Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunity, Diversity and Affirmative Action

Academic Year 2020- 2021 Final Report

Committee Membership:

Co-Chairs: Christina Santana and Frances Manocchio

Committee Members: Marilyn Cleary, Johnathan Flowers, Adrian Gage, Susan Mitroka-Batsford, Cara Berg Powers, Michelle Puch, Karen Shalev, Hardeep Sidhu, Mark Wagner.

Ex-Officio: Maria Isabel Gariepy, Stacey Luster.

Over the past year, we, the Advisory Committee for Equal Opportunity, Diversity & Affirmative Action, have discussed ways that the university can meet its affirmative action goals by enabling search committee members to move past their biases and choose candidates from increasingly diverse and historically underrepresented/ underserved backgrounds. The committee has also extensively discussed ways to attract a variety of programming and training to be offered to the campus community within the structures / avenues already in place. While it may be the purview of the Campus Climate Committee, we also recognize that without a deep investment in a welcoming and supportive environment, meeting hiring goals will be of little to no consequence, given the likelihood of retention.

In support of the values outlined in the strategic plan,

Strategies and Initiatives Related to Equity (excerpt from the WSU Strategic Plan 2020-2025)

PEOPLE AND CULTURE

- Establish WSU as an even more welcoming and supportive environment for students, faculty and staff from historically under-represented or marginalized groups
- Recruit, retain and reward high-quality and historically minoritized faculty and staff committed to educating and supporting a diverse student body
- Continue to equip and encourage all faculty and staff to address the diverse and evolving needs of a changing student body
- Conduct an equity audit
- Promote campus-wide cultural fluency, anchored in WSU's core values, to foster greater understanding and inclusion of the diverse cultures represented in the WSU community
- Implement a strategic recruitment and retention strategy for under-represented faculty and staff, including visiting faculty, adjuncts, and international hires
- Offer multiple levels of staff and faculty training, from beginner to advanced, on issues relating to diversity, equity and inclusion.

I.   INCREASING DIVERSITY OF FACULTY AND STAFF

Recommendation #1 Cluster Hire Historically Minoritized Faculty for the New Interdisciplinary Department

For searches starting in Fall 2021, we recommend the strategy of cluster hiring to increase the diversity of racial and ethnic representation of the Worcester State University community, specifically the faculty. Faculty searches that do not result in a hire that would contribute to increasing the diversity composition/ representation of minority groups at WSU should be considered failed searches. For more information, see Recommendation #5.

Recommendation #2 Promote Faculty Involved in Diversity Support

A proposal, from the University, for a pathway towards a tenure-track position for full-time temporary faculty who contribute to the diversity of Worcester State University. (This will need to be negotiated during bargaining). This is in specific regard to full-time-temporary faculty who have been actively engaged in moving forward the equity agenda set forth by Commissioner Santiago and/or have contributed towards Worcester State University's DEI efforts. Work done contributing to these purposes should be accounted for in both the Service and Continuing Scholarship areas of review.

Recommendation #3 Create Adjunct to Tenure Pipeline

Seek out opportunities to promote Adjunct and Part-Time Faculty toward more senior or tenure-track positions by prioritizing existing WSU records of service in hiring searches, in particular in the case that they increase the goals of the Strategic Plan around equity and inclusion. Documentation of course materials, support for students of color and first-generation students, and other relevant experience should be considered in hiring to full-time positions.

Recommendation #4 President Visits to Departments to Discuss Diversity

This committee feels that President Maloney's active voice and presence at department and other group meetings would better enable him to explain his vision for diversity, discuss specifics for unique groups, and encourage concrete and meaningful improvement and change (including, but not limited to, the establishment and development of departmental and group specific diversity goals).

We also see real value in the President working with the Staff Navigator and the Faculty Fellow positions we recommend later in this report to speak to diversity support campus wide. For more information, see recommendation #2 under the Funding/Resources section.

Recommendation #5 Allow Failed Searches to Prioritize Hiring a More Diverse Staff

We recommend that search committees prioritize candidates that increase the diversity and Affirmative Action institutional/departmental/ division goals to the extent that searches may "fail" if the candidate pool includes qualified applicants from minoritized groups and the search committee does not hire one of such candidates. For those cases where the labor market exists

for such positions, the committee recommends tenure track positions be filled with Adjuncts if the hire does not meet the Affirmative Action goals set forth.

We appreciate President Maloney's example in this regard from a recent example he shared with the MSCA Union Executive Board about the search for Campus Police Officers.

Recommendation #6 Budget and Prioritize Activities to Proactively Seek out Historically Minoritized Candidates

We recommend the exploration of other proactive recruitment techniques to recruit historically minoritized candidates in addition to current approaches of attending national conferences. Departments could be queried to identify key opportunities to reach a more diverse pool of experts in each field, including outreach to specific programs and professional/ affinity organizations, while reducing reliance on personal networks for recruitment of faculty and staff.

II.   COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation #1 Update Existing Language Used to Attract and Retain a Diverse Workforce

Last year, a team of faculty and administrators worked on the *Higher Education Innovation Fund* grant study focused on diversifying the faculty. That effort identified a series of updates that could be made to better attract and retain a diverse workforce, often women and faculty of color. Specifically, there were four places where language on diversity and inclusion and engagement might be updated and be made more specific.

This committee recommends that these changes are implemented:

> *The WSU Prospectus.* A key publication of HR in recruitment and marketing the school. This document was reviewed for verbiage, images, and missing content. A series of recommended changes was submitted.

> *The Chronicle Ad:* Every Fall, WSU runs an ad in the Chronicle of Higher Education, announcing the tenure track faculty vacancies. This ad already speaks to our work with the tagline: *Changing Lives, in and out of the classroom.* This ad and video link should be reviewed and new recommendations should be made.

> *Messaging Content on Social Media:* A review of the language and images used on social media, particularly as it relates to LinkedIn, should be reviewed to ensure consistent communication of diversity and inclusion values.

> *Interview Exchange:* A review of the paragraph of content unique to WSU should determine if the language fully expresses our diversity and inclusion values.

Further review of those documents that includes our leadership (and new diversity-focused positions Staff Navigator and Faculty Fellow) would be ideal to ensure that changes that will reflect the values of diversity and inclusion and engaged scholarship at WSU.

Recommendation #2 Place Historically Minoritized Faculty and Staff in Charge of Task Forces

According to Frank Dobbins, renowned expert on why diversity programs fail, evidence from data on over 600 studies, covering 30 years, shows that diversity managers and faculty - led task forces have strong positive effects on diversity.

We recommend prioritizing the people most impacted by our DEI efforts to the leadership roles of said efforts, such as teams of faculty and staff serving on committees and other diversity task forces or councils. As a reminder to earlier recommendations, work done contributing to these purposes should be accounted for in both the Service and Scholarship areas of review.

Recommendation #3 Introduce a LASC Task Force

Following from recommendation #2, we see an opportunity to create a task force to support the implementation of the new Diversity Content Area with the following focus areas:
- This taskforce should assess all previous courses designated Diversity Across the Curriculum for inclusion in the new Diversity Content Area.
- This task force should also have the freedom to recommend revision of old syllabi to bring them in line with the requirements of the Diversity Content Area as well as to reject those courses that fail to meet the requirements of the Diversity Content Area.
- This taskforce should develop methodologies to help departments and faculty to diversify their curriculum and the materials offered in their courses.

Recommendation #4 Support a More Diverse Faculty through Child Care Access

We recommend the exploration of partnerships with local child care facilities/ providers such as QCC's Education Lab School to better attract, support and retain Faculty and Staff and offer child care access for new hires. Explore possibilities for similar programs at Worcester State University. Dr. Frank Dobbins suggested there were three effective means to increase diversity identified in his study.

Recommendation #5 Increase Communication

We recommend that communication between projects, DEI related committees, faculty, staff, and students increase and improve though the following actions:
- Collect information on the various committees and task forces, HR, marketing, faculty and co-curricular efforts related to DEI.
- Centralize and prioritize communication of campus opportunities and information to faculty, staff, and students as it relates to DEI efforts and programming to ensure broader audience reach.
- Take advantage of "Opening Day" breakout sessions to announce the plans/ roadmap regarding DEI efforts, committees work, search processes and hiring.

III.   FUNDING/RESOURCES

Recommendation #1: Creation of a Budget Line for Initiatives that Impact D, I, and AA

We recommend that a budget line item be created to serve initiatives that impact diversity inclusion and affirmative action prioritized by this committee. Currently, the only monies devoted to these commitments are specific to the diversity mini grant fund, which is not substantial enough to attract applications or move the needle in any significant way.
As the charge specifies, we must "evaluate institutional compliance with respect to all equal opportunity, diversity, and affirmative action programs, and to recommend appropriate strategies to the President."

We request that $50,000 be set aside and earmarked for use by the advisory committee to pursue the diversity goals articulated by this committee in support of the strategic plan. Specifically, we aim to fund the following initiatives:
- Diversity Support Navigator and Faculty Fellow Initiative (See recommendation #2 below)
- Diversity and Inclusion focused Tiered Training (see recommendation #1 in the Training section below)
- Diversity Advocates Program (see recommendation #2 in the Training section below)

Other options are being explored to develop training on campus, and existing resources (HERC, CUPA, and online employee compliance system) will be utilized when possible.

Recommendation #2: Creation of a Diversity Support Navigator and Faculty Fellow

We recommend that two part-time positions be created - these two positions would be filled by one staff member and one faculty member, who are focused on engaging with, supporting, mentoring, and helping to retain faculty and staff of color.

Institutions that have similar positions include

- Pikes Peak Community College https://www.ppcc.edu/fellows
- University of Tennessee at Knoxville https://diversity.utk.edu/campus-initiatives/academic-diversity-initiative/faculty-and-administrative-fellows-program/
- University of North Carolina, Asheville https://academicaffairs.unca.edu/faculty-openings/university-fellowship-for-faculty-diversity/

We believe that the creation of these positions would enable WSU to be competitive and attract candidates whose identities contribute to a more diverse campus or who are committed to diversity and inclusion.

Fuller position descriptions, with our best initial ideas regarding responsibilities and qualifications, are attached.

IV.   TRAINING

The following recommendations were forwarded in the 2020 final report. Due to the COVID pandemic, they were unimplementable. Therefore, we include them again as we still believe that they are vital to enabling the university to meet its affirmative action goals by enabling search committee members to move past their biases and choose candidates from increasingly diverse and historically underrepresented/ underserved backgrounds.

Recommendation #1: Diversity and Inclusion focused Tiered Training

We recommend that a tiered training is developed during the summer of 2021 to be piloted during the fall 2021-2022 academic year. In order to achieve this initiative, we recommend that a small cohort of committee members (3-5 total) from the different committees that work on Diversity and Inclusion initiatives/ issues on campus (CCC, BIRT, LGBTQ+ and AA/EO) develop such a program over the summer months.

The committee originally imagined the initiative as a summer working group project that would combine the efforts of multiple committees. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted budgets and changed plans; we recognize this is no longer possible as originally imagined. Instead, we have worked collaboratively with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion as they lead this effort through this time. The committee expects continued collaboration in the fall as soon as we return to normal operations.

The sessions the committee supports and recommends are implemented as part of the tiered training may be available individually or as part of a comprehensive Certificate program. Examples include:

- 2- hour workshops that further the WSU's Five Point Plan of Action with specific key learning outcomes.
    - Diversity & Inclusion: Necessary Skills for a Welcoming Environment
    - Power & Privilege: How We Use Them and Their Impact at WSU
    - Who Gets Hired: The Impact of Bias in Hiring and Retention

- One-week (5 full days) programs of instruction/ training time and can be offered both in-person or online, in a time-customized manner.
    - Mindfulness as a Catalyst for Equity & Social Justice

- 2-hour (faculty led) workshops under a "train the trainer" program.
    - Principles and Practices of Inclusive Pedagogy

The estimated cost of this program, based on projections provided by vendors, is 20,000.

Recommendation #2: Diversity Advocates Initiative

An increasing number of higher education institutions, both private and public, have adopted a Diversity Advocate model within search committees. This model works more effectively when

part of a comprehensive set of strategies all taking place at a given time on a given campus, not done in isolation. Some models and examples are detailed and can be explored here:

- https://facultyaffairs.gwu.edu/diversity-advocate
- https://searchadvocate.oregonstate.edu/about
- https://oae.illinois.edu/NewSearchManual/Search%20Committee%20Member%20On-Line%20Training.pdf
- https://diverseeducation.com/article/149878/

Overall, the concept involves the use of Diversity Representatives or Advocates that typically and predominantly function as consultants to the search committee process from an AA/EO perspective. Most Diversity Advocates undergo extensive training and have the capacity to train other individuals in these topics, including in a train the trainer model. Diversity Advocates educate themselves and others on issues of discrimination, privilege, other social justice issues, as well as matters related to the context of search committees, with an AA/EO lens.

We recommend that university faculty, staff, and administrators be provided with advanced non-discriminatory training which would allow them to act as Diversity Advocates. In particular, we imagine that within search committees, Diversity Advocates would be able to advocate for candidates from traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups and have a more in-depth knowledge of best practices, unconscious bias, and other aspects of successful search committees.

Faculty, staff, and administrators interested in becoming Diversity Advocates would take a series of trainings designed to enhance and expand basic training.

Current trainings would be considered a prerequisite:

- Title IX,
- anti-discrimination / harassment,
- search committee orientation,

As well, more specialized opportunities:

- Safe Spaces,
- Bias Impact in Hiring and retention,
- Power & Privilege, etc.

These trainings could be drawn upon from the organized series of tiered training (see Recommendation # 1). Furthermore, specialized/ tailored options would be specifically designed with search committee dynamics and Diversity Advocates in mind and can include Job competency-based interview questions, Social Justice focused hiring practices, amongst others. Once a tiered diversity and inclusion training program is in place, individuals who aspire to serve as Diversity Advocates would be required to complete the most advanced level of training.

Ideally, a significant percentage of WSU faculty, staff, and administrators could be diversity advocates. We envision no less than 10% of the full-time employee population, in order to ensure participation of Diversity Advocates across all searches taking place on campus.

Ideally, when search committees are formed a chair and a diversity advocate are identified. The hiring manager should work with the EO officer to identify the Diversity Advocate for the search committee.

APPENDIX 1

Brainstorming Priorities for the EODAA Committee 2020-2021

Over the course of the year, the members identified and pursued the following priorities in subcommittees.

Hiring a More Diverse Faculty and Staff Related Questions
1. How does WSU currently approach hiring historically minoritized faculty and staff (i.e., job advertisements, recruitment, requesting diversity statements of candidates, etc)?
2. What training could be offered (now or in the future) that might effectively impact the whole picture of hiring historically minoritized faculty and staff? Maybe with the goal of setting some specific framing around what equity looks like on our campus? (one answer might be the "Diversity and Inclusion Focused Tiered-training Initiative")
3. How might we advocate for or otherwise initialize strategic approaches (i.e., cluster or targeted hiring) to diversify the faculty and staff?
4. How can we effectively and respectfully intervene in search committees to ensure that bias does not impede the recruitment and selection of historically minoritized faculty and staff? (one answer might be the "Diversity Advocates Initiative")

Communication and Engagement Related Questions
1. How might we leverage the current moment to provide the campus community with answers to their questions, including, why aren't there more Black professors?
2. What can be done to engage, encourage, and/or enforce the diversifying of inert departments? Specifically, how can we encourage departments and faculty to diversify their curriculum and the materials offered in their courses.
3. How can we support campus leaders interested in leveraging the expertise of internal and community-based individuals to provide diversity and inclusion-focused content? (one answer is to develop the "Diversity Speakers List")
4. How can we more effectively inspire and fund faculty, staff, and students to take on and execute projects within their own circles that promote diversity, equity and inclusion? (one answer is to continue promoting the "Diversity Mini Grant")
5. How can we increase student engagement and awareness of the efforts of this committee? (a few ideas include connecting with professors whose courses achieve a "Diversity" LASC designation, working with the SGA, attending student events).
6. How can we respond to or productively engage with campus community members' mistrust of affirmative action initiatives?

Resources and Funding Related Questions
1. What resources can we call upon and rely on to fund initiatives recommended by this committee?

APPENDIX 2

Staff Navigator for Diversity Support

A diverse staff is essential to Worcester State University's mission to create an environment which allows all members of our campus community to succeed. We understand that faculty members with diverse identities may have higher retention rates if supported by peer mentors and opportunities to meet and build relationships with other BIPOC staff as they acclimate, settle into, and thrive in their roles at WSU.

This position is responsible for enabling the success of retaining BIPOC staff, a component of the Strategic Plan. The successful integration of historically minoritized staff members will be the focus. Responsibilities include communication with BIPOC staff, facilitating opportunities for community engagement and mentoring BIPOC staff to support the retention of new staff members of color.

Responsibilities:
- Working with human resources to help to support and retain BIPOC staff members.
- Coordinating events to assist historically minoritized staff as they join the WSU community through community building and mentoring activities.
- Serving as a resource for BIPOC staff with any questions they may have as they become acclimated to the university.
- Assist new BIPOC staff in developing a sense of belonging to WSU's campus community.
- Providing BIPOC staff about opportunities for professional development and networking opportunities.

Requirements:
- Member of the WSU staff/administration team
- Strong understanding of and commitment to the diversity goals outlined in the strategic plan
- Experience as an advisor and/or mentor
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills

Compensation: $30/hr * 10 hours/week * 50 weeks/year = $15,000/year

Reports to: Human Resources

Estimated Cost: $15,000/ year

Faculty Fellow for Diversity Support

A diverse faculty is essential to Worcester State University's mission to create an environment which allows all members of our campus community to succeed. We understand that faculty members with diverse identities may have higher retention rates if supported by faculty mentors and opportunities to meet and build relationships with other BIPOC faculty as they acclimate to their roles at WSU.

This position is responsible for enabling the success of retaining BIPOC faculty, a component of the Strategic Plan. The successful integration of historically minoritized faculty members will be the focus. Responsibilities include communication with BIPOC faculty, facilitating opportunities for community engagement and mentoring BIPOC faculty to support the retention of new faculty members of color.

Responsibilities:
- Working with human resources to help to support and retain BIPOC faculty members.
- Coordinating events to assist historically minoritized faculty as they join the WSU community through community building and mentoring activities.
- Serving as a resource for BIPOC faculty with any questions they may have as they become acclimated to the university.
- Assist new BIPOC faculty in developing a sense of belonging to WSU's campus community.
- Providing BIPOC faculty about opportunities for professional development and networking opportunities.

Requirements:
- Ph.D. or Ed.D., rank of Assistant (including VAPs), Associate or Full Professor
- Strong understanding of and commitment to the diversity goals outlined in the strategic plan
- Experience as an advisor and/or mentor
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills

Compensation: three (3) credit APR per semester

Reports to: Human Resources

Estimated Cost: $15,000/ year