off every project I did because she didn't like my hair, then gave me a C in the class even though my classmates agreed I worked my butt off and deserved an A.”

Next one: “My professor refused to pronounce my name correctly all semester even after I told him multiple times how to pronounce it. He then told me what he would call me by then called me by and did this to other black girls in my class.”

Next comment: “I had a theater professor who would make subtle racist remarks once when we were performing are monologues she said, I was being too nonchalant and suggested I should try being more like Madea.”

“We had Pandora playing during my class. Drake started playing and my Asian professor looked at me and said, I bet “person’s name” can rap.”

“A UNT advisor told me during our first time ever meeting and without any information of my experience or background telling me straight up I was not going to get into nursing school.”

And the last two: “Hearing my white professor use the “N word” freshman year and tried to defend it after I called him out. He said, he didn't want to censor history.”

And then finally: “I remember during my time as BSU president. When I had multiple students tell me their history professor repeatedly said the “N word.” When I reported it nothing changed.” So I want to pause here because these are all these are at are occurring within classrooms and see if Dr. Cowley would like to respond.

Jennifer Cowley, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs: Yes, thank you. I appreciate that. So our students certainly deserve a learning environment that creates the opportunity for every student to feel valued and that hasn't always happened. We talked about earlier some of the incidents related to microaggressions is one example. We know that there are instances where our faculty have engaged in a microaggression. We also know that there are examples of where our students have been in class and engaged in microaggressions against other students. And the faculty members haven't always felt that they knew exactly, how to manage that situation. We know that's not the way it should be but I acknowledge that's the reality for some of our students in some of our classrooms.

Another area that I think we need to do better in is around the selection and content and framing of class materials that center around racial topics and you shared some examples. For example, in a theatre class or I have an ample here of in a history class where inappropriate words were used and a faculty member responded with not wanting to censor history. There are very important topics that we need to cover in our classrooms that we must be able to confront issues of. Our historical roots and the contemporary manifestations of social inequity and discrimination in the country. Yet we know that not everyone is able to communicate effectively about the topics of privilege, racism, economic inequality and police violence. Facilitating these conversations in the classroom requires skill, and I need to be doing more to help our faculty to be more effective in the classroom. In response to our undergraduate student government in the last year asked us to do more in the professional development of our faculty.

Faculty Senate took that up this year and voted in favor of a mandatory requirement around diversity and inclusion. Our faculty set it and our Office of Diversity and Inclusion and our Office of Faculty Success are all partnering to put together a more robust professional development program for our faculty that they can participate in coming this fall. My hope is that by engaging in deeper conversations around these topics that we will prevent our students from having these experiences in the future.

Shani Barrax Moore: Great, thank you. Dr. Cowley, so there were also a number of comments that I'll share a couple more comments and then I will go to Dr. With to talk about some of the comments related to Student Affairs, but this is an additional comment that seems to be related to Athletics that got sent in:

"In the Green Brigade, we were taking a group picture before halftime. It was dark outside and our tech was taking pictures without flash. On my third time I said can you turn it on for people with melanin and he said, there's only four of you. So it doesn't matter."

And these two comments are related to student workers: "My boss called me and my black coworker each other's names for the entire summer and when reported still did it every single time."

And then the next comment: “Having to sit there as I heard microaggressions by white bosses against international students many of whom were African and one boss calling anything that inconvenienced her ghetto. I could not voice that I was wrong because they would call me sensitive and I was afraid that they would fire me.” So Dr. With, would you like to address any of those comments or any of the other comments that are coming through in the chat about student experiences?

Vice President of Student Affairs Elizabeth With: First I want to say thank you for the opportunity to be here. I too am ready to hear and want to hear all the comments from the students. I agree that we have very brave students that are willing to talk about their experiences online today and I appreciate them coming forward and I think we need to hear more of them. I echoed the comments of the president in that regard. We need to hear more of these situations from our students.

In some of the information that was submitted before some their scenarios that are from the Division of Student Affairs and I will admit we can do better. We must do better. We have to do better to address racism to ensure that our staff are representative of our student population. Dr. Cowley mentioned that when SGA came forward in November one of the requests was that we train our staff. And I think that while we are not where we need to be we've taken some incremental steps.

Our diversity council through the Division of Student Affairs has required all of our staff in addition to the course that the university required all of the members of the Division Student Affairs to take three additional online trainings and they had about five months to do so. But I will say that almost 600 members of our staff, 96% of them, took all three of those courses by the deadline we'd all that 25 that did. That does not in itself solve the problem but it helps us moving along in helping our staff to understand and to know that we must focus on changing the climate. We must focus on improving our ability to hear our students to see our students of all colors, black, Latin X. All of our students.

It's important and so the commitment for me is that we're going to continue to listen that we're going to continue to do all that we can to support. One of the comments that's come, one of the students asked: “Where do you direct your concerns if you have a problem with the faculty member or staff member?” You can always go to Equity and Diversity to listen to file a complaint or larger concern. You can do so with your department chair if it's a faculty member and you certainly can go to the Dean of Students Office or to my office, the Vice President for Student Affairs office. I'm in Hurley Hall. We want to listen, we want to hear, we want to respond we want to do better. Shani, I'll turn it back to you.

President Smatresk: Shani, I think you're muted.

Shani Barrax Moore: I am so sorry, here we go again.

“I feel as though during these Town Halls the administration becomes defensive with their responses, and it seems like a continuous loop of no action. I would like to know what concrete things have happened since these conversations started. Could we have an elaboration on what concrete things have happened to support our black and indigenous people of color? Or BIPOC, people of color on campus.”

So there are a couple of these questions that are asking for specific answers. There's another Tweet wanting to know the answer to the question about will the university commit to defunding UNTPD and instead reallocate these funds to the Division of Diversity and Inclusion who literally only have two trainers and commit to actual antiracism work. So I'm just being asked because it's being flashed it they would like an answer to some of these questions.

President Smatresk: I think Joanne is interested in fielding this question.

Shani Barrax Moore: OK great.

Vice President for Institutional Equity and Diversity Joanne Woodard: Hopefully you can hear me, Joanne Woodard, here. I can only speak to what has been going on at the University of North Texas over the past five years and yes, some of these seem to be perennial kind of concerns. And problems to which we have not been able to provide appropriate answers to truly address them and as the president mentioned earlier create their systemic change that would more than likely help to eliminate some of what's going on.

There have been efforts made to provide additional resources. For example, to the Multicultural Center and to try to support students who frequent the center as well as providing additional support to our office the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity. Since I've been there we have increased the number of staff before I got there we did not have an Office of Diversity and Inclusion that's now headed by Shani Barrax Moore. And so the two trainers that are there are two trainers that have happened or have been hired in the past five years. We are working very closely with the Office of Faculty Success and with the Faculty Senate who did pass the resolution urging diversity training for faculty. So we have been working hard to identify appropriate training activities that would meet faculty where they are on that continuum of understanding valuing appreciating diversity. It's not going to be a one size fits all because people are at different levels. So we hope that we at the end of this will have an array of training opportunities, workshops that people can plug into and people are always welcome to identify workshops and activities that are not offered by the university as well.

But we do have a complement of workshops that we offer and then we've tried to be very intentional about making sure that people know where to come. And so I'm a little distressed that I'm hearing still people not knowing where to come. You can always start with our office but it's not something that's appropriately within the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, we will make sure that it gets to the appropriate place. And I think I speak for all of the administrators that are on the call today. If you were to take it to the Provost Office or to the

vice president of student affairs or even to the president, eventually we're going to make sure it gets farmed out to the appropriate office to handle the concern and make sure that there is an appropriate response to the concern. Sometimes everything that comes to our office does not rise to the level of being a policy violation in terms of the policies that our office is responsible for handling that still doesn't relieve us of the obligation to look at things. Particularly if it is a persistent problem or issue to try to find solutions to that. I'm just trying to think what else.

So the concerns that students raised back in November we have been working diligently on those concerns. I would venture to say we probably haven't done as good a job as we could have publicizing to date what actions have been taken but I do know that as an administration we will be more visible. We will be more intentional and I think one of the things that the events that have happened across the United States and right on our campus over the past few weeks has pointed out that it's not until I think people sometimes it becomes personal to you that you can really understand and you can really begin the work that is going to be necessary to really affect some sustained change.

We don't want to have these Town Halls and then things kind of lapse back to and I don't want it to be business as usual because the business as usual obviously was not good or we would not have all the complaints and concerns that are coming in but really be visible be intentional hopefully you've internalized some of this is very personal for us will be very specific about what we're doing and making sure that we're doing a better job of communicating this to the entire university community and beyond. And yes, some of these concerns have been brought up multiple times and we are working on those concerns.

Shani Barrax Moore: President Smatresk, did you have a comment or Dr. With?

Elizabeth With: Yes. Thank you. I want to follow up to what Joanne was talking about. Some of the things that were asked of the university in November and I just wanted to follow up on some of the progress that we have made. We still have a great deal of progress to make but a couple of things have happened. And so one of them is actually occurring right now. The students asked that we train students that we have a course for students. And so one of the things that we're doing is for all these students coming through orientation, there's a diversity training course that students do online. Students requested that. We had students that actually took a look at what we had to offer and provided input and the course that the new students are taking. And so that's happening now our freshmen students are beginning orientation. It went out in the pre-orientation homework.

In addition there were requests to provide more resources to the Multicultural Center. This year the president actually implemented those fees and are adding a staff member to the Multicultural Center in the fall. They've also augmented some of the funds that will be available for the Black Student Experience as well as creating funding for a Latin X Experience. And so I think those are a couple of things, I think that are really positive that help us moving forward. A couple of other initiatives from the student service fee are focusing on a graduate assistant who

is bilingual so that we can help our Latin X students coming in, helping their families who don't speak English. It'll be great liaison between the campus and those families as well as creating a first generation student center. So those are but few of the things that we've been working on obviously more that needs to be done.

Shani Barrax Moore: OK, thank you, Dr. With. I want to also mention that many of the campus colleges in the divisions are in the process of developing diversity and inclusion council's and those councils will actually be participating in our five module training inclusion, equity and community building that is a comprehensive approach to looking at topics such as bias awareness, identity development, issues of privilege. It spends a lot of time talking about microaggressions and inclusive language and action. How do you move toward action?

So there are a lot of efforts particularly one of the things that we have said as a function of being on the diversity and inclusion council's because these are the councils that are actually going to be addressing the campus inclusion climate survey data for their respective areas, that we want to make sure that they are speaking the language. And that they understand that say, for example, tolerance is not where we want to be that we want to get to acceptance. A number of those different things we're learning about cultural humility versus cultural competence. And we are looking at converting our inclusion equity in community building to a virtual offering in the fall just to make sure that it is available to as many people as possible. So be on the lookout for that. It is extremely comprehensive and it's open to any employees. And we have some standalone trainings as well related to bias awareness and microaggressions. OK.

So now I want to get back to some of the comments about how do we move forward? So there are a lot of comments here about the police that our Vice President Joanne Woodard is going to read. However, I want to start with some of these other comments before we end with the police and I would be I'll just be very just be very honest there a lot of comments in the chat specifically about UNTPD.

So we're going to end with that. So the first one is in terms of how can we move forward? "First we must listen to people of color. We must hear them. Once we're listening we need to believe people of color. When they say that microaggressions are directed toward them we believe them. When they say that they are being profiled we believe them. When they say that UNT is not a good place for them we believe them. When they say they are worried for their lives we must believe them. The next step is to assess what we're doing. How are we complicit in such wrongdoing, well-intentioned as we may be. What are we doing to perpetuate the status quo? What's wrong with the status quo? To move forward, I believe UNT needs a more educated and considerate president. Smatresk was bullied into speaking and he did not do it on his own. I understand racism is controversial. However if he knows what his values are, it should not be an issue to speak out for the diverse students, he prides so much."

So now I'm going to turn it over to Vice President Joanne Woodard to address the plethora of comments that we have about UNTPD.

Joanne Woodard: Thank you, Shani. I will be reading some of the comments that have come in so far regarding our campus police.

First comment: "Denton is a place where your first encounter with police at a red light, the officer gets out and punches your car and yells at you to pull over in an alley for a moving violation."

Another comment: "Having a UNT cop stopped me and search me and my roommate after admitting they were looking for someone else."

Another comment: "Being stopped for lights not being on by UNT police and asked to get out of the car because I didn't "look like someone who could own this type of car.""

Another comment: "Having UNT cops pulled me over because I didn't stop at the stop sign long enough and asked if I was a student, for my citizenship status and where I live while having two other officers try and look through my car and another had a hand on his gun holster the whole time."

Another comment: "Having police pull up and shine their flashlight into your car and question you because you're just sitting in it."

"Being pulled over for not having lights on, forced to get out of my car, being interrogated and then told by an armed officer with his hand on his gun quote "stop talking I'm losing my patience" when I was only answering the questions he was asking me."

The last one I read is: "I had parked my car in the parking lot of my resident hall but I decided to leave my car running because I just needed to use the bathroom really quick and my boyfriend was in the passenger seat. When I got back to my car not even five minutes later I saw police officer interrogating him and flashing a light right into his eyes. When I told the officer that it was my car he then preceded to interrogate me about my whereabouts and then claim that he just did car checks with people to "ensure they aren't passed out.""

And Shani I think there was another a comment on the chat about the police but I can't see.

Shani Barrax Moore: There's a lot going on in the chat about police.

"We need to address how UNTPD brutalizes black students and I think we need to define UNTPD and invest in better services for black students. Can you discuss how this will be addressed?"

"How can you say that you truly support our student body when you will openly and intentionally disassociate with students like Jekhari Williams who you claim was not at all associated with the university when footage was released of him being beaten by four campus

police on campus?" And I think President Smatresk has already addressed that. Do you want to go ahead and address it again?

President Smatresk: OK. Yeah, I've seen a ton of comments about our Police Department and about the Jekhari Williams experience. So let me start off by saying first you know, I learned about it. I didn't know much about what had happened and then I got to view the body cam footage and to be honest, it tells different stories to different people, and that's what bothers me. When I saw it, it made me sad for all kinds of reasons. I think we found a person who was last a student in 2016 just to set the record straight. But who I wish was still a student. Something went off track. Jekhari and I've talked on the phone, and we're going to be meeting and probably will meet with a few of his friends.

And I want our chief of police to hear his story as well, because I think it's important. He feels that he came to UNT and his life was ruined because of his encounters with the police. And he feels that since that time, he's had no opportunity to readdress to reengage and I don't believe that we offered him the services that he needs. I don't believe that we've attended to students who may have at one point or another been in trouble or may have in fact experienced what many of the people on this site have told me which is they feel victimized by our police. They feel that they are just by being here that they are very likely to be stopped to be searched to be questioned. I don't think that's a healthy environment. Add the Chief of Police Chief Reynolds and I are discussing this.

I want to know how we can make this campus a friendlier place. I want to know how the police here can serve to create a safe campus and a secure campus without a campus that makes people of color afraid. There's a ton of training that are police go through and I believe it's very good training. However, they are still police concerned with campus safety. And that leads to some incidents that I think are regrettable. I've taken a lot of heat for saying that by the way from other individuals who defend our police.

Let me try to be balanced. Our force is the best I've ever seen in four institutions that I've been to. That doesn't mean we can't get better. And that doesn't mean that people of color are comfortable with them. We have to solve this, and it's a very, very challenging problem. I want to offer a solution that may sound trivial, but I think would start to lead to the right kind of response. You know we've pulled over a hundred and sixty-seven students for not having lights on their bikes at night in the last two years. I'm not sure why that's real important on a college campus.

However, I understand that there are legitimate safety concerns and no one wants to hit a student on a bike with their car. So maybe instead of giving out warnings to students or potentially bringing out fear in our students, we should hand out a bike light. And perform a service for our students. I'm not trying to trivialize engagements. But I'm trying to suggest that there are better ways to engage that can create trust and confidence rather than fear. I'm going to be again meeting with Jekhari, I want to try to see if we can get him back on track and hopefully even back in school. I know that this is a stretch right now. But at least on a personal

level, I'm very interested in this story because I believe it typifies many other stories about what's happening to our students and I think that our campus force is going to have to change and adapt to try to become not an object of fear but someone who has the perception of support and support to our community. So that's what I have to say on the topic, and I hope I've addressed two topics. We're not, by the way, going to defund our police. We need police to protect us, but we need police protecting us the right way.

Shani Barrax Moore: OK, so Vice President Woodard would you like to follow up with the solutions since we're still on the topic of policing the solutions that have come from some of our students?

Joanne Woodard: Yes, Shani, I'll be happy to read some of those solutions. Some of those that were provided multiple times by different students.

First: "You and your staff can implement a policy that every officer on the UNT campus must have a body camera and it must be on during any interactions with students/civilians. A study with the Las Vegas Police Department found a 37% reduction in use of force incidents with the addition of body cameras and the use of cameras actually ended up saving the police department money."

"You and your staff can increase the amount of training on campus officers receives specifically in the areas of racial bias, mental health, and conflict mediation such as training is produced by the Center for Policing Equity."

"There are answers they're not hard to find and it is up to you to truly make reducing racism and increasing the safety of all UNT students a foremost priority. Immediate actions must be taken."

Shani Barrax Moore: Thank you. We had a couple more comments come in from the chat and some of these are related.

One is: "I've listened to racist comments from peers at UNT, I've heard first hand that it isn't a race problem. I think this is ludicrous. Is there anyway, we can get students like these to understand that racism is still a problem that racism is alive and real? It's not just a little problem. It's a big problem."

And then there's an additional comment: "Black students have had nooses hung on their doors, and it's been covered up. This is more than just a training issue. You're covering up white supremacy and racism on your campus."

And then there's another question and I think this gets to accessibility because we may have some students on this call who maybe visually impaired. "When you do trainings like this, especially about race, it helps blind students to know who is speaking. Are these white people talking? Black? Is there representation? Please make part of your introductions in the future."

So I think that's something those of us with ability privilege that, you know, oftentimes, we have the privilege of oblivion when we do not have those identities that are marginalized. So that is something that we need to keep in mind for future sessions. So President Smatresk, would you like to wrap this up, talk about some of our next steps and how we're going to move forward as university?

President Smatresk: Well first I've read as many of the comments as I could they were coming in fast and furious. I've answered as many as I could and I'm pretty sure that the answers that I've given when I type them up weren't always going to please the individuals who got them. I'm trying to be as transparent and straightforward as I can and I'm not afraid to stand to listen to address things.

I've heard that there will be a protest next Wednesday at Denton City Square. I've been invited to go. I will plan to go. I would appreciate anybody giving me the details of this. Listening is the first part. Everybody wants immediate action and I get it. I don't think that all of the actions that I've heard today are what I would call actions that create sustainable change or really change our culture. I am most interested in how we influence and persuade people to have changes of heart that make them first listen and empathize and then how we can offer and support them with training and advice for how to create a better environment whether it's in the classroom or whether it's in our police force. Wherever it might be, we have to be able to hear.

I'm lucky, I got to hear all these responses today and I got to see the questions. And I got to feel the trepidation, the fear, the victimization of many of our black students. Everybody needs to be able to hear and feel that, so I want some how to create a forum where people can help understand the black experience. For our faculty and staff it's a training, it doesn't change your heart. It's something you have to do and it can be effective and highly effective if you're willing to let training inform you.

Today you've heard a lot about things we are doing that are concrete. Joanne, Elizabeth, Jennifer have all talked about them. Many different things are in the works and many of the pieces of our action plan have actually been put forward and I really appreciate it. But, I will admit failure on my part as COVID hit, it took up all the oxygen in the room. We've been scrambling hard to try to understand how to run our campus, how to manage the financial shortfalls that we've experienced, how we go into next year with an estimated 50 million dollar shortfall and survive as a university.

And because of that we stopped communicating about the black lives matters issues and that's my fault. That's on me. We're going to get better. We're going to continue the dialogue this strange confluence of what's happened this summer and COVID have created an unusual circumstance that's disruptive, but I think can actually be helpful. So I'm looking for an opportunity for us to be able to get together to communicate for faculty and staff members to understand at a much deeper level what it means to be black at UNT and what it means to be black in our society. And with that in August we're going to have a different kind of event.

Hopefully it will be more face to face. Hopefully by then will be able to talk about yet more of concrete changes that we've made.

But between now and then I want to try to create opportunities for our faculty and staff to hear the same kinds of comments that I heard today because it's going to make them better. So thank you all. I really appreciate you and at UNT we will be better. We are working on it. And the plans that are coming forward will be informed by all of the things that you've said. Thank you.

Shani Barrax Moore: Thank you, President Smatresk. I'd like to see if any of the students have any final comments before we turn it over on to any of the administrators. You don't have to, this is about you so we want to make sure that you have the final fight. What is it that you'd like us to be left with as the result of this event today?

Andrea Ortiz: Thank God. I'd like to go on record and say on behalf of the Graduate Student Council the Graduate Student Body that any "ISM" is academic dishonesty. And I hope that moving forward UNT starts to treat racism of all people, specifically black students, specifically students of color, of visible students of color, for those who are impaired and cannot hear I am Africa Latina, but I hope it gets treated like academic dishonesty. You can say a lot of the price and be kicked out of school for that?

Cameron Combs: On behalf of the Student Government Association, I just want to say that we will continue to be planning and organizing and working with GAC to figure out exactly how do we as students support our students that we represent to a greater extent as well as how do well as how do we also continue to make sure that administration is holding up to exactly what the demands that we would like to see on this campus. Yeah, that's just my piece.

Shani Barrax Moore: Michael, did you have anything?

Michael Luecke: No, I'm good. Thank you.

Shani Barrax Moore: OK there was something in the chat about whether any of the comments from #BlackatUNT we're going to be read. I wasn't sure if Cameron or any of the students have those comments and if you wanted to share some of them, but that was a specific request that they wanted some of those comments to be read. Do you have those with you?

Cameron Combs: Yes, we have them. I was just looking at the hashtag, so within this was a hashtag that was essentially some students voices about students black students voices about how they've been microaggressed by professors, faculty, staff members about how they have they been in racist situations with other members of our university. I'm just going to read off some of these?

Shani Barrax Moore: Any of the ones that haven't already been read but I think some of these maybe got incorporated but I think most of them are from the emails.

Michael Luecke: OK. So a few that I wanted just to be heard just 'cause I know Joanne briefly read off some of them, but one that I thought was something that was kind of not surprising but um something that I think that people needed here was one that said:

“I had someone decorate their dorm door with a noose in my hall in the area staff was making us have an open discussion about it with all of the white kids telling us why it really wasn't a problem. When I walked out of the room they forced me to come back. The crazier part is that we were told the student had asked the RA for permission to hang the noose.”

There was also one that said: “My ex-coworker at Honors Hall used to tell me stories about her granddaughters alleged class bullying. She once told me about a time when she told her granddaughter to relay a message to the girl that was bullying her that her uncle works for Border Patrol, and that they would get her parents and family. She claimed that they were children, it didn't know what it meant, but she knew it worked because apparently the girl stopped bullying. I would have reported the incident to HR. But she was HR.”

Shani Barrax Moore: And maybe while you're looking for some of those are there any other of the of the um, 'cause we did we did share some of those and I just I just wanted those were acknowledged because there were a lot of good comments in there. So Dr. Cowley, would you like to speak?

Jennifer Cowley: I was just going to offer that earlier this week I received the comments from the #BlackatUNT and distributed those to all of our academic faculty and staff. I asked them to read those, to reflect on those in advance of today's Town Hall meeting and I know that many of our faculty are here with us today. And I just want to say thank you to those faculty who are participating who are committing to make a better experience for our students and I appreciate all of our students have participated today in joining us and sharing their thoughts and comments. My takeaway is that there's a desire to know more what comes next, what are the actions were taking, how are we going to be better? And I'm committed to reporting more on that after this meeting.

Cameron Combs: I just came across one, I think is really an important.

So this one says: “Having the whole organization of white women screaming the “N word” at me and then being bullied off-campus for an entire year because UNT Dean of Students told me they didn't think the organization was at fault.”

Shani Barrax Moore: Alright thank you. Alright, so going back to any final thoughts from President Smatresk has shared some final thoughts. What about some final thoughts from Dr. With?

Elizabeth With: I appreciate the opportunity to be here today and I welcome the opportunity to hear more from, our black students and their experiences but I want you to know I'm

committed to all that we can do within the Division of Student Affairs to improve that experience. We talk as a team. We're working with as a leadership team. We've had a couple of meetings this week already working and talking about what we can do to make action, positive action to support our students. I commit to you that we will do better. We will do better.

Shani Barrax Moore: Yes, and Joanne Woodard.

Joanne Woodard: I appreciate everyone taking the time this afternoon to participate in the Town Hall. The information that you shared with us is very valuable. And we will be following up within our division and we've already gotten a lot of calls and contacts. I appreciate all the students, faculty and staff who reached out to us this week with thoughts of support and expressions of how difficult we know our job it has become even more, so with all that's going on. So I really appreciate that.

But I really believe out of all of this what someone like Albert Einstein would call clutter. We will find some simplicity and will find some ways to move forward with us since sustained progress to help us make UNT a better place. I think out of the discord that we see at UNT right now and across our country right now that eventually will find some harmony, we'll find ways that we can work together productively. An even in the middle of all of this difficulty I think it does provide us with the opportunity to really to do better we say we can do better. We know we can do better. And we will be better here at UNT. So thank you, Shani.

Shani Barrax Moore: Anyone else? There is a comment in the chat that I think is a good place to end. It's anonymous: "I would like to end by saying that if you're not willing to be radical with your solutions, then nothing will work."

So I think having heard all that we have heard today about the experiences of our black students, and I want to make clear we did get another comment that we keep saying people of color. But this is a Town Hall that was supposed to be about black students and black people. So I'm just honoring that here that while some of the comments in the chat may have referred to people of color. This is Black Lives Matter Town Hall. The Town Hall that we will have on Monday will allow for an opportunity for our employees, our faculty, staff and administrators to share their experiences similarly. And the focus will indeed be on our members of our black community. So I did just want to address that so it's we're clear.

I'm getting another chat OK and maybe we'll end here. "UNT's Black Student Union" and I will say that we wanted a representative from UNT's Black Student Union but they just were unavailable to attend but I will end with this:

"UNT's Black Student Union put extraordinary work into a statement outlining items for immediate and definitive action. Many of the comments and questions here expressed frustration about remaining stalled in the listening stage, exhausting for the folks being asked to do the talking and talking and talking. Perhaps the president could respond directly and specifically to each of the action items proposed by UNT's BSU, outlining and specific terms how

each directive will be implemented. These are clear demands that they were provided with such specificity, indeed at all is generous. It is not the job of black students and students of color more generally to fix institutional racism at UNT that's on UNT as an institution.”

And I think that is I think that's a good reminder for us that we have some solutions that have been submitted. President Smatresk, would you like to respond?

President Smatresk: Yeah. You know, we are responding to the list that was given to us in November. So I'm just going to come out and say for all of you who said, there's no action that simply isn't the case. There has been action. The action doesn't always create the change that you're looking for instantly, and I wish it would but that's generally not how sustainable change occurs. That answer won't make people happy. Radical change rarely is sustainable, however were willing to look at all kinds of solutions. We're implementing those suggestions. I will also say not all suggestions are equally useful. Now, many in the room are going to want to hear that. But we work through these, we talk about them, we are thoughtful, we divert resources to them, and we implement things. That's what we do.

So I think, you can look forward to seeing that all of us here who are panelist today will be assembling a document that will outline the progress that we've made, the real actions that we've taken and some of the forward looking actions that begin to address the concerns that we saw raised today. So this isn't going to be listening with an inaction this will be listening with action and I hope you can understand that we are deeply concerned about this and that this is really important to us. We wouldn't be taking the time to do this if it was for show and tell. It is not and I think the people in the room and the panelists here and our students are all looking for the same thing. For us to improve the community and for us to do better. So with that I look forward to the August meeting and I look forward to helping to celebrate some of the progress that we've made more importantly, I look forward to seeing people changing their hearts. Thank you.

Shani Barrax Moore: Thank you, President Smatresk and we have had some questions about whether this Town Hall will be recorded. It will be on the website of the Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity for those who missed it. Thank you. Thank you all for joining us.