



Subject Line: 2020 December Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Task Force Update

In June 2020 the Association of Black Social Work Students, Black Radical Healing Pathways, and the Black Community within the School of Social Work (SSW) sent a call to our SSW Administration to address institutional racism within our school of social work. In response to that call Dean Videka created two Tasks Forces, an Anti-Racism Budget Advisory Group that would determine how funds donated to address racism would be allocated and a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Task Force (DEI TF). The DEI TF is composed of faculty and students nominated by the student body and appointed by Dean Videka. They were charged with addressing 55 demands to address racism in our school and field presented to the School of Social Work Community by the Association of Black Social Work Students, Black Radical Healing Pathways, the Black Community and the Doctoral Students' Organization in their call for action.

The DEI TF is co-chaired by Associate Dean Lorraine Gutiérrez and Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Larry Gant. Members are Lauren Davis, Ayesha Ghazi Edwin, William Elliott, Jackie Hawkins, Jamie Simmons, Jordan Walker, Joel Lucio, and Matthew Bakko. We have met 15 times since our first meeting on July 9, 2020. We are sharing here some of the progress on these demands so far:

1. Dean Videka, on behalf of the SSW, wrote a public letter of support for changes to the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) 2022 EPAS review encouraging inclusion of language related to anti-racism/anti-oppression.
2. Created a DEI communication task force focused on ways to communicate effectively with the school about current events, world issues, and internal incidences at the school.
3. Worked with the MSW curriculum committee on their Anti-Racism plan. This plan includes more organized efforts for faculty collaboration, education and support to teach PODS more effectively, and more consistency across courses



4. Rolled out the Centering Justice online modules to all full and part time faculty, to improve understanding and teaching of PODS. Required this module of all new faculty.
5. Created more intersectional course content and other courses focused on social equity, diversity, and marginalized identities
6. A student initiated town hall was held, with a demand that the SSW administration provide responses to the issues. This response is linked here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fAV4ds1OIC5-5rIloiBrdw7nasLxl4hw/view?usp=sharing>
7. Shared our Demands Progress document with students to address the need for transparency regarding how the demands are being met.
8. Began addressing PhD students' job market concerns, especially as related to the BIPOC students.
9. Facilitated Community Conversation around "hot topics" such as best classroom practices in the upcoming Winter semester, feeling misplaced due to COVID, communication with field advisors, and students feeling unheard.
10. Expanded Continuing Education workshops for faculty, including field instructors, on anti-racist pedagogy and issues.
11. Created a course, *ENGAGE: Community*, for Winter 2021 that will feature virtual discussion with local community leaders, organizers, and scholars leading movements for social and racial equity. A course on Anti-Blackness is being developed for a future semester.

Please feel free to email SSW.DEITaskforce@umich.edu if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Gutiérrez and Larry Gant

For the DEI Strategic Task Force:

Matthew Bakko, Lauren Davis, William Elliott, Ayesha Ghazi, Jackie Hawkins, Joel Lucio, Jamie Simmons, Jordan Walker