

The George Washington University Response Action Plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

April 2018

Executive Summary

The topics of race, diversity and inclusion have been brought to the forefront of conversations at the George Washington University (GW) following an offensive and racially inflammatory social media posting. The incident caused immeasurable hurt to members of our community, particularly our African-American students, and also led to a wave of conversations – some in public forums with hundreds of people, some in small group settings and many in one-on-one interactions among students, staff and faculty – not only about the specific instance but also about the countless instances in which members of our GW community experience racism on and off campus during the course of their daily lives. It became clear that bold action, both short- and long-term, was needed to begin to address racism and other forms of bias and discrimination in our GW community.

We know our capacity to uphold academic excellence, to solve our greatest problems and to serve others can only be enhanced by a diverse and truly inclusive campus community. This requires our collective awareness, engagement and, most importantly, action. Over the past several weeks, university leaders have collaborated with students, staff and faculty members on project teams to develop a comprehensive action plan as laid out by President Thomas LeBlanc on Feb. 7, 2018. The actions outlined in this plan are underway or will commence immediately. These are the first step in our journey to create a more inclusive and diverse GW and to meet our larger strategic goals of improving the student experience and the institutional culture. We want to harness the energy that has been generated by this painful moment to move with purpose and a sense of urgency toward ensuring all students, staff and faculty members truly feel welcome and valued on this campus.

GW is committed to developing policies and programs to create an inclusive campus climate that supports an optimal learning and working environment for students, faculty and staff.

Each action outlined in this plan is related to one of nine goals:

1. Make diversity training mandatory for all incoming students in fall 2018.
2. Require diversity training for residential life staff, RAs, Colonial Inauguration leaders, admissions staff, tour guides and other staff members who work closely with students.
3. Update the student code of conduct to address non-sex based harassment and discrimination.
4. Update the university's equal opportunity policy to include definitions and procedures to address forms of harassment beyond sexual harassment.
5. Establish a bias incident reporting system to track and address verbal harassment and other forms of unwelcome conduct motivated by hatred based on race, color, religion,

gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin or any other factor. Anonymous reporting will be a feature of this new reporting system.

6. Establish a GW Race in America speaker series.
7. Regarding the imminent search for a dean of the student experience, make documented leadership skills in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion a required core competency of the position.
8. Require diversity training for all recruitment chairs and new member educators within the Greek community.
9. Identify opportunities for on-campus Greek housing.

All participants attending the community meeting led by President LeBlanc on Feb. 27, 2018, were sent a follow-up email inviting them to visit the [Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement's website](#) to share additional ideas and concerns as well as to volunteer for one of the working groups charged with addressing the identified goals. This invitation was also shared more broadly with various campus constituencies. As a result, more than 85 students, staff and faculty members committed to creating the following action plan, and to championing the ongoing efforts around the nine goals. We are grateful for the outpouring of interest and the time and energy that these team members have spent over the past several weeks to chart a path forward.

This process has illuminated numerous other initiatives already in the works. Some of GW's schools have appointed chief diversity officers or diversity committees, and all schools are actively developing strategic approaches to diversity and inclusion. For example, the School of Nursing has institutionalized its approach to diversity, equity and inclusion through a [robust series of actions](#). The [School of Medicine and Health Sciences](#) continues down a road they have been on for a number of years to build a stronger community through diversity and inclusion. The Committee on Inclusive Classrooms has been meeting since fall 2017 to create a set of resources for faculty on creating inclusive classrooms. The group will compile articles, papers, presentations and other materials for a website dedicated to supporting GW faculty who are interested in ensuring full engagement of all our students in the classroom. And GW's annual Diversity Summit brings hundreds of students, staff, faculty members and alumni together to learn from and about each other.

These are only a few examples that remind us that our work to fight racism and other forms of discrimination and bias at GW must be approached from many angles, and that no one document, initiative or accomplishment is enough.

Thus, while this action plan is a direct response to a specific incident on campus, it is only one step of many more to come in the months and years ahead. We are committed to comprehensive, intentional change and improvement; ongoing efforts are required from all members of the GW community to make the university the kind of pre-eminent institution to which we aspire, one where all of us are valued, respected and embraced for who we are and the perspectives and experiences we bring.

Goal 1: Diversity Training for all incoming students in fall 2018

Objective *To increase students' awareness and understanding, communicate shared definitions of terms and build capacity to engage in productive and respectful conversations both in and outside the classroom around issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

- A working group of staff and students has been meeting to determine this year's approach and has developed a pilot training model to include three segments: adapting and implementing the skits during CI as learning instruments to lead into facilitated small group discussions around racism, discrimination and bias; researching and implementing student-focused online diversity training in support of developing a common language and communicating GW community values and expectations; and hosting a speaker and planning small group discussions with trained student, staff and faculty facilitators during fall 2018.
- In addition, ongoing training opportunities are critical to further engagement. Encourage students to attend MSSC and other anti-racism/bias workshops throughout the year by communicating information early and frequently.
- Using data from the inaugural training experience, the group will create a plan by May 2019 for an even more robust new student training approach for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Project Owners

Staff from Enrollment and the Student Experience and the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement, in collaboration with interested students, staff and faculty; outside expertise will be consulted as necessary.

Goal 2: Diversity Training for staff, faculty, and student leaders

Objective *Create trainings to increase student, faculty and staff leaders' awareness and understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion, including communicating shared definitions of terms and building capacity to engage in productive and respectful conversations.*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

- A working group of students, staff and faculty has been meeting to develop an immediate approach to training through benchmarking, information gathering and existing expertise. Contract with the Posse Foundation's consulting arm or another existing resource to deliver training during spring, summer and fall 2018 for key student leaders as well as staff in Admissions, Student Financial Assistance, Colonial Student Services and Residential Life.
- Work with Human Resources to determine feasibility and resources required to integrate unconscious bias and/or diversity training modules into new employee orientation. Leverage existing training curricula from ODECE and the HR Learning Management System, Talent @ GW system.
- The Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement (ODECE) in collaboration with Enrollment and the Student Experience has prepared a job description and will be recruiting and hiring a diversity and inclusion training director in the coming months. This will allow for a more systemic and institutionalized approach to training experiences and workshops to address issues related to diversity, cultural competence, intersectionality, intercultural communications, anti-racism, unconscious bias, equity and related topics.
- The university will provide diversity training for incoming faculty at new faculty orientation. Ideally, these sessions will include information on anti-discrimination principles, GW's commitment to diversity and inclusion, and information about how to create inclusive classrooms.
- The university will continue to provide unconscious bias training for faculty search committees across the university. This one-hour program is designed to help participants explore the concept of unconscious bias through Harvard/University of Washington's Implicit Association test, research-based practical examples of unconscious bias in hiring and other decision-making. The program ends with practical

advice about how to minimize bias in hiring and in one's interactions with colleagues and co-workers.

Project Owners

Staff from the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement, Enrollment and the Student Experience, the Office for Faculty Affairs and Human Resources with input and collaboration from students, staff and faculty members

Goal 3: Update the student code of conduct to address non-sex based harassment and discrimination

Objective *To promote the well-being of our students through written policies that align with GW's mission and values.*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

Once the equal opportunity policy update has been published, the student code of conduct will be updated to reflect the changes in the EO policy. This updated policy language will be reviewed by necessary campus partners and will be published on or before the start of the 2018-19 academic year. The new policy will be communicated broadly to ensure all GW students are aware of the updates.

Project Owner

Staff from the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement and the Division of Student Affairs (ESE as of July 1, 2018)

Goal 4: Update the university's equal opportunity policy to include definitions and procedures to address forms of harassment beyond sexual harassment

Objective *To champion GW's commitment to fair treatment of all members of our community*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

The equal opportunity policy update has been drafted and includes definitions of harassment and retaliation. The updated sections also highlight pathways for addressing non-sex based harassment. Following review and input from necessary campus partners, the updated policy will be published and effective by the start of fall 2018.

Project Owners

The Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement in partnership with the Division of Student Affairs (ESE) and Human Resources.

Goal 5: Establish a bias incident reporting system

Objective *We strive to create a diverse and inclusive learning environment where open, honest and respectful communications are the expectation. By establishing a bias incident reporting system GW will be able to confront instances of bias immediately to address the effects of bias and marshal GW's resources to focus on community healing and restoration.*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

- Content for Bias Incident Response Team (BIRT) site has been drafted, including a list of campus offices that will be part of the BIRT. Current team members include the Office for Diversity Equity and Community Engagement; Division of Student Affairs (Dean's Office, Center for Student Engagement, Residential Life, Counseling Center); Division of Safety and Security; and Human Resources.
- GW BIRT will utilize an existing anonymous reporting tool already available to the GW community through a third-party provider, EthicsPoint (gwu.ethicspoint.com).
- BIRT project team has been assembled and will be asked to review and contribute to the final draft of the website content.

- Campus partners will meet during the summer of 2018 to prepare for BIRT site launch on or before the start of the 2018-19 academic year.

Project Owners

The Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement and the Division of Student Affairs (as of July 1, 2018 the Enrollment and the Student Experience team).

Goal 6: Establish a GW Race in America speaker series

Objective *The university will develop a Race in America speaker series to bring to GW dynamic and compelling speakers who will facilitate and promote genuine engagement within the GW community.*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

- The third annual Diversity Summit: Embracing Diversity and Inclusion at GW hosted the inaugural speakers in the GW Race in America speaker series with addresses by Ibram X. Kendi and Symone Sanders.
- Roger Fairfax, senior associate dean for academic affairs and professor of law, and Helen Cannaday Saulny, associate dean for diversity, equity and community engagement, will lead a steering committee with student, staff and faculty representation to direct the activities of the speaker series, including selection of speakers and topics; development of proposals for invitation; solicitation of funding and underwriting; frequency, timing and location of events; and coordination with university and community entities regarding format and logistics.

Project Owners

Staff from the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement in partnership with External Relations, the Student Association, Enrollment and the Student Experience, and other key stakeholders

Goal 7: Dean of the student experience to demonstrate previous leadership skills in and be a champion of diversity, equity, and inclusion

Objective *The dean of the student experience will help to foster a transformative college experience to enhance academic performance and social excellence by building effective communities of learning that promote diversity, inclusion and equity for all students.*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

- In order to hire an experienced leader, a collaborative bridge builder, a well-informed and accomplished student affairs practitioner and a champion of diversity who recognizes the essential link between inclusion and excellence, the posting for the dean of the student experience required documented leadership skills in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion as core competencies.
- The vice provost for enrollment management and retention in collaboration with the committee chairs and the search firm have actively pursued the development of a diverse candidate pool and assembled a diverse search committee that includes three undergraduate students and one graduate student. Search committee members participated in unconscious bias training. In addition, a consultative committee of current students from a diversity of backgrounds was created to meet confidentially with finalists and provide feedback to the search committee.

Project Owner

The vice provost for enrollment management and retention, with strong support from the search committee co-chairs and members of the search committee and student consultative committee

Goal 8: Diversity training for all recruitment chairs and new member educators within the Greek community

Objective *Develop training that furthers students' understanding of the broader systemic issues of racism, classism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination and bias to ensure a more*

welcoming and inclusive approach to new member selection and orientation.

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

Students from Greek organizations and governance bodies are working with staff from the Multicultural Student Services Center (MSSC) and the Center for Student Engagement (CSE) to develop a training plan for diversity and inclusion for fall 2018 with programs that will include topics like unconscious bias.

Project Owners

Staff from the MSSC within the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement and the Center for Student Engagement team within DSA/ESE, along with students

Goal 9: Identify opportunities for on-campus Greek housing

Objective *Provide students from Multicultural Greek Council organizations an opportunity to reside in a community with other MGC members.*

Current Status and Remaining Action Items

- A survey was conducted of all members of MGC sororities and fraternities in March 2018 to determine interest in living in a common space in Munson Hall for the 2018-2019 academic year. Given time constraints, students had already identified housing options for the following year. Instead, space is being identified in District House for the 2019-2020 academic year while it is determined whether MGC organizations have an interest in residing together for that school year.
- In addition, staff are reviewing the affinity-housing policy and adjusting language so organizations from the Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) are able to apply. Further, staff in collaboration with students will determine best communication methods to ensure transparency and consistency when a townhouse becomes available for rent. Finally, we will assess the excellence process and application and incorporate feedback from MGC organizations while continuing to provide assistance for completing the award packets.

Project Owners

The Center for Student Engagement's Greek Life and Residential Engagement teams, in partnership with the MSSC and students from the Multicultural Greek Council

Collaborators

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to the many students, staff and faculty members who collaborated on project teams to make this action plan possible.

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