

My Statement

On October 11, 2022 I attended the EODAC meeting with a few of my peers from my class. When we entered the room the atmosphere was tense. Looking at the staff's faces, I felt like we were not welcomed. As we entered the room I along with my peers heard Professor Catherine Jones whisper, "Why the f- are they here?" To say it was a cold feeling would be an understatement. While the meeting progressed, Dr. Parks brought up the racial climate task force.

During the time where questions could be asked there were a couple of professors who stood out to me. First, Professor Ximena Da Silva Tavares; she was the first to raise her hand even before Dr. Parks finished what she had to say. When the results of the surveys came in from the students she questioned them saying things along the lines of, "Are we sure these are the right questions to ask?" "The data could be wrong since this was from covid and now we are on campus again" and "These questions are pushing students to think a certain way." These questions did not make any sense to me," because I know personally that since covid the racism in my peers had grown. So why question the data when it is obvious your students are not happy? I later learned that she is a chemistry professor, this added insult to injury. As a professor of science, do you not rely on the data of your experiments to move forward?

Next, Professor Matt Garrett, the history teacher. During the question portion of the meeting he insisted that the survey was not accurate. Then he went as far to insult Dr. Parks and her way of

teaching. Saying things such as, “Dr.Parks way of teaching is not....” While he was saying this I felt a mixture of confusion and concern. Confusion due to the fact that the results say students are not happy, students of color are not feeling safe. This task force can help them and he is fighting it? I can’t believe it!

The concern is coming from just the meeting as a whole. If there are professors who went to college themselves to get where they are, why are they fighting the opportunity to help their students become just as successful as they are? what is the point of them being on that team?

Is their goal not to help students? More specifically, do they just want to see not only black students, but students of color as a whole to fail? I am saying this because that is what it felt like. Being a black student in that room I did not feel welcomed. I did not feel as if they were going to help me when I needed it, it felt like every move I made was being judged. Now there were staff members who had to step in to remind them that they are there for us, and I commend them for defending us. I am glad that the racial climate task force got the approval, but I still want direct answers from those who said no to the proposal.

In the end, I did not feel safe in that room. Even though nothing was said towards me directly, the feeling I was getting was enough. Something needs to be done. People like that cannot be left to make decisions for students.