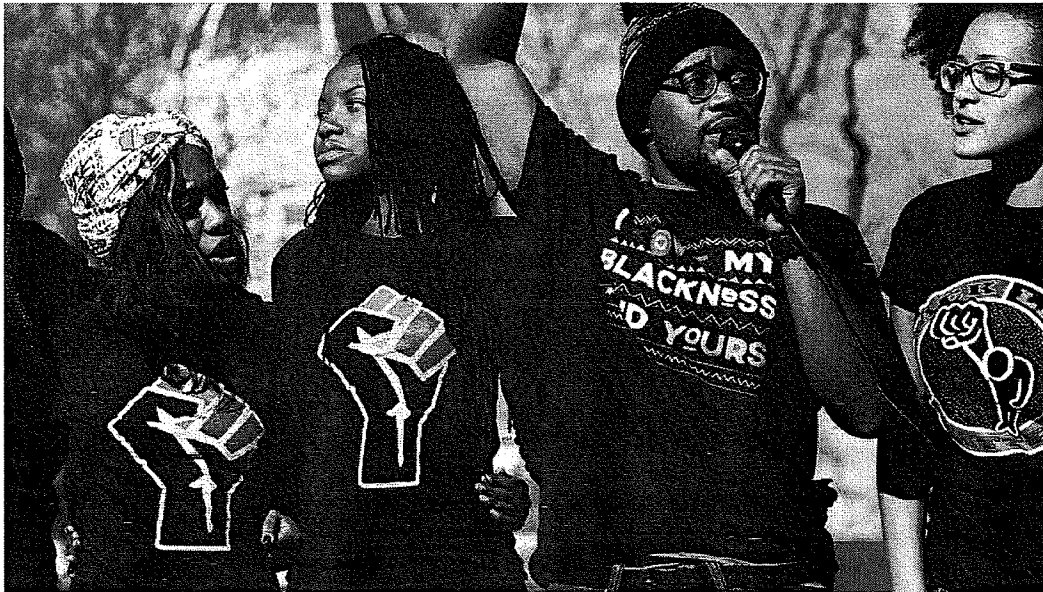


University of Missouri president quits over campus racial complaints

By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff on 11.11.15

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Concerned Student 1950, led by University of Missouri graduate student Jonathan Butler (second from right), speaks following the announcement that University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe would resign, Nov. 9, 2015, Columbia, Missouri. Photo: Sarah Bell/Missourian via AP

COLUMBIA, Mo. — The president of the University of Missouri resigned Monday. Students at the school had been angered at what they said was his failure to respond to racist incidents on campus. The football team and others had been in open revolt, in an effort to get him to step down.

President Tim Wolfe said he would leave office immediately.

The complaints came to a head a day earlier, when at least 30 black football players announced that they would not play until the president was gone. One student had already begun a hunger strike a week ago.

Wolfe took "full responsibility for the frustration" students had expressed and said their complaints were "clear" and "real."

"Heal And Start Talking Again," He Says

However, Wolfe also made some critical remarks.

"This is not the way change comes about," he said, referring to recent protests. "We stopped listening to each other."

Wolfe urged students, teachers and staff to use the resignation "to heal and start talking again to make the changes necessary."

For months, black student groups have complained of racist insults and other slights on the overwhelmingly white campus. Frustrations flared during a homecoming parade Oct. 10 when black protesters blocked Wolfe's car, and he did not get out and talk to them. They were removed by police.

Black members of the football team joined the outcry on Saturday night. By Sunday, a campus sit-in had grown in size and student groups planned walkouts.

Until Monday, Wolfe did not indicate that he had any intention of stepping down, though he did admit that "change is needed."

Athletes' Protest Could Cost \$1 Million

The Tigers' next game is Saturday against Brigham Young University at Arrowhead Stadium. Canceling it could cost the school more than \$1 million.

"The athletes of color on the University of Missouri football team truly believe 'Injustice Anywhere is a threat to Justice Everywhere,'" the players said in a statement. "We will no longer participate in any football related activities until President Tim Wolfe resigns or is removed" due to his failure to respond to the rise in racist incidents. "WE ARE UNITED!!!!!"

Head football coach Gary Pinkel expressed support for his players, and posted a picture of the team and coaches locking arms. Pinkel said team staff stand "as one. We are united. We are behind our players."

Pinkel and Missouri Athletic Director Mack Rhoades issued a joint statement about the player walkout. It linked the return of the protesting football players to the end of a hunger strike by Jonathan Butler, a black student. Butler began his effort Nov. 2 and had vowed to not eat until Wolfe was gone.

"Our focus right now is on the health of Jonathan Butler" and on the "concerns of our student-athletes," the statement said.

Student Ends His Hunger Strike

After Wolfe's announcement, Butler said his hunger strike was over.

The protests began after the student government president, who is black, said in September that people in a passing pickup truck shouted racist insults at him. In early October, members of a black student organization said racist insults were hurled at them as well. The insulting comments were made by a white student who appeared to be drunk.

Also, a swastika was recently drawn in a dormitory bathroom. The swastika is originally associated with the German Nazi Party and has long been used as a white power symbol.

Many of the protests have been led by an organization called Concerned Student 1950, which gets its name from the year the university accepted its first black student. Its members besieged Wolfe's car at the parade. Since last Monday, they have been conducting a sit-in on a campus plaza.

At least 150 students gathered at the plaza Sunday night, a larger crowd than on previous days. Many planned to camp there overnight, despite temperatures that had dropped into the upper 30s.

Two student groups that called for walkouts Monday and Tuesday also joined in the protest effort. The school's student government, the Missouri Students Association, participated as well.

Tensions Grew After Ferguson Shooting

The association said in a letter Sunday that there had been "an increase in tension and inequality" on campus since last year's fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The letter charged that Wolfe had done nothing to respond to the increase in racist incidents.

Brown, an unarmed black 18-year-old, was shot and killed by a white police officer during a struggle. His death helped spawn the "Black Lives Matter" movement, which has challenged harsh and unjust treatment of minorities by police.

The association said Wolfe heads a university leadership that "has undeniably failed us and the students that we represent."

He has "blatantly ignored and disrespected the concerns of students," the group wrote.

One of the sit-in participants, black student Abigail Hollis, said the campus is "unhealthy and unsafe for us."

White students at the campus are treated much better than black students, Hollis said. "It's time to stop that. It's 2015."

Evidence-based discussion prompt:

Another (<https://newsela.com/articles/New-civilrights/id/6296/>) article from 2014 mentions that a "new civil rights movement" is on the rise in the U.S. ~~Do you~~ think the Missouri president's resignation is a victory for this new movement? Why or why not? Use evidence from both articles to support your answer.

Quiz

- 1 Which answer choice BEST describes the events that occurred involving President Wolfe and Missouri students?
- (A) Missouri students participated in hunger strikes and sit-ins, and Wolfe did not take action to stop them.
 - (B) Missouri students protested Wolfe's inaction around racism, leading to Wolfe's resignation.
 - (C) Missouri student protesters blocked Wolfe's car, and he refused to get out and talk to them.
 - (D) Missouri students shouted racist insults at a black student, and Wolfe did not understand why the student was upset.
- 2 According to Wolfe's statements in the article, which statement BEST represents his perspective following the events at Missouri?
- (A) He believes that he should not have had to resign and feels angry at the students.
 - (B) He believes that racism is not an issue at Missouri and wants students to focus on other problems.
 - (C) He hopes that students do not continue to protest because he considers it disrespectful.
 - (D) He hopes that the Missouri community can openly discuss issues of racism.
- 3 Read the sentence from the introduction [paragraphs 1-4].

The complaints came to a head a day earlier, when at least 30 black football players announced that they would not play until the president was gone.

What does the phrase "came to a head" mean in the sentence above?

- (A) The complaints were well understood.
- (B) The complaints were stated very loudly.
- (C) The complaints were understood by the public.
- (D) The complaints reached maximum power.

4 Read the excerpt from the article.

Black members of the football team joined the outcry on Saturday night. By Sunday, a campus sit-in had grown in size and student groups planned walkouts.

What is the BEST substitute for "outcry"?

- (A) complaining
- (B) tears
- (C) protest
- (D) event