



MEMORANDUM

TO: Rev. Dennis H. Holtschneider, President
FROM: President's Diversity Council (PDC)
DATE: March 1, 2016
RE: Action Plan to BSU Student Concerns

Introduction

This report outlines the PDC's recommendations and action plan as a response to the concerns of African American students on campus and serves as a follow up on the meeting that the President and the Provost had with the Black Student Union in early January. The PDC strongly believes that the plan should be grounded in DePaul's longstanding history and commitment to diversity as well as developed through the lens of our Vincentian heritage of ennobling the human dignity of each individual.

Also, the PDC recommends that the university be consistent in its messaging regarding diversity and the importance of providing a safe and open learning environment for all students. As we proceed with the task at hand, there is an inherent obligation to value all diversity while we look to resolve issues that are particularly concerning for African American students. We challenge ourselves and the University to live up to our highest ideals of diversity and social and restorative justice.

The PDC acknowledges that student voices and concerns must be part of any proposed recommendations and solutions. We also hope to contextualize the work of the PDC based on the needs, input, and recommendations of the students and stakeholders we survey and interview. Therefore, the first phase of the plan is exploratory as we work to incorporate student voices and campus feedback. In addition, we will work with the various university divisions and departments in the implementation of this plan to include but not limited to: Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Public Safety and Enrollment Management and Marketing. Lastly, we realize that this work will take time to complete. Hence, we are proposing an immediate response to events on campus while gathering the necessary information to put forth a long-term strategic plan of action.

Recommended Action Plan

The PDC will assemble the following six working groups to begin its work: 1) Student Feedback and Involvement, 2) Education and Awareness Training, 3) Policy and Processes (to include the anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policy process, financial aid and scholarship resources, advising and other supports for African American and underrepresented students), 4) Data collection and Campus

Climate Survey Results, 5) African American Student Resource Center models, and, 6) Issues regarding faculty and staff diversity.

Immediate actions to be taken in March and April 2016:

- A. Assemble committees and assign tasks.
- B. Create an online anonymous forum in partnership with Student Affairs for student feedback.
- C. Design Public Safety Training to be conducted in July.
- D. Collaborate with the Office of Financial Aid Scholarship Team to offer demonstrations on Scholarship Connect (DePaul's online scholarship tool) for student groups and support professionals. The Scholarship Team will provide a demonstration to the existing Economic Distress Taskforce at their April 2016 meeting. This taskforce consists of members from Student Affairs, the Dean of Students, Housing, Office of Multicultural Student Success, Student Legal Services, Mission and Values, University Counseling and Student Accounts.
- E. Post signs at DePaul Central service counters informing students of the ability to meet with a financial aid advisor in private upon request.
- F. Invite DePaul Central and Financial Aid staff to participate in BSU focus groups to discuss how services may be improved to meet the needs of African American students.
- G. Create a bibliography of faculty and staff resources to be posted on OIDE's website.

Work Groups tasks and timelines:

- 1. Student Feedback and Involvement (in partnership with Student Affairs)
 - A. Design and administer an anonymous online feedback forum.
 - B. Conduct focus groups with other African American and other under-represented students.
 - C. Conduct a roundtable discussion among student organization leaders to foster student dialogue and understanding.
 - D. Complete a strategy for addressing student issues and concerns with recommendations to be implemented.

Time frame: March – June 2016

- 2. Education and Awareness Training
 - A. Train Public Safety staff (July 14 and July 21, 2016).
 - B. Design and pilot micro-aggression and racial profiling training for campus community.
 - C. Provide micro-aggression and diversity training for student employees.
 - D. Participate in New Student Orientation to introduce and discuss the Anti-Discriminatory Harassment Policy and inform students where and how to file a racial or protected class discrimination complaint.
 - E. Provide diversity training for student organizations.
 - F. Institute a bias training requirement for members of the university community chairing or serving on faculty and staff search committees.

Time frame: April - August 2016

- 3. Policy and Process

- A. Assess current practices and policies for gaps and recommendations.
- B. Explore the Title IX model as an approach to processing and investigating racial complaints on campus to include appropriate policies, procedures and training.
- C. Conduct an inventory of current student support services, identify where students are going to seek assistance and look to internal best practices of programs and systems that work for possible duplication/replication, expansion and preservation.

Time frame: March - August 2016

4. Data and Campus Climate Survey Results

- A. Collect data on African American and other under-represented students, faculty, and staff.
- B. Analyze current climate surveys for diversity perceptions and climate.

Time frame: March - August 2016

5. Explore African American Student Resource Center Models

- A. Explore the feasibility of creating an African American Resource Center.
- B. Benchmark other national models.
- C. Lead a campus wide discussion on the benefits of racial and ethnic cultural centers as a model to address underrepresented support, retention and student success.

Time frame: April – November 2016

6. Issues regarding faculty and staff diversity

- A. Inventory current mentoring and resources to ensure success of diverse faculty and staff.
- B. Explore best practices for possible long-term recommendations.

Time frame: March - August 2016

Conclusion

The PDC is prepared to complete the action items as outlined in this memorandum. We appreciate your meeting with the PDC and detailing the concerns of the Black Student Union and the confidence that you have bestowed upon us in finding proactive remedies to address the environment for African American and underrepresented students at DePaul University. The PDC takes our charge very seriously and we look forward to working with you in ensuring a truly diverse DePaul community. The PDC will submit a full multi-year plan in August 2016 after it has compiled student input, collected data, and discussed best strategies for addressing student concerns and vetted the plan with university stakeholders.