

Transcriptions of posts selected from bipocatiwu by the Faculty Committee on Diversity, Spring 2021

1. @black@iwu gives BIPOC students/alumni/faculty/staff the opportunity to share stories anonymously from their experiences at IWU. Please click the link in our bio to share your stories.
2. "I just want to share my story as an Asian American without faculty/students needing to tell me about their study abroad trip to an unrelated Asian country. You do not understand me or my struggles because you spent 3 months in Beijing. I'm not even Chinese."
3. "Does anyone else feel like they could count on one hand the faculty or staff that you can go talk to without being judged?"
4. "Well there goes another POC staff member..."
5. "By no means are my experiences as upsetting as other POC, but I just don't believe many people at school understand that even though I was raised by white parents, act "white", and have extreme privilege, I still have experienced racist comments and judgements based on my looks. As a member of Greek life, it is more than apparent that people in all organizations on campus are super unaware and even choose to ignore oppression and microaggressions that are apparent in everyday life and on this campus. It's disheartening and IWU does very little to genuinely help, it's all about appearance to hide the ugliness on our campus."
6. "A family member just passed and I emailed all my professors and some understood by some just sent me to the dean of students. When will they understand that the dean of students does not help in any way. Instead of telling us to "try harder" I just want someone to talk to and the only people I can go to is ODI and it's not even their job to offer counseling service but the school does not offer any useful sort of support for pocs" Class of 2022
7. "I feel so burnt out of trying to educate others and have my voice heard on this campus since my freshman year. As a Latina I am not represented anywhere on this campus other than ODI (Shout out to Veronica). White students will never understand how it feels to not see yourself be represented. I wish I could of been just a regular student."
8. "During the move-in to IWU this year, everyone kept staring at my mom because she wears a hijab. One kid's mom directly looked at me to ask a question assuming my mother doesn't speak English. Even when my mother was answering, she kept looking at me during the whole conversation. The cultural shock hits me every time I come to campus. The lady was acting like my mother was a whole different species, which made me upset. POC deserve more respect than that." Class of 2024
9. "My freshman year I worked as a tour guide on campus. After giving my first tour, my boss reached out to me individually to "give a tour to a couple Hispanic families" with no additional information. I embarrassed myself in front of a perspective family because the tour was supposed to be given all in Spanish. My last name is Villanueva. I am a Filipino American. My first and only language is English."
If I was really cared for as a student worker, I would have received an apology from my boss or anyone from the admissions office that knew about this experience. When I

suggested to add the ODI to the tour, I was rejected in front of all my co-workers, but now that the school is called out for being white progressives, they now have the ODI as a option to show "diversity". IWU admissions tokenizes their students of color just look at the advertisements and observe the actions taken to support us. OUR only purpose there is for the photo op."

10. "It's a shame that POC feel as if they have to represent their entire race whenever they step foot on campus. I feel this burden heavily and always feel as if I have to work 10x harder so I don't give people a reason to think of POC as less. That being said, I personally feel more comfortable here at IWU than I do in most mostly-white spaces. I feel as if the POC here have a unique, unspoken bond (including faculty), and the majority of white students/staff are very inclusive people (for lack of better terms). We need to stop judging people based on predetermined ideas and get to know them for who they really are." Class of 2022
11. "I went into Greek life to try to change the system and make it more inclusive towards BIPOC. As a queer Filipina-American, I was very uncomfortable during the whole process and didn't see myself represented, but I went through with it anyway and did my best. Now I can see that the system and IWU itself is not open to real change, just performance action. My needs and well-being have never been a priority for them. It's time to leave." Class of 2021
12. "As a woman of color (WOC), I always felt like I was unwillingly placed in a competition with the other WOC on campus. I found myself in a toxic mindset that I wasn't good enough because I wasn't the token WOC "woke" professors and administrators called upon when they needed to defend "diversity" on campus. It made it difficult for me to build healthy relationships with my peers so I isolated myself."
Once I graduated, I realized how detrimental that experience was to my mental health and how I wished I was aware of it while I was still at IWU. If any current faculty and staff are reading this, take note: just because she's quiet, doesn't mean she's rude or has nothing to say. Maybe you should re-examine how welcoming you are to people of color in general and not just one or two token students."
13. "People on this campus are too scared to talk about race & politics. I barely hear any conversation or even recognition of anything going on. THE silence is deafening, from both students and faculty."
14. "I am so overwhelmed by every single class I have right now and to be really honest, none of my professors care. No one cares about what has been going on in my home state, or the racial injustice of this entire country, or political unrest because we have an idiot for a president, of, and the fact that during a pandemic, professors are giving no type of leeway or slack for any of the students here. I feel so unheard, So small. I feel as if I do not matter.
I would want pass/fail to be optional for this semester. I simply want a fair system for the circumstances we are in."
15. "As a person of color I go to ODI to talk to Veronica and Hannah about issues I have that affect my academic ability just so someone on this campus knows what's going on. I want to go to counseling services, but what's the point if counseling isn't considered a viable source in case you need proof/documentation if you want to leave housing,

explain to your professors what's going on, or drop a course? Why offer services that will not support you when you need to take action to prioritize your mental health? Why put up marketing posters of percentages of depression on campus? What's the point if you don't do anything?

I want IWU to offer services that will allow students to use it to TAKE ACTION and prioritize their mental health. If we decide to go to counseling, but the school doesn't consider it a verifiable service that will document the need for you to drop a course, leave housing, or receive extensions/understanding from professors, WHAT IS THE POINT OF HAVING IT?" Class of 2022

16. "No matter how many stories we share, nothing will happen. Just like everything on this campus. From sexual assault cases, to financial aid, to mental health, to dietary restrictions in the dining halls, to covid outbreaks. Not even the stories of the POC, who represent the already small percentage of diversity on campus, will matter to them. There will always be some sort of rule, a hidden section on a contract, that will prevent us from getting what we need as students, as human beings. That's the hardest pill I've had to swallow and I choke on it every day.
I just want to be heard. To know that they're listening and doing something about it."
Class of 2022
17. "As an alum of color, I would not advise **perspective** BIPOC students to attend IWU at this time. This university does not care beyond the statistics that you offer.
I was tokenized to the nth degree and told I was "one of the good ones" on more than one occasion. I wish I had the confidence that I have now or someone to advocate for me when I was a student to call out that toxic behavior in the moment."
18. "One of my professors just referenced black people as "blacks". Why couldn't he just say black people? I'm not black but it felt so wrong to hear it out of his mouth."
19. "IWU needs to change the way they are handling this semester. I've seen countless BIPOC students trying to get their school work done while balancing life, a pandemic and even work. There's many lack of resource within our community and teachers continue to pile work on that. I really don't understand how they want us to thrive in an environment we don't feel safe and we have to prove ourselves daily while in a middle of a stressing global situation." Class of 2023
20. "The way the university disrespects and harms BIPOC students intersects with its treatment of faculty and staff as well as curriculum. The cuts they made this year terminated BIPOC faculty and eliminated programs that are sometimes the only exposure students have to different cultures in the classroom."
21. "I am a low-income PoC student with several chronic health conditions. Even though I had proper documentation from my doctor saying I have a severe condition with intermittent exacerbations that hinder my ability to attend class, my professor still failed me because I was unable to go to class-- which was a requirement. I was told it wasn't fair to other students that they had to go to class and I didn't. I was punished for my illness instead of accommodated for. Disability services helped as much as they could, but it was up to the prof, who said my grade "wasn't salvageable." As a result, I had to drop my entire minor (the professor was aware this would be a consequence). Worst part about all this? The professor's curriculum literally says that empathy and cultural

competence are the most important traits to have in her line of work. Don't they get tired of performing? IWU can step up their game and not leave everything to Chandra Shipley. Professors should feel accountable for their students' success-- ESPECIALLY those of color, if they're interested in getting "diverse students" Class of 2021 AND TIRED

22. "If I could go back and NOT hit that "submit" button on my application here, I for sure would. The way that they advertised this school and how it ACTUALLY is such false advertisement and now I'm kind of stuck here because I'm so close to finishing."
23. "My heart goes out to the women of color, ESPECIALLY black women, with this upcoming election and Supreme Court nomination. Women's rights may be taken away and even criminalized. Black women have a higher death rate in hospitals, statistically. And the fact that women may be charged for any reason for miscarriage is frightening. The combination of hospital neglect and police brutality makes me scared to be an American and scared for people that I know.
I just with the students would cancel classes and assignments for Election Day. We should be able to be people of society and follow the election, not to worry about our papers and exams. We are adults who are acting members of society. This affects us more.." Class of 2022
24. "To the anonymous person that keeps wondering what our goals are, this is a list that was compiled through BSU, Hannah, a friend of mine, and myself:
 - accountability and a clear process to stop bias/hate
 - actual, meaningful anti-racism training by professionals
 - actual sace/resources with more BIPOC professionals (this hopes to include queer reserouces as well)
 - increase BIPOC faculty and staff
 - increase in staff at ODI
 - increase in BIPOC student enrollment and retentionThe lack of all this right now is harming students personally and academically which you can clearly see from this page. We're hoping to present this list to Nugent once we have everything organized. Hopefully this helps people understand what we're working towards." Jasmyn Taylor, Class of 2022
25. "I really wonder if this university enjoys going through the hiring process over and over again. Because it doesn't seem like they want to keep anyone." Class of 2022
26. "In my IWU years it's been Kwame then Brandon and now Hannah? The institution really do not care how this affects POC students. Do you understand that we have made deep connections with them and having them leave is hurting us? I love Veronica but it is too much work for one person up there at ODI. I'm sure they had good reason to leave but I feel abandoned. I should have transferred when I had the chance." Class of 2022
27. "Not just Hannah, but we're losing Rosetta as well. I'm done asking for better from my university. Illinois Wesleyan is an embarrassment, and at this point harming their students/faculty of color has become the norm. I've heard "what did you expect" or "what can you do" countless times, but why is it so unreasonable to expect the people I pay 70k a year to treat people of color the same way they do whites? This is some pretty

expensive racism, and maybe if you were seriously proactive about BIPOC concerns you'd have more tangible, meaningful, and expensive changes in this coming year!"

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29. "The hatred I hold for certain aspects of IWU is extraordinary. The fact that Caucasians are allowed to be racist without facing proper punishment here is literally just so ridiculous to me. Not to mention all the other ways that IWU staff have become the poster children for hypocrisy and turning a blind eye to all the problems people mention about their "precious university" and the way they handle issues here. Why the hell are white students allowed to skip out on classes for stupid ass reasons while us POC get punished for skipping class or even merely asking for an extension on an assignment because we're SICK?! That kind of logic doesn't make any sense to me at all. It is so flawed and so unfair for the university to continue letting these things happen. I have spent so many days on campus feeling depressed as all hell because I know I don't fit in, and the fact that POC are so discriminated against by others at my own school just makes that depression even worse. IF IWU doesn't step up and do anything about these issues soon, our school's reputation (which has already been soiled) is going to crash and burn." Rachel Kim, Class of 2023
30. "President Nugent sent the exact email we were expecting. Ok you're putting yourself in the position to recruit POC faculty. But when they get here what will be done to assure retention? No initiatives on POC student retention either? How about simply admitting there is a problem. You go to great lengths to describe these plans as advancements of an already successful diversity initiative, when really you're trying to manage the racism and inequalities that plague this campus. This has done nothing for us, and it looks like they'll continue to do nothing for us. 103 posts looking for change but at least we know our president knows how to type Black Lives Matter."