

Diversity and Inclusion Working Group  
Southern Illinois University (SIU) System

August 2020

**Background:**

The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group was developed and convened in February 2020 at the request of the incoming SIU System President Dan Mahony. Dr. Mahony discussed the purpose of the working group was to help guide the SIU system strategic plan. It was suggested that our group look at where we are today, what is working well as a system and at both campuses, and to also determine 5-10 items that would have an impact on the system in the area of diversity and inclusion. The Diversity and Inclusion Working Group met monthly and divided the work into small subgroups working collaboratively. During the work of this group, a variety of social injustices occurred in our country bringing light to the critical and immediate need of the group’s work. In light of the more recent social injustices, immediate actions were developed by this working group and provided to President Mahony in June 2020 for implementation by the SIU Diversity Advisory Council (Appendix 1). Additionally, all recommendations of this working group are requested to be considered for short-term implementation within the next year due to the critical urgency of creating an anti-racist institution. Overall, the current system Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) is suggested to be charged with implementing immediate and sustained recommendations.

Group members include:

Brown	Venessa	SIUE	Associate Chancellor/Professor
Butler*	Lakesha	SIUE	Clinical Professor/Director DEI
Fatima	Saba	SIUE	Associate Professor
Jackson	Rex	SIUE	Associate Director
Smith**	VJ (Vernon)	SIUE	Student
Watts	Christian	SIUE	Student
Wilkins	Avian	SIUC	Student
Bryson	Todd	SIUC	Interim Associate Chancellor for Diversity
El-Amin	Wendi	SIU Medicine	Associate Dean of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
McNeese	Wesley	SIUC	System Executive Director for Diversity Initiatives
Allen	James	SIUC	Acting VP of Academic Affairs
Castillo	Cristina	SIUC	Program Coordinator
Donahoo	Saran	SIUC	Associate Dean

\*Chair

\*\*Served as student representative partially and was replaced by Christian Watts

## Areas of Focus

**Structure and Representation:** The working group determined that the Universities need to develop a more structured Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ecosystem with specific attention given to break up silos and create more cohesive and efficient organizational chart and units. Additionally, representation and inclusion of Senior Diversity and Inclusion leadership (Chief Diversity Officer or related position) at the senior administrative level is critical.

- **Centralized structure of Diversity and Inclusion offices:** Currently, the efforts of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on the campuses are disjointed limiting their resources, communication and efficiency. The universities should develop a more centralized structure including all areas pertaining to equity, diversity and inclusion. The offices should be streamlined under the umbrella of DEI. There should exist a DEI ecosystem that can include Title IX office, resource centers, affinity groups, veterans' services, disability services, etc). Review example institutions for sample structures such as University of Texas-Austin, Emory University and University of Michigan, for example. A centralized and more streamlined structure will enhance communication across the institution and lead to less fragmented work.
- **Facilitate a collaborative spirit** around Diversity and Inclusion work within institutions and system
- **Allocate more resources and more staffing to the DEI office** to facilitate broader reach and greater impact. Review existing examples of a DEI office structure to determine additional job lines. It is recommended to complete a financial analysis of efforts in D&I across campus to determine how allocated funds can be more streamlined and where more D&I funds need to be allocated. It is also recommended to review and update current job descriptions and responsibilities of current Chief Diversity Officers.
- **Require Institutional Chief Diversity Officers be added to the Senior leadership administration team at their respective campuses.** Currently, the Institutional Diversity and Inclusion officers on each main campus are not a part of the senior leadership administrative team. In order for Diversity and Inclusion efforts to be at the forefront and to be interwoven throughout the system, representation at this senior level is critical.

**Metrics/Benchmarks:** Accountability through specific metrics and benchmarks can help ensure diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are threaded throughout the institution.

- Equity score cards should be developed to track where we currently are and to discover areas of improvement. Recommendations for metric areas include (not all inclusive):
  - Hiring and retention of faculty/staff/administrators of color
  - Significant faculty/staff involvement in DEI efforts is reflected in workloads (number with DEI included in workloads)
  - Faculty/staff involvement in DEI efforts is included in assessments for tenure and promotion decisions (Policies are changed)
  - Salaries by race and gender (discipline and rank)
  - Annual individual meetings and exit interviews conducted
  - Overall satisfaction and assessment of the climate for faculty/staff/administrators of color

- Time to promotion by race and gender
- Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Research
  - Number of courses added or revised with a focus on DEI
  - Student learning outcomes relative to DEI
- Philosophy & Mission
  - DEI is included in mission statements (Missions are revised as necessary)
  - System-wide statement of diversity
  - DEI efforts and goals are included in strategic plan (Inclusion in strategic plan)
  - DEI is considered whenever making changes or developing new policies and procedures (Number of policies changed or developed)
  - Assessment of past naming (awards, buildings, etc.) across campuses and number of new or changed names reflecting DEI priority
  - Establishment of processes for the reporting and addressing complaints of bias incidents
  - Establishment and assessment of goals for external impact
- Student Support and Involvement
  - New student, retention, and overall student numbers by race and gender (undergraduate and graduate)
  - Number of students receiving training relative to DEI
  - Ongoing assessment of high D/F/W courses by race and gender
  - Overall satisfaction and assessment of the climate for students of color
  - Institutional scholarship support by race and gender

**Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Minority Faculty, Staff and Students:**

There has been significant efforts in recruiting URM students at all campuses, however not the same effort or result of faculty and staff recruitment. Students desire mentors and faculty that look like them and this is an area we have fallen short.

- Evaluate and assess for barriers in recruiting diverse faculty
- Enhance the culture of the system through equity scorecards
- Create affinity groups at each campus with constituency status at system level
- Evaluate hiring practices such as composition, education and utilization of search committees
- Develop a leadership pipeline for minorities to prepare for administrative roles throughout the system
- Develop and implement a pledge against racial injustice for new employees to sign during onboarding
- Develop scholarships for marginalized, disadvantaged students with a passion for social justice and allocate more scholarship dollars for URM students
- Remove ACT/SAT requirement for student admission due to known inequities in test scores of URM

**Education/Training:** The working group determined the need to develop specific and ongoing requirements around education and training of faculty, staff and students.

- Require anti-bias/anti-racism system-wide education for faculty, staff and students

- Create anti-bias/anti-racism curricular task force to ensure these topics are threaded throughout the curriculum

**Policy Analysis:** Most policies developed by the institutions were not created with an equitable, inclusive lens for all. It is critical to review and assess current policies and perform a gap analysis for new policies.

- Review policies and procedures at system level and on each campus to assess for equity and inclusion (may be beneficial to hire a consultant to review policies and make recommendations)
- Review our police policies comparing local practices to national/state policies such as [ilchiefs.org](http://ilchiefs.org)
- Develop hate speech policy for system and each campus

Appendix 1. Working group recommendations for immediate actions submitted to President Mahony.

1. Develop a system-wide anti-racism task force (or charge the current DAC) to develop and implement immediate and sustained recommendations
2. Required anti-bias/anti-racism system-wide training for faculty, staff and students
3. Evaluate our relationship with police departments on campus level (local practices compared to national/state policies such as those found at [ilchiefs.org](http://ilchiefs.org)) and review our police policies
4. Anti-bias curricular task force to ensure anti-bias/anti-racism education is threaded throughout the curriculum
5. Review policies and procedures at a system level to ensure inclusive
6. Review system-wide benchmarks
7. Have new employers and existing employers sign a pledge against racial injustice during onboarding
8. Scholarships for marginalized, disadvantaged students with a passion for social justice in honor of George Floyd or others
9. Naming of schools and/or buildings after African Americans