



## **Campuses across country demonstrating in support of MU**

By Natalia Alamdari, Brooke Kottmann

Blake Nelson contributed reporting

Columbia Missourian

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COLUMBIA — Students were organizing protests, demonstrations and town hall meetings across the U.S. Thursday in support of MU and Concerned Student 1950.

Ravyn Brooks, a junior at Missouri State University, shared a call to action Tuesday on the website the Black Tribune, an independent website focusing on diverse news, asking students to hold synchronized demonstrations.

Missouri State is one of the 30 colleges and universities that pledged to participate in standing in solidarity with MU, as of 10:30 a.m. Thursday. The Black Tribune said it would continue to update the list on its website.

“Systemic oppression in higher education is a national issue,” Brooks said in an interview. “I really wanted people to admire Mizzou for bringing that to life. You allowed your campus to be a stage, to be the microcosm of America.”

Brooks said she has been “overwhelmed” by the amount of support her idea has received.

Shereen Baig, a representative of the Muslim Students’ Association at the University of Michigan in Flint, said she and fellow students organized a peaceful protest overnight, after seeing Brooks’s call to action.

“We’re all college students and we all expect to go to classes and feel safe,” Shereen said. “The fact that there are students that don’t feel safe because of their color is highly offensive. This is about us trying to let people know that this racism, this hate needs to come to an end.”

About 100 students gathered this morning to link arms at Swarthmore College’s Parrish Hall. Black students wore tape over their mouths to symbolize ways they’ve been silenced.

“This is an inter-collegiate issue,” said Louis Lainé, a senior at Swarthmore.

Lainé said he hoped this would help spark conversations with other universities. But he also described ways black students have felt isolated on campus, and how hard it is to explain that isolation to others.

“It’s hard to articulate when someone doesn’t understand your experience,” he said.

Almost 1,000 miles west, students at the University of Iowa held their own demonstrations.

Carter Yerkes, a student leader with an on-campus human rights group helped organize an on-campus vigil for about 40 students last night.

“We recognize that the issues and problems at the University of Missouri–Columbia, are very similar to the issues and problems we’re facing on our home campus,” he said.

He mentioned that international students had recently been targeted by xenophobic posts on Yik Yak, a social media platform where users can post anonymously. Yerkes said the vigil followed a rally by the University of Iowa’s Black Student Union that drew hundreds of people.

On the West Coast, several student activist groups at San Diego State University marched on Wednesday.

“A lot of racial incidences are not becoming heard on our campus,” said Zakkiyya West, the president of the Association of Africana Studies Majors and Minors. “We kind of cover it up.”

The rally is “a chance to speak out,” West said, because racism “is embedded in the system.”

West helped organized the march with Sierra Marcellus, a member of the campus organization “Concerned Students” (no connection to MU’s “Concerned Student 1950”). Marcellus said campus police regularly racially profile students, the n-word was recently spray-painted on a campus parking garage, and that there is a lack of diversity among students and staff.

Marcellus also said the Black Tribune’s call to action helped push them to act.

Students not actively marching have taken to Twitter, sharing photos of groups of students dressed in black expressing solidarity with MU and Concerned Student 1950. Many tweets used the hashtag "InSolidarityWithMizzou."

Following the resignations of UM System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, campuses across the country have voiced similar demands.

Students at Ithaca College in New York held a Solidarity Walkout on Wednesday “for all the injustices students of color face on this campus and other campuses nationally,” the event’s Facebook page said.

Students demanded the resignation of Tom Rochon, president of Ithaca College, asking students and faculty to vote “no confidence” in the president.

“With University of Missouri's president stepping down, we demand Rochon to do the same as it is vital to fight against both covert and overt racism in all places of education and empowerment,” the event page said.

At least 1,000 people participated in the walkout, chanting “we are here and we demand change” and holding a die-in, according to the Ithaca Journal.

Yale University has had similar events, with students holding a March of Resilience on Monday. Photos on Twitter showed a student holding up a Mizzou T-shirt.

Students confronted university officials on Thursday, according to the Washington Post.

After an email was sent out by Yale's administration discouraging potentially offensive Halloween costumes, Erika Christakis, a faculty member, emailed students saying “whose business is it to control the forms of costumes of young people? It's not mine, I know that.”

Students also cited a fraternity for allowing only white women into a party. Like Concerned Student 1950, Yale students had concerns over mental health resources.

“We have failed you,” Peter Salovey, president of the university, told students.

The undergraduate student government at the University of Southern California passed a Diversity Climate Resolution on Tuesday.

Through the resolution, the student government hopes to create a new multicultural center, designate a vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion and create mandated diversity training for students and faculty, among other diversity initiatives.

The students plan to meet with Michael Quick, university provost, on Nov. 23.

“This is just one step of the advocacy process,” Rini Sampath, USC undergraduate student body president, told the Daily Trojan. “We're making sure that our University is able to implement these diverse initiatives and make our campus climate better.”

On Sept. 20, Sampath took to Facebook to document a racist slur hurled at her, along with a drink, out of a fraternity house window the night before. In reflection with a friend after the incident, Sampath admitted to feeling “subhuman” to peers who are white.

“This isn't an isolated incident,” Sampath continued in her Facebook post. “It happens everywhere. Last week, individuals in a pick-up truck yelled racial slurs at Mizzou's Student Body President Payton Head. Who knows what will happen to someone who looks like me today?”

Sampath did not identify the suspect from the fraternity house. Later that evening, USC released a campuswide statement urging students to report incidents of hate speech and racial bias, according to the Los Angeles Times.

On Oct. 16, BuzzFeed published a video featuring Sampath and her experience with hate speech at USC. In the video, Sampath talks about how racial slurs need to be addressed on college campuses before they escalate to violence.

“It starts with words,” Sampath said in the BuzzFeed video. “It starts with a frame of mind and mentality that other people are lesser than you, and it’s OK to call them out and threat them like that. It’ll get to a point where people’s lives are at stake, and people’s lives are in danger by this type of mentality that we allow to continue.”

The resolution directly references MU “grappling with diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.”

Universities have also encouraged open dialogue concerning race relations on campus.

On Wednesday, students at the University of Kansas marched in black clothing to the Kansas Union, where they held a town hall meeting moderated by Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little. The meeting, called in a joint effort by KU’s office of multicultural affairs in the university in general, discussed race, respect and free speech.

Caleb Bobo, a KU senior political science major with a minor in African-American studies, is the founder and chairman for Black Male Initiative, an organization that strives to create an environment that supports and empowers African-American male KU students, according to its website.

Black Male Initiative’s purpose is to build a community and doesn't always take the form of hosting a protest but stresses community service and holds panels and socials, Bobo said.

Bobo said he founded the Initiative in response to African-American males having the lowest graduation rate among any other ethnicity on campus.

“It rubbed me the wrong way,” Bobo said. “The university pledges to be a diverse campus, but when it comes down to it, you don’t see a lot of people who look like you.”

In light of recent events at MU, the hashtag #ConcernedStudent1950 has been written in chalk in various locations around campus, Bobo said. He said Caucasian students and some of his old high school friends have been very critical of the movement.

“There are a lot of black students at KU who don’t have the privilege of not knowing about racism,” Bobo said. “Colleagues who aren’t black are oblivious. Our Caucasian counterparts have the option, ability and privilege of not knowing their colleagues’ lives are threatened.”

Mariam Navid, a senior at University of California Berkeley studying molecular and cell biology, spoke on racial tensions on her campus.

“California is pretty progressive, but that doesn’t mean racial tensions don’t exist,” Navid said. “It’s just a lot more subtle. Despite UC Berkeley being so progressive, we can’t deny that systematic racism still exists.”

Navid is concerned that not all students on her campus are taught by professors who look like them. She is also keeping up with events happening on MU’s campus.

“First and foremost, it’s about the black students who made the (UM system president) step down, and it’s about the black students specifically whose safety is at risk right now.”

“(MU) is another example of how university systems are set up across the nation,” Navid continued. “They are not set up for people of color to be successful. As a student on the other side of the country, it’s a reaffirmation of the same racial issues we see on my campus.”

Faculty is not diverse and athletes of color — especially black students — are abused and stereotyped, she said.

Navid, also the external affairs vice president of the Associated Students of UC, is a liaison between students and administration. She also mediates conversation between the two for students wants and needs on campus.

ASUC is trying to figure out tangible ways to further implement diversity on colleges across UC Berkeley and across the other eight campuses in the UC system. Today, a Million Student March, mostly dealing with tuition and wages — is taking place on all nine campuses in the UC system. The march will reference institutional racism and the importance of faculty diversity and connect it to solidarity with MU, she said.

"People of color have realized that anything is possible if students come together," Bobo said. "They have a unified voice and they can really do anything."

*Supervising editor is Katherine Reed*