To the Board of Governors, faculty and staff, fellow students, media, and Springfield community, thank you for your time and presence at today's meeting.

> "It is the policy of Missouri State University to maintain the campus as a place of work and study for faculty, staff and students free from discrimination and harassment in violation of the University's policies."

Because I agree with this statement I stand in affirmation of the resolution I propose to you today:

Resolved: The University ought to be held accountable for its commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

I will provide you with three policies as outlined in the Missouri State Policy Library as we state these cases

Definitions of terms in the resolution as well as a fact sheet can be provided upon request

Nondiscrimination Policy

> Approved by Board of Governors: July 16, 2014

Missouri State University is a community of people with respect for diversity. The University emphasizes the dignity and equality common to all persons and adheres to a strict nondiscrimination policy regarding the treatment of individual faculty, staff, and students. In accord with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status in employment or in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University. In addition, the University does not discriminate on any basis (including, but not limited to, political affiliation and sexual orientation) not related to the applicable educational requirements for students or the applicable job requirements for employees.

Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment Policy

The University will respond to instances of discrimination or harassment in accordance with the Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance Complaint Procedures (Op1.02-2) and will respond appropriately to those who violate this policy, up to and including dismissal from the University or termination of employment.

To achieve this end, the University believes it should foster a learning, working and living environment free from discrimination and harassment on any basis not related to the applicable educational requirements for students or the applicable job requirements for employees.

The University's educational mission is promoted by professionalism. Professionalism is fostered by an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Actions of faculty, staff, students and others affiliated with the University that harm this atmosphere undermine professionalism and hinder fulfillment of the University's educational mission. Trust and respect are diminished when those in positions of authority abuse their power. Those who abuse their power in such a context violate their duty to the University community.

According to the cultural climate: One major obstacle that must be addressed is the perception by some "majority group" (i.e., white, male, heterosexual, Christian) students, faculty, administrators, staff and community members that microaggressions neither exist nor matter and that diversity is "much to do about nothing." Consequently, any diversity planning should prioritize strategies for expanding the involvement, education and awareness of those on campus who have remained on the sidelines thinking diversity is about "them" and not "us".

Reasonable Person Standard

 (As defined by the Cornell University Law School)

The hypothetical reasonable person behaves in a way that is legally appropriate. Those who do not meet this standard -- that is, they do not behave at least as a reasonable person would -- are considered negligent and may be held liable for damages caused by their actions.

a.   Whether particular physical, non-verbal, or verbal conduct constitutes prohibited discrimination or harassment in violation of this policy will depend upon all of the circumstances involved, the context in which the conduct occurred, and the frequency, severity, and pattern of the conduct.

b.   Isolated or single-incident inappropriate behavior typically does not constitute prohibited discrimination or harassment. However, in those incidents where the behavior complained of is sufficiently egregious, it may constitute a violation of this policy.

While I commend the university on these policies created, i fail to believe that they are being adequately applied as minority student on this campus after my experiences as as the information provided in the climate study.

Good Morning, My name is Xavier Torres-Ghoston, current senior at Missouri State University. I am in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Communications with a minor in African Americans studies by the end of May 2016. Complementary to my academic endeavors, I am a proud member of the African American sector of this university community.

On March 16, 2015, the university published the "Campus and Community Climate Study Report Presented by DiversityWorks Inc."

The aforementioned study highlighted issues of diversity, climate, and representation. Along with its evaluation of the issues on our campus, it provided several solutions that our administration and other members of our university community have neglected to enforce.

> "The public affairs mission should be utilized further for diversity. Ethical leadership is a supposed pillar of the mission but there is not much accountability for it. How can we make ourselves more accountable for it as an institution? Administrators must be held accountable for progress on diversity in their evaluation(s)"

Because I agree with this statement from the study, I stand in affirmation of the resolution I propose to you today:

Resolved: The University ought to be held accountable for its commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

Under the premise of CAMPUS CLIMATE, I will provide you with three ways the University can be held accountable.

Definitions of terms in the resolution can provided upon request.

1. Make people of color visible on this campus.

    a. Establish Diversity Council

        i. Due to underrepresentation, students and staff of color can and do suffer from an invisibility that not only limits our impact on this campus, but neglects our individual needs. In order to combat this limitation on power and presence, the university should install the "Diversity Council" in accordance with the climate study. Every unit on campus should have a representative on a campus-wide diversity council, chaired by the vice president for diversity and inclusion.

    b. Place a memorial of an influential person of color or MSU alum on campus.

    c. living learning community for students of color and low income students (CC quotes)

    d. Promote integration of diverse curriculum with emphasis on public affairs mission.

Institute a "Hate Speech Policy."

According to the Prohibition of Discrimination and Harassment Policy and reasonable person standard, university officials are obliged to respond to discomfort surrounding racial slurs, threatening speech and/or violence related to prejudice.

Given that the university that has also published definitions on the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance website for "nigger", the "n-word" and "negro," it can be assumed that the governors and administrators present have a full understanding of the history and impact of these words.

Introducing this policy does not limit our first amendment right to "free speech" for two reasons. First, it is within the realms "fighting words" doctrine instituted by the supreme court in 1942. Second, it is simply a reaction to speech, not the prohibition of it—not unlike addressing any other form of harassment. If one can face consequences for using sexually charged language or speech interpreted as threat, one should face the same consequences for racial prejudice. Selectively enforcing verbal harassment policies, the university contradicts its nondiscrimination policy and the reasonable person standard by which it evaluates harassment, itself.

Universities such as Santa Clara University in Silicon Valley, California have already gotten on board the train of social justice and instituted codes and policies addressing hate speech.

No student at Missouri State University should have to sit and decide whether or not they will attend after being called a nigger on campus. No student should have to decide not to attend class after her professor joins in laughter with classmates after they ask her if she was even born in this country. No professor should ask the question why don't African Americans vote and the majority white class heckles "because they're lazy they don't care".

These are encounters no one should face at a University who upholds the pillar of Cultural Competence.

I realize that we cannot change feelings or minds but our University can create policy to combat these situations and hold our University faculty, staff, administration and students accountable.

I am Adekemi Omoloja, a junior at Missouri State University in pursuit of a Bachelor of Science Degree in Cellular Molecular Biology with a minor in Chemistry. I possess many identities: Nigerian, Multicultural student, campus leader and scholar.

I am still in attendance at Missouri State University due to the TRIO Student Support Services program, which has aided me financially, academically and personally in navigating this Predominantly White Institution. This would be beneficial for some of the 2,255 underrepresented students currently attending this university. Unfortunately, TRIO caters to only 150 students and that is where the University plays an integral part. The Climate study poses the question, why can't we expand this program further to serve even more students?

Because the answer to this question is crucial to the success of minority students, Resolved: the University ought to be held accountable for its commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

The University prides itself on the growth of diverse student population, but unless there are resources in place for student development, retention will continue to be an obstacle moving forward. Under the premise of funding and resources, I will provide three ways retention for students of color can be improved.

I. **Restructuring of the Jumpstart program. The Jumpstart program is an accelerated summer program targeting incoming students who are underprepared for fall courses.** I credit the University in implementing a summer bridge program. This can improve enrollment, retention, and satisfaction rates for students. However, there is a structural and counterproductive issue with the program. How it is funded.

   A. This program is geared toward students who "do not meet traditional freshman admission criteria based on GPA, class rank, or test scores."

   B. Because students tend to use financial aid to pay for enrollment in the program, the program does not fully relieve students of burdens associated with being underprivileged. And not being able to pay for the rest of their academic year.

   C. The university could combat this inequality by including Jumpstart as a part of Multicultural Programs. Giving these students a place in the university budget, not only increases retention, but diversifies the program's portfolio.

II. **A Development of a Program similar to that of TRIO that would extend resources to all students of color at Missouri State University.**

   A. Like TRIO it would provide services such as, Tutoring, Reading/Study Skills Assistance, Career Exploration, Academic Advising, Personal Assistance, Financial aid paperwork assistance, Assistance with your scholarship search, Volunteer Opportunities and Leadership Opportunities.

B. **The aforementioned services contribute to high retention in higher education and Missouri State specifically.**

C. **Trio Services Retention Rates** - Retention Rates for Trio- 95% and Graduation Rates for trio- 83% Graduation Rates at MSU- 53.4% for 2013 44% Af-Ams 48% Hispanics

III. **The Reevaluation of Budgeting in Multicultural Programs and Diversity initiatives**

A. With the future goals for increasing diversity, multicultural programs needs to increase the budget to adequately adhere to Missouri State's pillars.

B. The climate study suggests that the university, Focus more on how to increase the number of people (faculty, administrators, staff and students) participating in diversity activities, workshops, conferences, etc. so there is widespread campus participation. **This will take resources and more importantly funding.**

C. According to the Climate study "There never seems to be enough money for further diversity training, education, programs, etc.," The suggestion would be for the university to prioritize fundraising from donors, alumnae, etc. to increase University-wide funding on diversity.

The climate study itself states there is a tendency for universities to take no action However, ignoring such a wealth of information is to ignore the reality that an increase in enrollment of underrepresented student groups is not the same as guaranteeing educational equity for those students.

My name is Monica Villa Meza, a current Junior at Missouri State University majoring in Sociology with a minor in Spanish and a recipient of the Multicultural Leadership scholarship.

"MSU students are behind on many key assessment indicators of academic challenge and seem to be weakest on cultural competence goals and measures."

Because I agree with this statement from the climate study, I stand in affirmation of the resolution I propose to you today:

Resolved: The university ought to be held accountable to its commitment to Diversity and Inclusion.

Under the premise of equity and compliance, I will provide you with three ways the University can be held accountable.

1. The university needs to re-evaluate its hiring process.

    a. The hiring process, as it as stands, does not sufficiency address the needs of our campus. With an influx of students of colors, there is higher demand for diverse representation in staff.

        i. To meet this need, the university ought to *prioritize* hiring people of color. On many occasions that university explains efforts to hire diverse staff, however, it rarely declares it a top priority.

            1. Currently, the university has 11 Latino staff members, but gives the "Latino face" to only one.

                a. The climate study states, "Hire more Latinos as support staff, academic professionals, faculty, administrators, etc. so Latinos are more visible as employees at MSU."

        ii. Hiring candidates outside of MSU graduates will help enrich the cultural climate.

            1. The the study suggest that the administrators should,"Hire faculty, administrators and staff who are not MSU graduates in order to support diverse thinking, new strategies, philosophies and approaches."

        iii. Evaluating cultural competence of applicants

            1. Before hiring, administrators should evaluate the applicant's experience with interpersonal relations, diversity training, and higher education.

  b. There should be students involved in the hiring process

    i. There should be established student-led simulations or interviews in which applicants are required to address issues that are current and specific to the needs of MSU students.

    ii. Climate study suggests that "More comprehensive education require on diverse hiring that focuses on the retention of diverse faculty and staff (not just recruitment and hiring) as well as biases in the search and hiring process (not just legalities)."

2. Consider the needs of staff/faculty of color

  a. As it was mentioned in the climate study, "Although there were no differences between White employees and employees of color on perceptions regarding experiences of positive/inclusive, there were difference between these groups regarding negative/hostile climate at MSU, in which employees of color reported more negative/hostile climate experiences than White employee.

3. Hold faculty/staff accountable to inclusiveness

  a. Prohibit discriminatory language.

Closing the loopholes in rehiring process, will bridge the gaps between cultures and lend to more and inclusive environment.

During my time here at MSU as a Latina, I have witness breakdowns in communication amongst students, staff, and administration.

- First of all, there is a misunderstanding of Latino culture in the university community.
  - We are governed by our values.
    - Collectivism: tendency to look at others to help guide decisions and opinions.
    - Respeto (respect): we hold a high esteem for authority and authoritative figures.
    - Simpatía (kindness): emphasis on being polite and pleasant even in the face of stress and adversity. This causes us to avoid hostility or confrontation. As a result, we may not feel comfortable openly expressing disagreement with faculty, resources, or policies.

- Secondly, there is a lack of communication between Latino students and faculty/staff and administrators.

  - There is racial division amongst the multicultural students a result of incompetent leadership. The results of this division manifest in the student organizations and programs.

    - Latino students are hesitant to participate in unfamiliar events because racial tension. Prejudice has penetrated our communities from the top down. The same group of students participate in events, because there is a lack of unity.

    - Disunity exists between the Assistant VP of Multicultural services/ programs and other Latino faculty that leaves the community feeling voiceless.

    - There are over 700 latinos on this campus, but the same 30 students are selected to participate in organization. Opportunities are discriminately distributed, which is hindering the Latino students from progressing.

The broken relationships and cultural incompetence within the Latino community is simply a microcosm for a glorified, but unfulfilled public affairs mission.