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Campus Climate Task Force   Office of the President

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Campus Climate Task Force, Long-term Suggestions

Campus Climate Implementation Team
Illinois State University

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Illinois State University
Climate Assessment Task Force

FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Submitted by:

2016-2017 Climate Task Force Steering Committee:
Doris M. Houston (Chair), Guadalupe Montalvo (Co-Chair), Dave Bentlin, Rick Lewis, and Ryan Powers

Task Force Members: Wilma Bates, Sam Catanzaro, Sandy Colbs, John Davenport, Angell Davis, Michael Gizzi, Stacy Hardin, Arnold Hernandez, Andrew Jacobs, Jim Jawahar, Hyun-Sook Kang, Tammie Keney, LB Lyons, Jonathan Monroy, Mayuko Nakamura, Mark Olson, Aleisha Reado, Erin Thomas, Maura Toro-Morn, Anthony Walesby

I am a taskforce member because… inclusive excellence is a prerequisite for academic excellence. Learning happens best when people are challenged in a supportive environment. Learning is our business.

My contribution to the task force is… my knowledge of the ISU community, my persistence in seeing that our recommendations and actions are addressed, and my ability to empathize with the diverse campus.

My contribution to the task force is… to be an open thinker and my willingness to pose the questions that seem difficult to hear.

My contribution to the task force is… to listen, understand, speak up, join hands, and push forward.

I am a taskforce member because… diversity is a strength and we must stay vigilant in our goal to include all students, faculty, and staff in our definition of success.

I am a task force member because… I am responsible for the well-being of my students and peers.

I am a task force member because… I believe in a fair, just, and equitable society.

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Executive Summary

This report is the second of a two-part document developed by the **2016-2017 Climate Assessment Task Force** that includes recommendations to increase equity, inclusion, and access on the campus of Illinois State University. Part I of the report (see: Fall 2016 Climate Assessment Task Force: Short Term Recommendations) consisted of recommendations for immediate action (within 30-60 days) and recommendations to expand and/or increase awareness of existing diversity initiatives.

Within the current report (Part II), the Task Force offers its recommendations for intermediate implementation (12 months or less) and long-term implementation (more than one year). Whereas Part I of the report provides suggested action items across a broad spectrum of institutional domains, this report offers a focused and strategic set of institutional objectives, which if achieved, will result in sustained, structural change within the campus community.

Background
The 2016-2017 Climate Task Force was convened by President Larry Dietz in response to the 2016 Climate Assessment conducted by the Center for the Study of Race & Equity in Education at the University of Pennsylvania (see: Illinois State University Campus Climate Assessment Final Report). The Climate Assessment uncovered several core findings suggesting the need for more focused efforts to create an environment of inclusive excellence on the campus of Illinois State University. Those findings included the need for the campus to address the following areas of concern as expressed by climate assessment survey and interview participants:

- ➢ A sense of marginalization, isolation, and exclusion expressed by students of color
- ➢ A sense of marginalization expressed by women professionals and faculty/staff of color
- ➢ Institutional barriers that impede inclusive recruitment and hiring
- ➢ Institutional responses to reports of discrimination and harassment

These areas of concern, as uncovered within the 2016 Illinois State Climate Assessment, are congruent with the concerns expressed across the spectrum of higher education settings nationwide. For example, in the spring of 2016, the American Council on Education (ACE) and the U.S. Department of Education recognized the need to convene a diverse group of higher education stakeholders who reviewed diversity outcomes data and discussed innovations in equity and inclusion on college campuses. Representatives from Illinois State University participated in this national dialogue and will remain engaged in solution-focused efforts.

As institutions of higher learning continue to seek ways to enhance campus diversity, these efforts are likely to pay high dividends. For example, evidence suggests that inclusive academic communities add value to the institution in the form of *increased academic excellence and innovation*, *improved student enrollment and retention*, and *enhanced global workforce development*[1].

The remainder of this report will focus on **four strategic objectives** that if adopted, will place Illinois State University at the forefront of inclusive excellence across the equity and inclusion spectrum (i.e. gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, language, faith, country of origin, levels of ability). These objectives are as follows: **1) Create an inclusive classroom and campus experience; 2) Recruit and retain diverse faculty and staff across the inclusion spectrum; 3) Create and invest in affirming spaces for diverse students; and 4) Close the gap in retention and persistence to graduation for underrepresented students.**

Each recommended objective is linked to one or more of the following institutional impact and priority outcomes:

- ➢ Increase student admissions among underrepresented groups.
- ➢ Increase student retention and completion among underrepresented groups.
- ➢ Increase faculty/staff recruitment and hiring among underrepresented groups.
- ➢ Increase faculty/staff retention among underrepresented groups.
- ➢ Promote an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Objective 1: Create an Inclusive Classroom

Institutional Impact:

➢ Increase student retention and completion among underrepresented groups.
➢ Increase faculty/staff retention among underrepresented groups.
➢ Promote an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Activities/Strategies	Resources/Input
Add a standard diversity statement to all syllabi including resources for seeking information, reporting discrimination or harassment, and declaring ISU as an inclusive campus community. • Review language from other institutions that have a similar statement. • Market this expectation at the university, college, and departmental/school levels.	• Provost's office (leads the initiative) • Appointed workgroup(s) • College deans • Department chairs/directors • Legal counsel • Marketing
Create an Inclusive Curriculum • Bring in diverse speakers, activities, and books/writers while ensuring that material is accessible to the student body at large. • Implement a curriculum and program review to ensure diversity and inclusion is embedded into all elements of academic and non-academic programs. • Utilize diverse and inclusive learning examples, photos, images, and best practices. • Create a diversity requirement for graduation.	• Provost's office • Academic Senate • VP of Student Affairs • Center for Teaching, Learning and Technology (CTLT)
Incentivize faculty and staff to participate in training that promotes diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and cultural competency in the classroom.	• CTLT • College deans • Department chairs/directors • Human Resources

OBJECTIVE 2: Recruit and Retain Diverse Faculty and Staff Across the Inclusion Spectrum

Institutional Impact:
- ➢ Increase faculty/staff recruitment and hiring among underrepresented groups.
- ➢ Increase faculty/staff retention among underrepresented groups.
- ➢ Promote an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.
- ➢ Increase student retention and completion among underrepresented groups.

Activities/Strategies	Resources/Input
Re-formulate the underrepresented faculty incentives program and spousal hire policy to ensure transparency, clear guidelines, and accessibility to all underrepresented faculty groups, administrative professionals, and civil service staff.	• Provost's office • Academic Senate • College deans • Department chairs/directors • External diversity experts • Office of Equal Opportunity and Access (OEOA)
Develop a 12-month equity-training plan for administrators, faculty, staff, and search committees that focuses on best practices in inclusive recruitment and retention. This plan should extend beyond current programs and include innovations with an outcome-focused curriculum.	• Provost's office • CTLT • OEOA • College deans • Department chairs/directors • External diversity experts • Human Resources
Review the process of creating search committees to ensure diverse groups are represented. In addition, incentivize faculty and staff who devote time to serving on time intensive search committees.	• Human Resources • VP's offices • OEOA

Develop a Diversity Executive Council with the governing equity of other governing associations (i.e.: AP Council, Civil Service Council, Academic Senate).
  • Include members from diverse affinity groups, campus partners, governing associations, and other identified groups.
  • Council would be responsible for maintaining an inventory of diversity and inclusion efforts/activities, and identifying gaps and opportunities.
	• President's office
	• VP's offices
	• Board of Trustees

During hiring and recruitment, include information (and presentations when possible) regarding campus and community resources such as affinity groups, child care, health promotions and wellness, campus recreation, and other special interest organizations.	• Human Resources • Provost's office • Student Affairs office

Reduce cultural taxation of minority faculty/staff aiding in retention.
  • Validate/formalize mentoring as a part of "Teaching" and "Service" (ASPT).
  • Recognize mentoring as a retention priority through acknowledgement and compensation.
  • Reduce taxation by training all faculty/staff (and support systems) about mentoring all students (look to Safe Zone model). Allies are an important component in how we build and create inclusive communities and mentorship.
  • Official recognition that all faculty/staff are here for students.
  • "Mentor release time" (similar to Health; 90 minutes).
	• VPs offices
	• Deans
	• Department chairs/directors

OBJECTIVE 3: Create and Invest in Affirming Spaces for Diverse Students

Institutional Impact:

➢ Increase student admissions among underrepresented groups.
➢ Increase student retention and completion among underrepresented groups.
➢ Promote an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Activities/Strategies	Resources/Input
Develop a long-term plan with students, pertinent campus partners and faculty/staff to establish a cultural center within the next 5 years. Identify an existing space on campus in a central location to house diverse student groups within the next 12 months.	• Facilities Planning • VP of Advancement • VP of Student Affairs • Educating Illinois
Brand "what it means to be a Redbird" from an "inclusive lens" to all students during Preview and Welcome Week: • Collaborate with faculty and staff across campus to ensure that the message is reinforced in 1st year general education courses, alumni mentorship, and university programs. • Consider the expansion of programs such as "Walk of Champions" and "Welcome Week Convocation", to include messages and populations that address diverse students in our Redbird family.	• University College • Welcome Week staff • Preview staff • Department chairs • University Marketing
Restructure deadlines for student commitment decisions to Illinois State to ensure equity of fees and elimination of disadvantage to students who cannot pay by deadlines. Restructure commitment decision policies and deadlines to promote equitable access to course, orientation, and housing selections.	• University Housing Services • Admissions • Welcome Week staff • Preview staff • University College • University Marketing
Overall review of multiple communication avenues: • Conduct an overall review of diversity in publications and outgoing messages via web and social media. • Conduct an internal scan of language (i.e. pronouns), messaging, images to make an intentional effort to include people from diverse backgrounds and diverse perspectives.	• University Marketing • Media Relations • Multicultural staff, faculty, students
Assess the physical accessibility of the campus, and immediate community, to ensure we meet the safety needs of our students with disabilities. In addition, review curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities to ensure that classroom and program materials are inclusive and accessible to students with varying levels of abilities.	• Facilities Planning • Parking and Transportation • Student Access and Accommodation Services • Community leaders • Provost office
Maintain active recruitment of diverse students, staff, and faculty in elected leadership roles on campus such as Student Government, Academic Senate, and Association of Residence Halls.	• Dean of Students office • Academic Senate • Civil Service Senate • Board of Trustees • Civil Service Council

OBJECTIVE 4: Close the Gap in Retention and Persistence to Graduation for Underrepresented Students

Institutional Impact:

➢ Increase student retention and completion among underrepresented groups.
➢ Increased admissions for underrepresented student groups.
➢ Promote an inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive campus environment for students, faculty, and staff.

Activities/Strategies	Resources/Input
Assess existing academic and nonacademic programming to determine the extent to which existing programs meet the needs of underrepresented students. Expand and/or develop services that adhere to best practices for supporting and serving underrepresented students on campus (i.e.: University College, MASAI, Noble 1 Network, Success 101, Trio, etc.).	• Trio • University College • VP of Student Affairs • Provost's office
Benchmark and research successful programs that serve underrepresented students at a national level to determine what fits our campus community.	• VP of Student Affairs • University College • Provost's office
Explore opportunities to develop a case management system through which students with high risk factors for withdrawal/ dismissal (i.e.: low socio-economic status, low ACT/SAT, low GPA, etc.) receive academic services that extend beyond the advisor role. Develop, train, and hire specialized staff to serve as "Retention Specialists" with a focus on holistic case management and well-being supports for at-risk students.	• Provost's office • VP of Student Affairs • University College
Identify opportunities for assessment of recent graduates to help identify contributing factors to their success on campus.	• Office of the Registrar • Division of Student Affairs • Provost's office • University College
Assess the needs of students from underrepresented groups who leave Illinois State University without completing their degree and identify their reasons for leaving before degree completion.	• Office of the Registrar • Division of Student Affairs • Provost's office • University College
Incentivize academic faculty and staff (through the ASPT process) who mentor academically challenged students on a consistent basis.	• Provost's office • College deans • Department chairs/directors • Academic Senate

[1] American Council on Education (2000). Does Diversity Make a Difference? Three Research Studies on Diversity in College Classrooms. Washington, DC: American Council on Education and American Association of University Professors.

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