

## **THIRTEEN IMMEDIATE RESPONSES** to the Open Dialogue on Racial Climate

We are pleased to update the campus on the efforts in response to the town hall meeting, “An Open Dialogue on Racial Climate,” that took place on November 20, 2015.

On December 10, 2015, three weeks after that town hall meeting, we, together with Kathryn Stockton, Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity, composed the following list of Thirteen Immediate Responses to the Open Dialogue on Racial Climate. Because we pledged to foster swift and meaningful change in the wake of this dialogue, we proposed immediate actions that promise impact. Next, we sought advice and feedback from our students. Associate Vice President Stockton met with the University’s many student groups who work on issues of social justice, to gather their responses to these strategies for change. She has completed this process, and she and Senior Vice President Watkins have just reported back to interested students in a town hall sponsored by ASUU on Tuesday, March 29, 2016, as part of the Conference on Diverse Excellence organized by ASUU student leaders.

In addition, the list of initiatives has been discussed with many other campus groups, including but not limited to the Council of Academic Deans, the Academic Senate, and the President’s Cabinet.

Here is a brief summary of the thirteen initiatives:

- 1) **Mandatory diversity training** for all faculty and staff: A working group to identify and/or design training has been formed and is beginning work this semester—with the goal of having a pilot program in place by next November, which can be assessed next spring semester before it receives full implementation.
- 2) **CESA (Center for Ethnic Student Affairs) space** to expand: A short-term plan—to provide more spacious room for student meetings and informal gatherings, along with quiet study space—has been developed and new space has already been located in the Student Union. Long-term plans are being developed as we work with donors and campus-planning units.
- 3) **Additional Financial Support for Student Equity and Diversity (SED) groups:** Increased support for SED high school conferences, conference travel, and SED graduation ceremonies has been identified and will be provided in the new 2016-17 budgets, July 1, to promote outreach and leadership development.
- 4) **Faculty Hiring Initiative and Diversity Post-Docs:** An open initiative to support recruitment of faculty and post-doctoral fellows from diverse backgrounds was launched in AY2014-15 and continues with increased funding in AY2015-16. This year alone, twenty-four offers have been made to new faculty from diverse backgrounds and 17 scholars have already committed to join the U in Fall 2016.

- 5) Developing a **Diverse Staff Hiring Plan**: With the Faculty Hiring Initiative in full swing since last year, a working group is being formed, under the leadership of Jeff Herring (the University's Chief Human Resources Officer) and Mary Anne Berzins (Assistant Vice President of Human Resources), to develop a plan to accelerate hiring of staff from diverse backgrounds.
- 6) Developing a **Mentoring Plan** for all Faculty and Staff: The Diversity Committee of the Academic Senate has completed and reported findings on best practices in faculty mentoring; a pilot program will be undertaken in Fall 2016 in the College of Humanities.
- 7) Funding has already been identified for the Office for Inclusive Excellence, directed by Dr. Belinda Otukolo Saltiban, to increase staffing to **respond to racial microaggressions**: This hire is currently underway, and both of these colleagues will team up more closely with staff in the Office for Equity and Diversity, including staff working in Student Equity and Diversity.
- 8) **Student Diversity Council**: This new Council has been formed to ensure the University administration is in tune with student issues. Representatives from major student groups who work on issues of diversity and equity will meet with Senior Vice President Ruth Watkins and Associate Vice President Kathryn Stockton several times each semester. The Council will also discuss diversity initiatives and climate concerns. Other leaders, including President Pershing and Vice President for Student Affairs Barbara Snyder, will join the council meetings periodically.
- 9) **"Diversity in Progress,"** a new communication tool, will be created: All diversity entities will contribute to one website to track University efforts and campus initiatives concerning diversity. The goal is to achieve maximum transparency and clear communication of diversity aims across many offices.
- 10) **Diversity Coalition Group**: Representatives from all major diversity entities will meet monthly to share campus diversity efforts, plan new initiatives, and support each other's ongoing plans, convened by Associate Vice President Kathryn Stockton.
- 11) **Diversity Scholars and Honors**: Developed in AY2014-15, this streamlined pipeline from the Diversity Scholars Program to the Honors College, for students who meet Honors requirements, will serve as a model for other small-cohort-experience partnerships around campus.
- 12) **New Scholarships to Support Native American Students**: A donor who wishes to foster educational opportunity for all Native American students has recently committed \$1M in new scholarship funding. Such funds are legally allowable to prioritize in this way for students who are tribally affiliated.
- 13) **The School for Cultural and Social Transformation**: The Ethnic Studies Program and the Gender Studies Program have developed a joint proposal to create a School for Cultural and Social Transformation that, after passing all necessary approvals, will significantly raise the stature and status of these programs both inside the University and in the nation.

We hope you are as excited as we are by these initiatives. We do believe they promise—and, indeed, are now enacting—the meaningful change we seek for the University of Utah.

**David W. Pershing**  
President  
University of Utah

**Vivian S. Lee**  
Senior Vice President  
for Health Sciences

**Ruth V. Watkins**  
Senior Vice President  
for Academic Affairs