

Letter to Gordon College Board of Trustees

February 2, 2021

Dear Gordon College Board of Trustees,

We, the undersigned parents, want you to know that we have been praying for the leadership of Gordon College and for the student body.

We are writing to express our deep concerns regarding issues on the campus that are compromising the Christian witness of the college and are also negatively impacting our students.

As we are sure you are aware, last semester there was a sudden explosion of racial activism on campus. Issues of race and racism dominated class discussion, resident life, student groups, and even sports teams. Prominent student leaders organized protests, sit-ins, meetings, and discussions decrying hatred and racism towards students who are persons of color. As the semester progressed it became apparent that there was an ideological battle going on, more than a fight for fairness and equality for all. Black Lives Matter (BLM) was a visible movement on campus and shockingly, unbiblical Critical Race Theory (CRT) and social justice theory were promoted, not only through student activism, but also by professors in class. These humanistic philosophies have no basis in Scripture and push aside the gospel of Jesus Christ as the solution for the problem of sin, including the sin of racism.

Colossians 2:8 instructs us, “See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” The BLM movement rests upon CRT which categorizes people by race, class, or privilege. This type of categorization has no basis in Scripture. God’s Word places man in two categories, fallen or redeemed. The leadership of the college had the opportunity to challenge students to not be taken captive by the worldly philosophy and deception of human tradition as Paul warns in Colossians, but sadly, instead, have allowed student leaders to foster and promote discord and hatred.

We are gravely concerned that the leadership of the college is not upholding Gordon’s published Student Life and Conduct statement or Statement of Faith. Not only have they allowed the advancement and promotion of divisive BLM activism and CRT ideology on campus, but they have also compromised their statements by allowing unbiblical messages regarding sexuality to be communicated through plays performed on campus. They also allowed students to use profuse profanity in those same theater productions. Below are some examples that specifically illustrate our concerns. Please also refer to the enclosed emails, pictures, and personal accounts from students and parents demonstrating what we are reporting.

- BLM signs and slogans have been prominently displayed on bulletin boards in common areas, as well as in residence halls. These signs have divisive and unbiblical messages and are clearly against the stated principals of “Shalom” which the school espouses.
- Chapel services and on campus activities have been almost solely focused on racial and social justice themes, to the detriment of other issues. Several chapel messages have taken Scripture out of context and have instead promoted a social justice viewpoint.
- Student leaders have been pressuring students to attend events that support BLM causes, even to the point of threatening fines for not attending, or for not signing on to specific commitments to support BLM.
- Many students have reported being intimidated, threatened, harassed, or shunned by BLM supporters, simply for not agreeing with BLM ideology, or even for choosing to not comment at all. They are being told, “Silence is violence.” Many are discouraged, and others are afraid of violence. As a result of the very tense atmosphere all of this has created on campus, some students have chosen not to return for the spring semester, and others are seriously considering transferring to a different college next year.
- There have been reported instances of students’ grievances about the division fostered by the BLM activism being summarily dismissed. These students continue to be harassed, and college leadership has not exhibited proper care in addressing their concerns.
- The leaders (staff and student leaders) have rightly invested time and energy to speak out against racism, and against acts of racism on campus against people of color. But they have not spoken out strongly enough to support those students who are being persecuted for not going along with the BLM movement and its ideas. These students are feeling demoralized as not enough is being done to stop the intimidation and harassment being committed against them.
- The college administration is not providing a balance of views on racial issues. For example, the leadership has invited speakers, such as Jemar Tisby and Phil Bowling-Dyer who espouse CRT. It would be preferable to have at least one speaker who challenges the CRT framework.
- Students are being pressured in some courses, such as Great Conversations, to spend excessive amounts of time considering and discussing racial issues. Some students have felt pressured to refrain from offering any dissenting opinions to the prevalent BLM and CRT racial narratives.
- President Lindsay, in his proposed plan to address racial issues published last semester, stated that there would be changes brought to core curriculum. In an email from a parent

to President Lindsay asking him if these changes included inserting CRT into core curriculum, his response did not engender confidence. His reply implied that he was not certain as to what extent CRT might be included in the curriculum.

- Plays performed on campus in 2019 communicated confusing messages about human sexuality, included lesbian characters kissing and petting each other, and characters using profuse profanity.

So much of what we are witnessing at Gordon looks alarmingly similar to what is happening on secular college campuses nationwide. During the Explore Gordon events many of us attended it was clearly asserted that as a thoroughly Christian institution, Gordon was committed to a biblical worldview, and that faith was at the center of academics and life together on campus.

We feel we were deceived.

Choosing a college is a family decision, especially when parents are supporting their students financially. This is not the kind of college experience we expected for our students, and many of us are wrestling with whether we are being good stewards of our finances by investing in a Gordon College education for our students. Sadly, as friends with college-bound students ask us about our experience with Gordon, we no longer feel confident recommending that they consider Gordon. Instead, we feel responsible to caution them about sending their students. Many of us are alumni, and this grieves our hearts.

Gordon College has traditionally been a reputable academic institution, solidly grounded in orthodox Christianity. It has served as a training ground for students, preparing them for Christian leadership to bring the gospel with them wherever they go. Given our students' experiences and the incidents that we are reporting in this letter, we now fear that the once bright light of Gordon College is growing ever so dim.

If the college does not remain steadfast in maintaining a commitment to biblical fidelity and keeping Christ as its firm foundation, then there will no longer be anything distinctive that sets it apart. We do not want to see Gordon College fade as a bastion of solid Christian education and simply become like the multitude of secular schools that have embraced racial division, identity politics, and the separation of people by color and sexual identity into arbitrary classes. We do not believe this is what the founders of Gordon College intended, nor is this the way of Christ.

We strongly urge the Board of Trustees to address the urgent issues we raise here and that are jeopardizing the health and longevity of the college. We would appreciate a response to confirm that our letter was received and read by the board. God bless you as serve to safeguard the mission of Gordon College.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely in Christ