

University of Wisconsin-Madison Campus Planning Committee

**From:** NALAH SHEA MCWHORTER <[nmcwhorter@wisc.edu](mailto:nmcwhorter@wisc.edu)>

**Date:** December 16, 2020 at 4:28:26 PM CST

**To:** GARY A BROWN <[gary.brown@wisc.edu](mailto:gary.brown@wisc.edu)>

**Cc:** Lori Reesor <[lreesor@wisc.edu](mailto:lreesor@wisc.edu)>, CHERYL GITTENS <[cheryl.gittens@wisc.edu](mailto:cheryl.gittens@wisc.edu)>, NZINGA MARIAMA ACOSTA <[nmacosta@wisc.edu](mailto:nmacosta@wisc.edu)>, GISELLE R MONETTE <[gmonette@wisc.edu](mailto:gmonette@wisc.edu)>

**Subject:** Please Forward to CPC

Hello Gary,

Nice to hear from you. Our meeting last Sunday went very well and we were able to hear from 20+ students who represented many Black Organizations such: The Black Voice, The Black Cultural Center, Wisconsin Association of Black Men, NSBEE, BIPOC Coalition, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc, and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. After discussing and exploring many options, everyone in this meeting came to a unanimous decision to completely remove, destroy, and discard of the rock. Black students ensured that this would bring true justice. They also suggested making this removal and hopefully, destruction of the rock, a space for healing for black students. The idea was to allow Black students to come and write something or answer a prompt such as, "What are some common misconceptions or stereotypes about your race?" or "How do stereotypes and biases make you feel as a Black person?", on the rock. Then when the rock is removed and destroyed it will symbolize all of those stereotypes and biases and misconceptions being destroyed as well. This offers a space for community, but also Black students to let go of the burdens that this society often puts on Black people to uphold to a certain standard or they will be categorized.

We also understand and acknowledge the Geo-Science's wishes and preference to not destroy the rock and to keep it whole. This topic was also discussed in our meeting. Black students feel that our voices and our wishes should be prioritized, and we should not have to compromise our vision of justice for another departments "convenience". We also believe that there has been ample time to research and study this rock, and keeping it here or anywhere is still just a painful reminder of its past.

These are the final decisions and thoughts that came from this meeting. Excited to hear back and know what the CPC decides.

Thank you so much Gary!

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**Nalah S. McWhorter**

*University of Wisconsin-Madison*

*Marketing & Management and Entrepreneurship*

*Wisconsin Black Student Union | President*

*Business Emerging Leaders Program | BEL Scholar*

**From:** [Aaron Williams](#)  
**To:** "[cpc-members@g-groups.wisc.edu](#)"  
**Cc:** [Karl Scholz](#); [Karl Scholz](#); [Robert G. Cramer](#); [Margaret Tennessen \(margaret.tennessen@wisc.edu\)](#); [KIP MCMAHAN](#); [Gary Brown - FP&M \(Gary.Brown@wisc.edu\)](#); [CHERYL GITTENS](#); [Lori Reesor](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Please forward to the CPC  
**Date:** Thursday, December 17, 2020 8:29:00 AM

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CPC Members,  
An additional memo that just came through. FYI

**Aaron Williams, PLA, ASLA**

Assistant Campus Planner & Zoning Coordinator  
[Campus Planning & Landscape Architecture](#)

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**From:** GARY A BROWN <[gary.brown@wisc.edu](mailto:gary.brown@wisc.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2020 8:29 AM  
**To:** Aaron Williams <[aaron.williams@wisc.edu](mailto:aaron.williams@wisc.edu)>  
**Subject:** FW: Please forward to the CPC

Please forward to CPC members.  
Gary

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**From:** NZINGA MARIAMA ACOSTA <[nmacosta@wisc.edu](mailto:nmacosta@wisc.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 17, 2020 8:12 AM  
**To:** GARY A BROWN <[gary.brown@wisc.edu](mailto:gary.brown@wisc.edu)>  
**Subject:** Please forward to the CPC

Good morning,

We have written a statement that gives more detail into the WBSU stance. Could you please forward the following statement to the CPC board? Thank you!

-Nzinga

**Statement:**

At the last CPC meeting, WBSU stated that we would have follow-up conversations with our executive board, our general body and the larger Black community about the fate of Chamberlin Rock after its removal from campus. As reported in that meeting, the two options that were discussed in prior conversations among our executive board were breaking the rock and preserving pieces for study, and burying the rock.

Since that meeting, we conducted a social media survey as well as an open forum discussion. In the social media survey, 60% of students selected burial, roughly 33% selected breaking the rock, and keeping it for study, and 7% of students selected relocation.

In the open forum meeting, the general consensus was destroying the rock. This option would accompany a ceremony where Black students would gather and share their experiences with racism. It was even suggested that these experiences be painted onto the rock prior to its destruction. Full details on this method of removal was sent out via email prior to this meeting.

While the survey was taken by some of our non-Black followers, participants in the open forum meeting were solely Black students and staff. We sought to gain the insight of what Black students deemed as justice, and thus we submitted the destruction option as WBSU's official stance.

The recommendation discussed today suggests that the rock should be relocated. We would like to remind the board that this is the least favored option of the three among Black students. We would also like to remind the board that this rock is being removed from campus because Black students see it as a symbol of a racist history on this campus. When asked what justice looked like to our community, the ones being harmed by the rock, the answer was clear. Destroying the rock is what our community needs to provide closure. Relocation does not fill this need for Black students.

With that being said, we are requesting for the vote to be postponed so that all options are explored and fully researched to the same degree. This recommendation document does not go into as much detail in addressing what further action for the options of burial or destruction would look like, including maps of potential burial sites or destruction zones. This information is necessary for the board to make a well informed decision.

We ask that the board prioritizes the request of Black students who have brought this matter to the table for discussion. This rock is being removed to address the trauma that it inflicts on the Black community on campus and to detach that racist

history from immediate access on campus. Regardless of where the rock is moved, that history will follow it.

If this is a conversation of compromise, consider the decades of compromising that Black students had to endure while racism persisted on this campus. From minstrel shows in the 20s to Black activist expulsions in the 60s and erasure of diversity as recently as 2019 - Black students have faced discrimination on this campus and still have been forced to consider others. This was an opportunity for Black students to be given agency to decide the fate of a symbol that has hurt us. We took that opportunity, and concluded its destruction being the just option. We would like our agency and our request to be honored by the board.