



Haverford Strikers Declare Victory After Final Negotiations

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Since the Haverford administration issued its **revised list of responses to strike demands** on November 6, student activists have been in a series of tense back-and-forth negotiations with college officials to secure more

accountability measures for their demands. As of November 10, their efforts have paid off: late last evening, organizers sent an email officially ending the strike for Haverford jobs, classes, and extracurriculars. The message laid out a number of the concrete results of the strike, including \$375,000 worth of committed funds for initiatives to ultimately increase accessibility and inclusivity for BIPOC/FGLI students, a modified grading system for the Fall 2020 semester, changes to tenure criteria for professors, and more. Wednesday, November 11 served as a final, celebratory day for strikers as well as a transition period before students return to academics for the remainder of the semester. However, the strike at Bryn Mawr is still ongoing, and [a new strike has recently begun at Swarthmore](#).

Strike Achievements

In a November 10 email titled “[For the Culture](#),” strike organizers summarized the tangible progress that had been made toward the goals of the movement. The following list of achievements is the product of days of continued discourse with President Wendy Raymond, the Board of Managers, and other administrators at Haverford. See the public spreadsheet “[Anti-Racism Commitments 2.1](#)” for the full demands, responses, timelines, budgets, and progress measures.

- Secured \$75,000 towards renovations for the Black Cultural Center.
- Cancelled classes and jobs on Election Day and secured holiday pay for essential employees.
- Guaranteed full funding for all students who wish to visit a therapist of their choosing off campus.
- Secured a Pass/Fail model for the Fall 2020 semester.
- Committed the college to articulating admission preferences for Indigenous students.
- Committed the [Committee on Student Standing and Programs](#) (CSSP) to a full overhaul of the academic warning system.
- Secured \$200,000 over the next three years committed to improving accessibility to buildings and facilities on campus.
- Secured an annual operating budget of \$25,000 for the work completed under the Chief Diversity Officer.
- Secured \$75,000 for bias training at the college over the next two years.

- Effectuated reevaluation of tenure and promotion criteria.
- Guaranteed compensation up to 20 hours of missed work while participating in strike.
- Encouraged interdepartmental discussion and reforms to center anti-racist work in every discipline.
- Secured reserve CAPS hours for LGBTQ+ students and the commitment to hire another counselor specialized in working with LGBTQ+ people.
- Facilitated an ongoing series of teach-ins that have dramatically expanded the scope and nature of intellectual inquiry at the college.

Yet the strike's organizers were careful to emphasize that just because the strike had ended did not mean that their work—nor that of the institution—was complete. Referring to the now-famous strike initiated by the Black Students' League in 1972, they provided a historical parallel for the current movement while also emphasizing the need to remain similarly vigilant in the future.

“Since 1972, BIPOC students have been demanding and taking action towards institutional change. This fight and desire for basic human rights and respect was here before us and will be here after us. The call to action, in many of our lifetimes, has never been as powerful as it is now and what we choose to contribute and sacrifice for this ongoing movement, and the many coinciding movements like it, will be what defines our stories. Be on the right side of history.”

Student organizers also used the email to address some of the criticism of the strike, whose tone some students felt was **harmful** to their sense of community. “By some who have not felt the very real divisions that already existed at Haverford, we have been called divisive. By some who have done nothing to bring about structural change at the college, we have been told that what we are asking for is not possible,” the email stated. “You cannot ‘love and light’ your way out of anti-Black racism, white supremacy, and the histories of hegemony that exist very much as the foundational backbone of Haverford.”

They reiterated earlier statements that President Raymond's email was not the exclusive reason for the strike, but rather the tipping point in a series of institutional procedures and attitudes that collectively make it challenging for BIPOC and FGLI students to succeed at Haverford—systems whose

problems they claimed had not been seriously addressed by the administration until the strike.

The main body of the email ended with a clear emphasis on the level of accountability to which students would hold the college to maintain the commitments that it had made during the strike. “BIPOC students will always be ready to mobilize and fight for change when you fail us,” it wrote. “Does a tsunami only have one wave?”

Recapping the Strike: A Timeline

The strike originated with an October 28 **email** from President Wendy Raymond and Interim Dean Joyce Bylander about the shooting of **Walter Wallace Jr.** by Philadelphia two days prior. Incensed by the administrators’ requests not to protest police violence in the city, **students organized a sit-in on Founders Green the same evening**. From there, students marched around campus and Ardmore in a general protest and initiated a strike from all jobs, academics, clubs, and committees related to the college. Organizers said that the strike would continue until their **list of demands** were met by the college.

On November 2, Raymond **responded** to the strike demands, but organizers immediately **rejected** her response as wholly insufficient. On November 3, **Bryn Mawr began its own strike**, issuing a similar set of **demands**. On November 5, Haverford strikers held a public **Zoom meeting** with administrators to reiterate their demands and hopefully reach a better conclusion.

The strike saw **further progress** on November 6, when the administration **revised their list of demand responses** at the behest of strike organizers. Organizers accepted a few of the commitments outright, but **requested additional qualifications for the rest** in an email sent on November 8. In the absence of complete agreement with the college, they did not explicitly announce an end to the strike.

In an **email** sent on November 8, President Raymond thanked student leaders for their efforts pertaining to social justice and stated, “I also recognize that these changes must be understood as only a start, for this work can never be seen as complete: it requires continuous dedication and movement forward.” She also provided an outline of the **accountability**

group being created to keep the institution on track in its handling of the strike demands, which she said would be comprised of “students, faculty, staff, alumni, and Board members, as well as outside experts in DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] and anti-racism.”

However, strike organizers explained in a [follow-up email](#) that evening that “her response has not addressed a single one of the concerns that we had with the response she provided on Friday.” They stated that only three out of the original twelve demands had been adequately addressed, three had unmet qualifications, and the remainder had not been met at all.

“Many of our comments on the demands were simple clarifying questions that the college refused to answer,” the email wrote. “Our attempts to be cordial with administrators have been reciprocated with rudeness, an intentional delay of communications in order to limit our response, and complete inaction beyond what the college felt comfortable committing to after the town hall. It’s for these reasons that: *THE STRIKE WILL GO ON.*”

On November 9, Raymond sent another email to students requesting further meetings with strike organizers over Zoom starting on Tuesday, November 10. She also listed the progress that had been made in regard to strike demands already, quoted below:

- **Chief Diversity Officer (CDO):** As interim CDO, Provost Linda Strong-Leek will be coordinating and driving forward much of the work that has been at the center of our recent conversations as well as other long-standing commitments. I will be assembling a CDO Advisory group to recommend what future CDO structure will best serve Haverford and its students; please submit advice or expressions of interest in serving on that group [here](#).
- **Academic Support and Flexibility:** Committee on Student Standing and Programs (CSSP) has begun a substantial reform process as detailed in yesterday’s communication from Karen Masters.
- **Community Safety:** The [Operations Planning Group](#) has launched an investigation that will collect and evaluate information about community monitoring during the COVID-19 period to discern and respond to what some students have reported as patterns of bias.

- **Crediting Work of Black Women:** College Archives has begun collecting records related to the strike to mark this important period and the contributions of the many individuals and groups who made it such an impactful action.
- **Ira Reid House:** Facilities Management is working with students to plan priority repairs and enhancements to Ira De A.Reid House.
- **Treaty Elm:** The Arboretum Advisory Committee will be considering how to publicly present a historical contextualization of this campus tree.
- **Accountability:** The Board of Managers has approved the creation of an inclusive accountability group of community members and outside experts charged with assessing the College's progress toward its anti-racism commitments. The Board **will welcome continued advice** from students, as well as faculty and staff, to articulate the group's ultimate, formalized structure and charge.

Her email also included a **form** to suggest additional changes to the **Anti-Racism Commitments 2.1** spreadsheet. Community members may choose to provide feedback under their names or anonymously.

On November 10, before formally meeting with Raymond, strike organizers sent a list of their perceptions of which demands had been met according to the updated version of the commitments spreadsheet. They stated that demands 1, 3, 8, and 9 had been met; demands 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, and 14 had been met with qualifications, and only demands 5 and 13 had not been met, "but we can move on." Many students interpreted this email positively, anticipating either an end to the strike sometime that week, or at least significant progress toward that goal. A recording of Tuesday's Zoom meeting may be found **here**.

At 11:23 PM on November 10, the **end of the strike** was announced. Organizers also scheduled one last sit-in on Founders Green on November 11 to celebrate the 14th and final day of the movement. Despite a fairly heavy downpour that afternoon, a large number of students gathered on the green, willing to put on their rain jackets and carry their umbrellas to stand in solidarity once more.

During the sit-in, organizers read off a list of achievements and commented on the overall success of the strike. "So many

people on this campus are not willing to sacrifice their comfort to bring about change,” they said. “But [these successes] show how much power the collective still has.”

They also brought to the stage an alumnus who had been a part of the original 1972 boycott. Identifying himself as Gabe ‘72, he lauded the strikers for their effort and diligence. “I cannot tell you how proud and how pleased I am of what you’re doing,” he said. In the theme of the strike, however, he also stated that anti-racism work must not be thought to end alongside the strike itself. “Please continue the struggle. The fight is not over.”

Articles from *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and other publications have since been published on the end of the strike, but the movement as a whole is still ongoing. At Bryn Mawr, students plan to continue striking indefinitely until their unique demands are met. The strike has also extended to the Tri-Co, as Swarthmore students are now similarly **rallying** the school’s administration with an **open letter** of their own.

Full timeline

- 10/26: **Walter Wallace Jr.** is shot by Philadelphia police
- 10/28: Raymond and Bylander send an **email** to the student body urging them not to attend protests
- 10/28: *The Haverford Clerk* publishes an opinion piece titled “**As Black Philadelphians Are Terrorized, I’m Ashamed of What Haverford Has to Say**” critical of the administration’s email and encouraging participation in a campus protest that evening
- 10/28: **Protest happens on campus**; students later march through Ardmore
- 10/29: **List of demands** are formally issued and Haverford strike officially begins
- 10/30: **@hc_strike** Instagram account begins posting
- 11/2: An anonymous letter titled “**Why I Oppose the Strike**” is distributed across campus
- 11/2: Raymond sends email to student body **responding to demands** in a vague way
- 11/2: Strike organizers **reject Raymond’s response**
- 11/3: Bryn Mawr officially **begins its own strike**
- 11/5: A **public meeting** is held between strike organizers and administrators
- 11/6: Raymond sends a **revised list of responses** to students

- 11/6: CAPS announces its intent to investigate malpractice allegations surrounding LGBTQ+ students
- 11/6: A signed letter titled “[The Strike’s Lack of Open Discussion Undermines Community Trust](#)” is published
- 11/7: The Committee on Student Standing and Programs (CSSP) announces its intent to restructure its academic warning system
- 11/8: Strike organizers request [qualifications to revised demands](#)
- 11/8: Raymond sends “[Message from President Raymond](#)”
- 11/9: Strike organizers state that [their demands are unmet](#) and the strike will continue
- 11/9: Raymond requests additional meetings with strike organizers
- 11/10: Registrar sends email on the return of the pass/fail model from the spring 2020 semester (announced by Raymond on 11/6)
- 11/10: Administrators and organizers [meet again](#) over Zoom
- 11/10: Haverford strike [officially ends](#)
- 11/11: [Swarthmore open letter](#) is released
- 11/11: Haverford strike organizers hold final celebratory sit-in on Founders Green

A version of this timeline is also recorded on the official “[HC Strike Updates](#)” web page. Additional resources from strike organizers can be found on the movement’s online [link tree](#).

Pictured: Gabe from the class of 1972 speaking at the strike’s final sit-in on November 11. Image credit: Adrian Velonis

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