MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Task Force on Racial Equity

FACULTY AND STAFF DIVERSITY

Fall 2020

Recommendations from the faculty and staff diversity working group of the Task Force on Racial Equity

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A working group of the Task Force on Racial Equity was formed to address the important issue of increasing the diversity of faculty and staff, one of the three initial issues that the President identified. Our main goal is to offer "recommendations for strategies that can be implemented in an expeditious manner to the DEI Steering Committee and the President."
On September 24, 2020, representatives from the working group met with and received feedback, on a draft of the recommendations, from Wanda Lipscomb, Luis Garcia and Rubén Martinez.

In what follows, this working group of the Task Force on Racial Equity offers a range of recommendations. These recommendations focus on major areas, including recruitment, retention and hiring practices; professional development opportunities; and university attitudes towards DEI vis-à-vis faculty and staff, among others. Increasing the diversity of faculty and staff will require significant investment. Thus, many of the recommendations that we offer call upon the university to invest more resources into DEI efforts.

It should also be recognized that we have been asked to provide recommendations for a large and diverse population of the MSU community (i.e., the university's faculty and staff). Each one of these non-monolithic groups consists of numerous different communities, and we recognize that distinct recommendations for each group of faculty and staff could and should be developed in the future. In this document, we highlight both specific recommendations for faculty and staff as well as encompassing suggestions that can be applied to faculty and staff.

A prerequisite to providing recommendations for increasing the diversity of faculty and staff is methodical research, data collection and analysis. Therefore, one of our overarching recommendations is that there be a deeper examination of the various and complex "racial inequities that affect members of the campus community" as related to MSU's faculty and staff in all of its diversity. Examples of such efforts are pointed out later in this document ("Additional Recommendations: Information Gathering, Research, and Data Analysis").

At the same time, our efforts and recommendations dovetail with and can inform the work of the DEI Steering Committee's Focus Area 1c workgroup, "Composition and Success of Our Faculty and Academic Staff." We also acknowledge, as the President noted, that input from the DEI Steering Committee as well as student, faculty and staff constituent groups and other campus and community stakeholders is important. These recommendations are offered as points of departure and any of the recommendations can be further detailed and explained. We welcome such opportunities to elaborate on our recommendations.

Recommendations: University-wide

There are practices that can be expanded across the university to support efforts in increasing a rich diversity experience for all.

- Expand hiring streams through established centrally supported funding to expand our reach. Recognize the differences of industry and needs of campus — many employees (i.e., skilled trades) do not have undergrad, graduate, postdoc etc. degrees that require us to source in other areas besides HERC, MITalent, Inside Higher Ed, etc.
- In order to boost diverse hiring, establish cluster hiring programs for faculty and staff in colleges and units.
- All search committees for faculty and staff positions should include an individual with experience and expertise in DEI, preferably from a different unit or college, who serves throughout the entire search process and "establish search committees that are diverse in terms of demographic characteristics and expertise but homogeneous in commitment to proactive, fair and equitable processes."
- All search committees must undergo bias training that focus on unconscious bias in recruitment and hiring processes, and such training should be consistent throughout the university because current practices seem to vary.
- Require all applicants for MSU faculty and staff positions to submit diversity statements that are considered and evaluated in similar manners that other statements are (i.e., letters of applications, teaching and research philosophies, etc.).
- Apply diversity, equity and inclusion to faculty and staff MSU Performance Excellence annual reviews and recognize DEI efforts. When evaluating and rewarding faculty and staff, diversity should be considered as being a "driver of excellence."
  - Provide more support to traditionally underrepresented faculty and staff who mentor traditionally underrepresented undergraduate and graduate students and recognize, through annual reviews, the often "invisible labor" and diversity work of faculty and staff.
- While MSU annually recognizes excellence in diversity with the Excellence in Diversity Awards, the university should more routinely publicize and acknowledge faculty and staff contributions to DEI.
- Create an annual pool of money that rewards the colleges/departments/units that explicitly advance diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.
- Create a faculty/staff leadership program that is designed to develop the leadership and managerial skills of diverse faculty/staff who have demonstrated exceptional ability and academic/leadership promise (e.g., a program for diverse faculty and staff that is similar to ALP).
- Create an executive leadership program that is designed to develop the leadership of diverse faculty and staff. This could be envisioned as a program similar to the Academic Advancement Network's Leadership Fellows program, but for underrepresented minority faculty and staff.

Recommendations: Faculty specific

- Create a university-wide post-doc-to-tenure system faculty program aimed at recruiting diverse faculty. The College of Social Science's [Dean's Research Associates Program](#) could serve as a point of departure and could be scaled up.
- Through symposiums and other formalized programs, establish relationships and collaborations with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, or HBCUs, Hispanic-serving institutions, or HSIs and minority serving institutions, or MSIs, as a way to recruit diverse faculty through, for instance, visiting faculty positions that could lead to tenure system appointments. It would be helpful to connect with and learn best practices from the Rutgers Center for Minority Serving Institutions, among other initiatives.
- Create initiatives like the [University of Kentucky's](#) Diversity Faculty Fund and Diversity Incentive Funding to recruit diverse faculty and staff, encourage colleges to enhance diversity, and to ensure competitive start-up packages.
- Create a program at MSU that is similar to Virginia Tech's [Future Faculty Diversity Program](#), in which prospective diverse faculty and staff are invited to MSU from universities across the country to learn about being a MSU faculty and staff member and to meet with potential departments and units.
- DEI should be incorporated into the reappointment, promotion and tenure process (i.e., in Form D).
- Establish centrally supported funding to reward exceptional fixed-term faculty and to create opportunities to transition them into tenure track faculty lines.
- Create more endowed and named professorships to attract and retain diverse faculty.
- A significant percentage of tenure system positions that the Provost approves for colleges, departments, and units over the next five years (to begin with) should be aimed at attracting scholars engaged in diversity-centered/focused research, teaching, mentoring and service/outreach.
- Requests from college deans and departments for tenure system positions should be required to highlight diversity, equity and inclusion.

Additional recommendations: Information gathering, research and data analysis

While the Task Force, formed in late July 2020, was charged with offering recommendations before the fall 2020 semester, the purpose of the Task Force on Racial Equity is also "to examine racial inequities that affect members of the campus community." Given the time constraints that this working group operated under, the complexity of the issue at hand, and the diversity of the faculty and staff at MSU and the different experiences of those racial and ethnic populations of faculty and staff that have been and are traditionally underrepresented in institutions of higher education (especially relative to their numbers in the general population), we recommend the following in order to engage in a more thorough examination. We understand that some of these recommendations will be addressed by the DEI Steering Committee.

- Compile and examine the data on all traditionally underrepresented faculty and staff at MSU for the last decade in order to examine trends and changes until the present, paying particular attention to the potential impact of the 2006 Proposal 2 (MCRI).
- Conduct exit surveys for all traditionally underrepresented faculty and staff who leave MSU.
- Conduct annual departmental audits, along the lines recommended by the [AALS Law Deans Antiracist Clearinghouse Project](). An audit of hiring practices and outcomes, department by department, would provide detailed data on outcomes rather than practices or platitudes.
- Carry out a systematic study and review of the status of traditionally underrepresented faculty and staff to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Evaluate the differences in diversity and equity practices and policies pertaining to hiring, onboarding, evaluating, mentoring and promotion opportunities for the different groups of faculty and staff (i.e., there are wide ranges of differences across colleges, departments, programs and units).
- Thoroughly explore and catalog the efforts at increasing the number of diversity faculty and staff that are currently being implemented by "Diversity Champion" universities throughout the country to explore how such initiatives can inform MSU's efforts (i.e., engage in comprehensive external benchmarking).
- Subdivide the various types of faculty and staff and independently analyze each of these sub-groups based upon the racial and ethnic identities of those who have been and are traditionally underrepresented at MSU.
- Conduct annual pay equity studies.