Washington University in St. Louis

Executive Summary Report
from the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion

June 30, 2017

Introduction

Washington University is deeply committed to diversity, inclusion, and equity and is actively engaged in a process of institutional transformation. Our Board of Trustees established strategic priorities in the university's Plan for Excellence, which includes the goal to "strengthen diversity and improve gender balance and inclusiveness in all segments of the university community." [1] Additionally, our mission statement affirms that the university is to:

"Welcome students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds to create an inclusive community that is welcoming, nurturing, and intellectually rigorous..." [2]

In February 2015, following a semester of campus activism and dialogue, Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton and Provost Holden Thorp established a Steering Committee for Diversity and Inclusion. The committee was led by Nancy Staudt, Dean of the School of Law, and was charged with the creation of a university-wide plan for increased diversity. The Report of the Steering Committee for Diversity and Inclusion defined a two-year, 12-point action plan that included the establishment of a Diversity Commission to implement the resulting strategy. To accomplish this goal, Adrienne Davis, vice provost and the William M. Van Cleve Professor of Law, was appointed as chair of the commission. Vice chairs were Linling Gao-Miles, lecturer, International and Area Studies in Arts & Sciences; Julia Macias, assistant dean, Scholars Program, and director, Annika Rodriguez Scholars Program; and Will Ross, associate dean for diversity and professor of medicine, School of Medicine.

The Commission on Diversity and Inclusion began its work in August 2015 and was composed of 27 members of the Washington University community, including faculty members, staff, and students—undergraduate, graduate, and professional students—from all campuses. To tackle the action items, we appointed 12 working groups and utilized the perspectives, experiences, and expertise of more than 230 faculty members, staff, and students. The working groups were as follows: (i) Data Framing, (ii) Diversifying Staff, (iii) Diversity Training, (iv) Eliminating Technology Barriers, (v) Events, (vi) Faculty/Faculty Pipeline, (vii) Graduate Student Diversity, (viii) Honors and Recognition, (ix) Race/Identity/Social Justice Institute Task Force, (x) Sex and Gender Equity, (xi) Task Force on Diversity Strategic Planning, and (xii) Undergraduate Student Diversity.

In addition, we took on the task of making recommendations on: an institutional scorecard, a chief diversity officer, a centralized "academy" to house training and other inclusion initiatives, tenure standards, urban fellows, publicity/communications strategy, and support for the university's Supplier Diversity Initiative. We also solicited input from the university's standing LGBT Advisory Committee.

To understand the shifting landscape of institutional leadership in diversity and inclusion, we engaged thought leaders in academic diversity, meeting with three academic chief diversity officers at peer institutions[3] and one local corporate chief diversity officer.[4] We met with key leaders at the university, including Holden Thorp, executive vice chancellor and provost; Hank Webber, executive vice chancellor for administration; Legail Poole Chandler, vice chancellor for human resources; Ellen Rostand, assistant vice chancellor for public affairs; Lynn McCloskey, assistant provost; Gephardt Institute leader Amanda Moore McBride; and Stephanie Smith, manager of supplier diversity.

Finally, we invited the broader university community to participate in our work, through formal meetings, town halls, campus diversity and inclusion advocacy groups, and informal "coffee hours" hosted by the individual working groups at the Center for Diversity and Inclusion.

[1] A Report of the Steering Committee for Inclusion and Diversity, August 14, 2015, at diversity.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf (pages 8-10.)
[2] Mark Wrighton, "Chancellor Statement on Diversity," Washington University in St. Louis: Diversity at WUSTL, diversity.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf (at page 8) and wustl.edu/about/mission-statement
[3] Patrick Simms, Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer, University of Wisconsin; George Hill, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Chief Diversity Officer, Vanderbilt University; and Jerry Kang, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, University of California, Los Angeles.
[4] Emily Pitts, Chief Diversity Officer, Edward Jones.

This report represents the culmination of two years of deep engagement, focused strategizing, fact finding, bench marking, and listening to the voices of our Washington University community.

Developing an action plan that promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity at Washington University requires a shared understanding of these key values and recognition that many of these ideas, terms, and definitions are evolving and will require a commitment to continuous learning over the course of time.

We at Washington University believe that the twin goals of diversity and inclusion are essential to our mission of excellence in teaching, research, patient care, and service.[5] Diverse communities that are also inclusive produce knowledge, solve complex problems, teach and learn, and offer patient care better than homogeneous and non-inclusive communities. Thus, inclusion supports the university's foundational goals and mission. Enhancing the diversity of our university community is but one component necessary for achieving our goals; we must also critically examine and be prepared to change our institutional structures, practices, and policies as needed to create an environment that is welcoming, collaborative, productive, and inclusive.

DIVERSITY

As Provost Holden Thorp's "Statement on Diversity" makes clear:

"Washington University welcomes difference on our campus in the form of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, geography, socioeconomic status, age, politics, religion, philosophy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and veteran status. We seek to bring these different backgrounds and perspectives to the great problems facing the world." [6]

Within this comprehensive array of identities, expressions, and experiences are many points of intersectionality, reflecting the complex and dynamic nature of human beings in their social environment. We recognize that social location as well as historic and enduring structural inequalities have disadvantaged some in our community. Consequently, we are committed to expanding access to members of underrepresented and marginalized groups because it is both just and results in a more vibrant, innovative, and productive institution.

Not only are diverse groups important, but so are diverse experiences and viewpoints within each group. Underrepresented identities are not interchangeable—we believe valuing each individual as unique is a sign of equity and respect, even when individuals share background characteristics across a group. True diversity reflects a wide range of cultural differences and encompasses many different individual attributes, both visible and invisible.

INCLUSION

An inclusive academic community commits to establishing the best possible conditions to support and promote the diverse people that comprise the community by ensuring fair access to educational and employment resources and opportunities. It meaningfully conveys respect for and recognition of the value that diverse individuals and groups bring to our institution. It fosters thoughtful interaction across groups, promotes the expression of diverse viewpoints in discussions and debates, and seeks inclusion in our decision-making processes across the university. An inclusive Washington University will leverage our diversity to achieve our mission and goals of excellence in education and scholarship.

As Chancellor Mark Wrighton has noted:

"Diversity strengthens our sense of community and is vital to our knowledge creation, problem solving, and productivity—all of which are essential to our mission as a world-class university. Enhancing our diversity, while making Washington University a more inclusive place, is not an option. It is an imperative. And, we know that we have work to do." [7]

We engaged more than 230 members of the university community, principally through working groups, informal

[5] Washington University in St. Louis, "Mission Statement: Strategic Priorities" at: wustl.edu/about/strategic-priorities also Steering Committee Report, at page 8: wustl.edu/about diversity. wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf
[6] Holden Thorp, "Provost Statement on Diversity" at provost.wustl.edu/diversity
[7] Wrighton, "Chancellor Statement on Diversity" at diversity.wustl.edu/framework/chancellor-statement

coffee hours, and other large forums with interested community members. Each working group produced its own report, which was then presented to the commission for review and approval. Taken together, these reports provide a road map to our goal.

There are some important issues we were unable to tackle at this juncture, most notably the specific needs of contingent faculty members, contract workers, professional school students, and international school students. In addition, we encourage Washington University to expand its focus to include other forms of diversity, such as religious and disability differences. These topics are addressed at various junctures in the full reports, which are available online; nevertheless we strongly recommend that the university would benefit from a more sustained focus.

It is our belief that Washington University in St. Louis is poised to become a leader in the areas of diversity and inclusion within higher education, research, patient care, and service. In order to address each of the areas within this report, it will require commitment, as well as dedication of time and resources to implement new initiatives, while building on existing strengths.

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Proposed 12-Point Action Plan

Immediate Action Items

1. The university will commit increased financial resources to ensure that we recruit, admit, and support a diverse population of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students;

2. The university will commit increased resources to ensure that we recruit, hire, and support diverse faculty through a variety of initiatives, including pipeline work;

3. Deans, leaders, and managers will review and assess hiring, promotion, and retention practices for the purpose of promoting greater staff diversity and inclusion;

4. The university will consider and evaluate a possible race/identity/social justice institute with the help of a faculty-led task force;

5. The university will create a repository with the goal of having a single location that supports the integration and analysis of diversity-related data and resources;

6. The university will institutionalize diversity and inclusion training across the campuses for students, staff, and faculty;

7. The university will host university-wide diversity and inclusion events (perhaps similar to the February 2015 event "Race and Ethnicity: A Day of Discovery and Dialogue") with students playing a key planning role;

8. Each school and unit will devise a strategic plan for promoting diversity and inclusion;

9. All deans, leaders, and managers will identify and eliminate technology-based barriers to diversity and inclusion in both the employment and academic contexts;

10. The university will recognize and honor individuals and/or groups who have advanced diversity and inclusion;

11. The university will issue and post annual diversity and inclusion scorecards; and

12. The chancellor will create a Commission on Diversity and Inclusion, which will help to implement the action items outlined above.

Executive Summary

The Commission on Diversity and Inclusion along with our 12 working groups have worked for two years to implement the 12-point action plan. In addition, we researched other initiatives to aid Washington University in St. Louis in reaching its goals of diversity, inclusion, and equity for students, staff, faculty members, and all employees throughout the university system.

Nineteen individual reports comprise the bulk of the Commission on Diversity and Inclusion Report (dated June 30, 2017). These individual reports track the 12-point action plan and our additional research, including the final recommendations, background information, pertinent attachments, and appendices.

What follows are highlights culled from the individual reports.

The commission undertook an intentionally wide-ranging consideration of the university's needs and opportunities. We note that the university often defaults to the academic schools and departments in discussing diversity and inclusion. However, some of our largest units are not academic departments; indeed, all of our units, academic and administrative, play crucial roles at the university and we cannot achieve our diversity and inclusion goals without recognizing and including them.

Report 1: Race and Ethnicity Center [Action Item #4]

The Race and Ethnicity Center report states that, "[G]lobal research universities tackle great problems, and race comprises one of the greatest challenges of our times. While Washington University has an outstanding African and African-American Studies department in the College of Arts & Sciences, the university lacks a university-wide infrastructure that facilitates the comparative study of race/ethnicity and faculty member engagement in shaping national and local policy." After much research and consultation, we recommend:

- Washington University create a "university-wide research center focused specifically on race and ethnicity."

- The center would "serve three broad primary purposes: promote outstanding research that helps shape national conversations on race/ethnicity; facilitate student learning and research on race/ethnicity; provide an infrastructure for our faculty members to intervene in public discourse and policy design, including addressing local and regional needs."

- Such a center would house curriculum for undergraduate and graduate students, "especially in the fields of Asian-American, Latinx, and comparative race/ethnicity studies," facilitate student research, and help develop a pipeline for the next generation of race and ethnicity scholars.

Report 2: Identifying Technology Barriers [Action Item #9]

The Eliminating Technology Barriers report states that, "For many people, their first or only contact with" the university is "through technology," mainly the university's libraries, numerous websites, and email system. However, some—be they students, staff, faculty, or visitors—experience barriers when attempting to access technology. Thus, we recommend:

- Funding is made available so that "all students have the computer equipment and software necessary for success in their studies." Student Financial Services will identify those students in need of a laptop and software so that all students are outfitted with a personal computer and the software needed to pursue academic studies.

- The university must "require all websites and online resources ... to follow web accessibility best practices, aiming to adhere to WCAIG 2.0 AA standard" so that those with "visual, hearing, motor, or cognitive disabilities, or ... older technology" not be excluded or barred from "full access to university web resources" and thus be able to engage in the benefits of all online opportunities.

- Make the university's hiring platforms more user-friendly, consistent, and functional in order to eliminate any barriers "for diverse applicants, who may not have access to the internal networks and connections" needed to navigate the system. This includes eliminating any unnecessary firewalls so potential students and employees can access "key resources, including scholarship, programming, and other ... resources."

Report 3: Undergraduate Students; Report 4: Graduate Students [Action Item #1]; and Report 5: Urban Fellows

The Undergraduate Student Diversity and Graduate Student Diversity reports recommend ways to both increase the number of students from underrepresented and marginalized groups and to ensure their academic success. A separate report recommends a signature community engagement strategy that will strengthen the university's "presence in the St. Louis community and region" in a way that aligns with our academic mission as a research institution. Recommendation highlights are:

- Build intellectual support for a diverse student body by increasing the retention of women and students of color in STEM fields through "providing multiple pathways to be a pre-med student," "expanding the use of transition and summer bridge programs, and" by "providing financial support for summer programs."

- Provide financial transparency in the true costs associated with an undergraduate education by supplying "students with the range of non-textbook estimated costs … associated with the instructional requirements of a course, minor, and major" and "adjusting the Cost of Attendance (COA) calculus to provide requisite financial aid to include support of the COA for a major course of study."

- Create a standing committee to promote graduate student diversity, host signature national conferences and seminars, and consolidate graduate student diversity recruitment efforts and weekends across all schools.

- Expand the Gephardt Institute's innovative St. Louis Urban Fellows Program so that students can "use their educations and skills to combat historic and structural inequality and ongoing disparities."

Report 6: Faculty; Report 7: Tenure Standards; and Report 8: Gender Equity [Action Item #2]

These three reports address and implement the same action item: ensuring the university hires a diverse faculty and commits the requisite resources for their promotion, retention, and professional success. Because of our stature as a global research university, there is also an emphasis on our unique role of producing the next generation of excellent scholars and researchers.

- Create a Provost's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program to harness the power of postdoctoral fellowships in the service of diversifying the next generation of scholars and researchers, at Washington University and in the academy more broadly. Such a program would centralize efforts to ensure a well-resourced, universal experience that combines the outstanding research experience characteristic of Washington University, with a supportive cohort experience and unique professional development and mentoring opportunities.

- Invest in a communications infrastructure to enhance awareness and deepen the use of existing university pipeline programs.

- Deepen our commitment to diverse faculty recruitment by piloting innovative approaches that include creating new partnerships, broadening the reach of search seminars and workshops, and especially empowering our "front lines" (i.e., individual faculty members) to recruit and mentor through toolkits and small grants to mentor trainees. At the institutional level, explore ways to structurally reduce barriers to high-cost STEM hires and explore the feasibility of cluster hires.

- Ensure that the academic careers of underrepresented faculty members thrive through connecting them to key institutional resources; publicizing their work; committing resources to research in disparities, equity, and diversity and inclusion; and exploring a service scholars program that will value the additional institutional work they do.

- We believe civic and community engagement is an important academic value and furthers diversity and inclusion; therefore, we "recommend that each school, or … each academic department review its tenure and promotion standards" and decide if "a community engagement component aligns with" its priorities, goals, and mission. However, community engagement should not be mandated as a tenure requirement nor, if adopted, should it disadvantage any faculty members. The faculty must retain control over the tenure process.

- On the Danforth Campus, we should increase the "percentage of female tenured-track faculty from" the "current level of 32 percent to a target goal of 50 percent" and on the Medical Campus substantially increase the number of women faculty members on the investigator track as well as "achieve parity on the clinician track."

- On both campuses, establish an Office for Women Faculty as a means to advance gender equity initiatives, including ensuring gender pay equity.

- Establish equity in paid leave between staff and faculty.

Report 9: Staff [Action Item #3]; Report 10: Academy; and Report 11: Training [Action Item #6]

Taken together, these three reports make recommendations regarding the diversification, training, and support for university staff. Although these reports also include students and faculty members, the recommendations center mainly on building a more diverse university staff as well as a more inclusive working environment overall.

- Support Human Resources' efforts to advance a career development program for staff, including creating a Professional Leadership Academy & Network (PLAN) track for junior-level staff; developing managers' leadership skills to better facilitate inclusive units; and studying the possibility of "creating a signature fellowship" plan in order to develop a "high-impact pipeline for senior administrative positions … at the university."

- Create an Academy for Diversity and Inclusion for staff and faculty members, to become the university's "primary forum for changing climate and culture" by housing diversity and inclusion resources, including training resources, support for campus affinity groups, and annual events and recognition ceremonies.

- Provide and encourage training to create and build diversity and inclusion awareness, knowledge, and skills by making available fundamental core courses to new and existing members of the university community. These would include standard introductory courses on Title IX, anti-bias training, SafeZones, and Green Dot–Bystander Intervention Training.

- Encourage staff and faculty members to participate in training by implementing an innovative suite of recognition and incentive opportunities.

- Undertake a consistent approach to evaluating current and future trainings by assigning "one office or group the responsibility" of assessment.

Report 12: Honors and Recognition [Action Item #10] and Report 13: Events [Action Item #7]

Recognizing and honoring our community members for their work on diversity, inclusion, and equity should become a regular and formal effort. It is important to institutionalize events that honor individuals as well as groups that undertake the hard work of making our campus more inclusive and equitable. Such recognition should be designed to build community and can even inspire and spark "new networking and collaborations."

- Create annual awards to recognize individuals and/or groups "who have made significant contributions to diversity and inclusion," including the award of "a cash prize of $3,000" for staff, faculty members, and students, including a supplemental prize of $2,000 for "the networks and institutions that nourished the individuals" and made their diversity work possible.

- Hold a summit every two to three years to coincide with these awards; summits should be designed to spark further innovation and collaboration in campus diversity and inclusion work.

- Continue the Day of Discovery and Dialogue, either as an annual or biannual event; house the event in the academy and designate a standing committee to oversee it.

- Create a permanent place for "diversity and inclusion events sponsored by staff and faculty … [and] affinity groups" including a "permanent home for Trailblazers" and "similar diversity and inclusion events."

Report 14: Supplier Diversity and Report 15: Publicity/Communications Strategy

These reports focus on ways to support the diversity and inclusion efforts of two key university teams, the university's Supplier Diversity Initiative and Office of Public Affairs. We were impressed with both teams' recent innovations and successes. These recommendations encourage the university to continue investment in both of these crucial areas.

- The Supplier Diversity Initiative has had great success in increasing the percentage of minority- and women-owned suppliers working with the university and pioneering innovative pipeline programs. We recommend that the university "continue its support for the Supplier Diversity Initiative and consider ways to expand this program," especially the Underrepresented Capacity Building Program and the Apprentice Work and Education Program.

- Empower Public Affairs to coordinate other key stakeholders and develop a strategic communications plan that will "position the university as an industry thought leader in the area of diversity and inclusion." Commit $75,000 annually "to more tightly defin[ing] success, more clearly defin[ing] audiences and actions, and creat[ing] compelling messages that will move audiences to act."

Report 16: Strategic Planning [Action Item #8]; Report 17: Data [Action Item #5]; Report 18: Scorecard [Action Item #11]; and Report 19: Chief Diversity Officer

These reports concern strategic planning and administrative support of diversity and inclusion. We recommend enhancements to infrastructure regarding support of diversity and inclusion.

- "[C]ontinue to foster diversity and inclusion strategic planning at each academic and administrative unit" by using a process that includes, among other items, "problem identification; crafting school or unit-specific vision, mission, and values statement[s]"; and "developing guidelines and products."

- Conduct regular exit interviews for faculty and staff members, as well as for students who leave the university for non-academic reasons.

- Pilot "an innovative approach to measuring ... progress in diversity and inclusion ... in two ways: longitudinally through objective indicators and as real-time 'snapshots' of climate and need."

- Although much of our diversity and inclusion infrastructure is relatively new, we risk pilot programs and test initiatives becoming legacy programs that linger without proven outcomes or past their efficacy. Hence, we should ensure regular assessment of legacy programs and also regularize climate surveys and integrate their outcomes into long-term planning and institutional decision-making.

- Develop a university-wide "diversity and inclusion repository" to collect and house a wide array of indicators and to support internal institutional research, scholarly research, and assessment. Aspire to national leadership and best practices in this area.

- Expand the university populations we currently track to include research teams, human subject pools, and post-doctoral fellows.

- Create a dedicated position/office that will serve two purposes. First, focus on assessment and measurement design and analysis/interpretation with the three goals of tracking progress, assessing culture, and driving innovation. Second, serve as a "strategic thinking" consultant that will "assist units in the planning and execution of their diversity strategic plans and service as a think tank for future ideas."

- In lieu of recommending a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), we recommend the university empanel an external diversity and inclusion review board "to conduct an analysis of current diversity and inclusion practices and programs, with periodic assessments every five years."

The chancellor has charged us with an ambitious set of action items. Many build on existing resources; others will require new investment and infrastructure. In particular, we highlight that a university-wide Race and Ethnicity Center; The Academy for Diversity and Inclusion; enhanced commitment to assessment, strategic planning, and data collection; and increased focus on gender equity each will require additional resources and potentially new positions.

Please click on report names to view full reports

COMMISSION_{ON}

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