**KSU REFUSES TO DEAL WITH RACIAL INJUSTICE**

# *Black Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies Program Resigns Due to Lack of Support*

**[Kennesaw, Georgia] —** The Kennesaw State University (KSU) administration is once again being called to task for empty promises of racial justice. On April 12, 2022, the only Black Department Chair in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (RCHSS) at KSU, Dr. Cécile Accilien, resigned from her position as Chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies Department (ISD) in a [letter](https://docs.google.com/document/d/18kYCuMtDUM-G7zXiiy9j3NaLygbc9Jd9Q0biHFW5eu8/edit) citing racism – both microaggressions and lack of support for programs serving marginalized students and addressing systemic racial injustices. Over one month later, there has been no response from the administration about the accusations. After two weeks of silence, a group of concerned faculty and students distributed a [petition](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1NtjZhm-PVd7hh7LLXEtm6AmQueCzGKXCHLZ_n-6Gu_U/viewform?edit_requested=true&fbzx=2465273236976402798) in support of Dr. Accilien’s resignation letter requesting a response as to how the university will address her outlined concerns. Over 100 faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community members signed on to the petition which was delivered on May 3rd. Silence has continued.

In her letter of resignation, Dr. Accilien, who will move to a regular faculty position this summer, explained that she joined KSU in 2020 excited about the possible opportunities to support and grow the Interdisciplinary Studies programs, including the African and African Diaspora Studies (AADS) and Asian Studies (AS) degrees. Dr. Accilien and many others assumed the importance of these two programs would be obvious in times of widespread Black Lives Matter (BLM) and Stop Asian Hate movements. However, Dr. Accilien reports she “was met … with a series of targeted decisions … directly undermin[ing] [her] ability to lead effectively and achieve the very goal of student success that I was charged with addressing.” She expressed disappointment that, “Unfortunately, the wealth of knowledge, worlds of expertise, and diverse experiences I and others bring have been consistently ignored in strategic discussions about the unit that I have been charged to lead. I am deeply disappointed that this opportunity has been squandered.” In conclusion, she shared, “I wish to step down as chair of the Interdisciplinary Studies Department not because I do not love the students or the faculty but because I, and therefore the department, have been set up to fail.”

 As the petition states, “The problems Dr. Accilien cites are systemic and institutional, and we recognize that they not only impacted her experience in her role but have had and continue to have a negative effect on the university’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.” The circulation of Dr. Accilien’s letter and consequent petition, has raised serious concerns about KSU’s administrations commitment to student success, addressing racism, supporting staff, faculty, and students. The petition writers are committed to continuing to organize until real commitments are made to invest both resources and respect to programs, faculty, staff, and students working towards the urgent goal of social justice.

 Dr. Accilien and faculty and student supporters are available for media interviews.

*###*