

# FOOD Slow Cooker Mock Lasagna



## Ingredients:

- 1-10 oz pkg lasagna broken into bite-size pieces
- 1 lb. ground turkey
- 1/2 lb Italian Sausage
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 12 oz Mozzarella cheese,

- shredded
- 1 12-oz carton cottage cheese
- 2 6-oz cans tomato paste
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 1/2 tbs dried parsley
- 1 tsp basil

## Directions:

Cook noodles according to package directions until tender; drain. Brown ground turkey and sausage; drain. Put in lightly greased Crock-Pot. Add all remaining ingredients. Stir to mix thoroughly. Cover, cook on low 7 to 9 hours (high: 3 to 5 hours). Makes 6 servings.

# Death and Dying as a Black Studies Professor

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thinking what an important message my friend was sending to our students and faculty. A cultural group who is ostracized across our country is being put front and center within the university. He was truly practicing equity.

About six years ago, Portland State went through restructuring. The Multicultural Center 'coordinator' position was shifted to a 'director' title and my friend was summarily removed with no offer to be considered for the director position. I recall that the university hired a white lesbian to do this restructuring work (This policy of bringing in underrepresented groups to implement racist policy is something I have noticed in other parts of the Portland area. Recently, for example, the Portland Police Bureau hired as their

chief of police a Black woman from Oakland.) My friend was made to disappear from PSU. Two years ago, I received an email from a colleague telling me my friend had died of a stroke. I was very upset. My friend was under much pressure as a Black African person coordinating the Multicultural Center. I wonder how it felt for him to be removed from his position with so little appreciation? My friend was in his early 60s when he died. Was it his bad eating habits and lack of physical activity that killed him or might it have been the stress that came with his job and being summarily removed that contributed to his early death.

While I know of no other deaths of Black people who worked at PSU, two of the previous chairs of Black Studies are both showing signs of wear. One has cancer and

had to retire and the other is suffering from physical ailments. He too has retired, but continues to teach as an emeritus professor. One of the current professors in the Black Studies Department is also suffering from health issues and is going to have to retire this year. Another Black colleague of mine, who worked in the School of Urban Planning, has fallen sick and had to retire. I attended her retirement 'party' during the summer. As far as I know I do not have cancer or some other disease. I regularly do get check-ups for prostate cancer because my dad died of this. Black men have the highest prostate cancer rate in the country. I did though have to take a leave of absence because of the stress I have felt working at Portland State. I have twice now admitted myself to the hospital because of chest pains to see if I was having a heart attack.

The Black Studies Department is a stressful place to work. Our students for example are constantly expressing to us the racism they experience in their classrooms. We regularly have to beg for resources to hold events. Being the smallest department on campus means if one of us fall sick or leaves, it causes a huge disruption in the daily running of the department compared to larger departments. Lastly, teaching about Black life (inequality, resistance, death, joy) takes its toll on you. Similarly, a professor who worked in the Black Studies Department, but left last year because he found PSU to be a toxic place, also had to take a leave of absence due to stress. Last year alone 10 Black administrators and faculty left Portland State University joining the many others from previous years. I talked to most of them and asked why they left and each expressed to me they 'got out' because they did not feel supported. The anti-Black racism on campus is so thick and unacknowledged that they did what is best for them and 'got out'. I completely understand.

This year the Black Studies Department is supposed to be celebrating and honoring 50 years of existence at Portland State. I am the chair of the department and I am the lead organizer of the events we are going to put on. The president of the university provided 5,000 dollars to the Black Studies Department to support the 50th Anniversary. PSU is a large public university with over 27,000 students. The money allocated would easily be used up in expenses for food, flying a speaker out, paying for their room board, providing an honorarium and paying for the venue. I see this as more than a slap in the face.

PSU regularly uses the Black Studies Department and the Chicano/Latino Studies and Indigenous Studies programs to tout itself as addressing diversity. If you look at the university's main website Black and other people of color are usually central. However, the Black Studies Department is the smallest department on campus and the other two do not even have departmental status. The last time I looked we are on Indige-

nous land and the Latinx population is the largest non-white population on campus. Portland State likes to claim it is the most racially and culturally diverse university in Oregon, but it does little to substantively address the needs of Black students and faculty. Black students have the lowest graduation rate on campus (their grades are on par with other groups. They mostly leave due to stress and financial reasons), but there is not one university wide initiative to address this. The one initiative they do have focusing on Black people is providing opportunities for mostly white students to come into prisons to teach writing classes to Black and brown inmates. Why don't they invest in Black students so they don't have to go to prison in the first place?

Last year, two of the faculty that left PSU came from the Black Studies Department. The administration of the university has refused to offer to hire new faculty so that Black Studies can replace these positions. The administration's answer to my request for replacements is 'budget deficit'. Black Studies has lost half of its tenure line professors, while other departments that are much larger have been able to replace theirs. So, in celebration of Black Study's 50th year in existence, we also get to watch its death. Without the faculty to run the department, Black Studies will not be able to fulfill its course rotation, student advising and research responsibilities. It will disappear. An external review conducted by Portland State two years ago on the Black Studies Department found that faculty in the department are "exhausted" and "overextended" and without new faculty, the department is unsustainable.


Like my friend who was made to disappear from his position, and the death of the South African professor who was here before me, and the many others that are sick, including me (I suffer from depression because of this job), Black Studies under the stress of denied white supremacy is on death row.

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