

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members of the Council for Diversity & Inclusion,

Let me begin by thanking you all for your important work. The University has much to do now and in the future, and it needs dedicated individuals like you to continue to make it a success.

Shortly after receiving your memorandum, I met with my Cabinet to begin discussing the recommendations. As that review continues, I want to update you on where we stand. I separated the recommendations into three categories: Complete, In Progress, and Under Review. Please note that I placed items under the “Complete” category because we had reached critical milestones. I recognize that many will require ongoing work.

Many of the items you list are significant precisely because of their complexity. In fact, they are central to one of the key goals of our newly approved strategic plan. To get to where we want to land, we will need the perspectives of most, if not all, University stakeholders. Such a process will require patience and a willingness to extend the pre-supposition of generosity to each other, what early Jesuit educators referred to as the plus sign.

Complete:

Recommendation: “We ask that Father Pilarz provide an update on the recommendations in his June 11, 2020 letter (which we understand is forthcoming)”.

Response: I provided an update on August 28, 2020. This was meant to be a first step in what will need to be a complicated journey as I noted in that update:

Creating a welcoming and supportive community is uniquely central to Scranton’s Catholic and Jesuit mission. I am grateful to the many members of campus for their efforts this summer and their plans for this fall. I recognize, however, that a list of activities is not enough to transform any institution and that there is so much more to be done. We must all commit ourselves to this work and accept nothing less than a community in which everyone feels welcome and safe.

<https://www.scranton.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/assets/documents/8-28-20-an-update-on-university-actions-to-combat-racism-and-discrimination-1.pdf>

Recommendation: “As requested in listening sessions and several emails and petitions, ensure transparency regarding commitments to anti-racist action and progress on them, inviting an iterative process that welcomes ongoing communication and feedback from the University community”.

Response: The University has always been public and unwavering in our institutional opposition to racism. In August, the University launched the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion website off of the University’s main website. <https://www.scranton.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/index.shtml>. The University will continue to update this website with information for transparency and information purposes.

Recommendation: “Create a website to provide regular updates on our anti-racism initiatives as we have done with COVID-19, and have “University's Response to Racial Injustice” on the homepages of my.scranton and scranton.edu as we have done with COVID-19”.

Response: The University launched the [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion website](#) off of the University’s homepage and “About Us” section in August with one of the purposes to provide regular updates on anti-racism initiatives and other equity, diversity and inclusion information.

Recommendation: “Thoroughly disseminate relevant policies related to anti-racism and anti-bias action, including, but not limited to the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, as requested by students and alumni”.

Response: The Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy was disseminated on June 11, 2020, to the entire campus and remains publicly available. Information sessions were held and made available to all students, faculty and staff in September 2020. The University will continue to take steps that will lead to a safer and more welcoming campus.

Recommendation: “Support alumni in forming an Alumni of Color group and students in creating a Black Student Union, and work with them to identify and meet their needs, including those related to physical space”.

Response: University Advancement is currently working to form an alumni group of color. A Black Student Union was approved by the Student Government in September.

Recommendation: “Continue to ensure the accessibility of products that support the skin, haircare, and other needs of students of color in campus stores”.

Response: Over the summer, the Cross Cultural Center worked with Aramark to identify and make said products available. We will continue to work with students and employees of color to strengthen the availability of products on campus and to promote information on community resources for these products.

Recommendation: “Discuss the possibility of establishing an employee code of conduct, which includes investigation processes and possible consequences for varying levels of conduct related to bias and racism, in addition to and referencing the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, following established procedures referenced therein for responding to such incidents”.

Response: The Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy includes an investigation process and a sanction process to address bias, racism and other prohibited conduct. The newly approved policy would appear to address this recommendation. Please let us know if you have any additional or other related concerns.

Recommendation: “Include the “Black Business Directory” created by the Black Scranton Project, as well as other documents highlighting local businesses run by or primarily in service to folks of color, in materials provided to students during Orientation and ahead of Move-In.”

Response: A business directory, that includes black business, was created and can be found <https://www.scranton.edu/equity-diversity/scranton-diversity-resources-2020-final-web.pdf>.

Recommendations: “Establish and publicize a use of force continuum for University Police, as well as the circumstances under which University Police are allowed to use force, to supplement the statement about choke holds in the June 11, 2020 email”.

Status: The University of Scranton Police Department is among the few in the Commonwealth to earn accreditation by the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association. As such, University Police adhere to the use of force protocols and other requirements outlined in the [PCPA Standards Manual](#).

Recommendation: “Support ongoing dialogues and programs focused on privilege, oppression, and anti-racist action (e.g., Cross Cultural Centers programming, Political Dialogue Working Group chaired by Julie Schumacher Cohen, the Schemel Forum, and the Pedagogical Partnerships program being led by Dr. Amy Simolo)”.

Response: The University continues to support these and many other programs on these and other topics related to diversity and inclusion. A few examples are:

October 29-Dr. Anthea Butler, Professor of Religious Studies and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, co-founder of #ScholarStrike, and Trustee at Loyola University Maryland, will be giving a Zoom presentation to the University community.

November 17-Workshop with Glynis Johns, founder of the Black Scranton Project.

December 7-11- Jesuit Center is preparing a workshop discussing Racism in light of our Mission.

Race and Pedagogy Reading Group in preparation for Dr. Chayla Haynes Davison’s spring workshops.

Several other programs were held over the summer and through October by Student Life, Residential Life, Office of Equity and Diversity, Jesuit Center and other departments. For further information on some of these programs, please visit: <https://www.scranton.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/index.shtml>

In Progress:

Recommendation: “Continue to support training and learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff, including administrators, that will foster development of anti-racist identities”.

Status: Over the summer and fall, Cabinet has supported training and learning opportunities for students, faculty, staff and the community of these and other related topics. As noted above, the University continues to support these and many other training and learning opportunities on these and other topics related to diversity and inclusion for all members of the community.

Recommendation: “As called for by numerous constituents, develop and implement a strategic recruitment, hiring, and retention plan to increase the representation of Black faculty and staff members and faculty and staff members of other underrepresented racial groups”.

Status: The University has approved immediate searches for four faculty positions that were proposed by departments to increase the number of Black faculty. The Provost has convened a working group to strategize and develop a plan for increasing the representation of Black faculty and staff. The group will eventually also focus on other underrepresented groups.

Recommendation: “Enable the development of new academic courses and programs of study, particularly related to African/Black Diaspora Studies and Critical Race Studies, in addition to the History Department’s position focusing on African American history”.

Status: The Provost’s working group on faculty hiring diversity, in collaboration with CAS Dean Michelle Maldonado, has begun strategizing a Black Studies concentration that will be noted in the before mentioned searches for four new faculty. We believe that this will help to attract a larger pool of diverse candidates. The specific title and focus of this concentration is yet to be determined. In addition, we want to support recent efforts by faculty to develop a research group focused on racism and economic inequality (point person, Dr. Christie Karpiak).

Recommendation: “Conduct a review of key decision-making bodies, including the Cabinet, the Board of Trustees, and other administrators, to ensure that our decision-makers are representative of our community overall, particularly with respect to race”.

Status: Key decision-making bodies are always reviewed to ensure that the needs of the community are being addressed.

Recommendation: “Work with the Dean’s office in each college to create an anti-racism “track” within the Passport and TAPESTRY programs that would require all students to attend a minimum number of events that addresses race and racism”.

Status: With the assistance from the President of Student Government, members of OED and CCC met with KSOM and are developing a program for the KSOM passport program. The program is available to other colleges.

Recommendation: “Support the work of the GE Curriculum Review Committee in reviewing the D designation to ensure all students are exposed to anti-racist education. We recommend continued work on this, with ongoing collaboration between the GE Curriculum Review Committee and the Council for Diversity and Inclusion”.

Status: The GE Curriculum Review Committee has begun their work, which will include a thorough review of the D designation and undergraduate exposure to anti-racism education. This is a faculty-led discussion.

Recommendations: “Begin conversations with the Faculty Affairs Council, Faculty Senate, and Staff Senate regarding mandatory anti-racism training for faculty and staff, as well as the Board of Trustees”.

Status: Provost Gingerich will bring this to the agenda of the University Governance Council (UGC) a discussion of mandatory anti-racism training. He will also discuss this with FAC. The Board of Trustees does not report to internal constituents but reviews itself.

Recommendation: “Select a text/speaker for the Ignatian Values in Action lecture that can speak to the issue of anti-Black racism (e.g., Bryan Stevenson’s *Just Mercy*)”.

Status: The text and speaker for the Ignatian Values in Action lecture has been selected by a committee of the First Year Seminar faculty in consultation with the Dean of Arts and Sciences and so it has not been an administrative decision. The Provost is currently addressing the process of selection of the text/author and will speak to the current committee about prioritizing selections that address systemic racism within the context of our Jesuit mission.

Still Under Review:

The remaining five (5) CDI recommendations are currently under review and require further discussion and collaboration with other University constituencies.

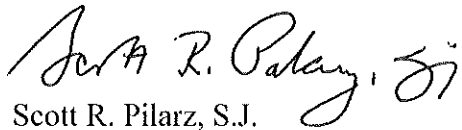
1. We recommend hiring a full-time consultant/firm on a multi-year contract (2-3 years) that would report to the Provost and regularly update the President’s Cabinet. The primary role of the consultant would be to guide the University in developing (year 1) and implementing (years 2-3) an anti-racism action plan. Development of this plan might include gathering data via focus groups, analyzing race-related questions on our diversity and inclusion needs assessment, and identifying training and resource needs and possible partners. Implementation of the plan is likely to include hiring additional staff, administrators, and/or faculty, and rolling out comprehensive training for faculty, staff, and students;
2. Require each department/division to submit an annual report to the Executive Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity that describes its contribution to the University’s diversity and inclusion efforts, in support of Father Pilarz’s call;
3. Begin conversations with the appropriate bodies (offices, Senates, and FAC) about including in annual performance appraisals, reappointment evaluations, and promotion and tenure applications information on employee’s contributions to diversity and inclusion efforts in support of Father Pilarz’s call;
4. Convene a committee to conduct a thorough review of the Student Code of Conduct to ensure it addresses racially biased actions directly and explicitly to meet student and alumni calls for consistent accountability;
5. Establish a fund to support optional and mandatory programs that bring Black voices to campus, collaborate with the local Black community, and educate on anti-racism. This

fund might also be used to provide stipends to faculty who work with relevant staff to develop co-curricular programming around anti-racism. Additionally, encourage or require student-led organizations to devote budgeting and programming to more diverse and anti-racist programming.

This memorandum will be added to the University's EDI website.

As I provide this response, I am also aware of the Diversity & Equity Campus Survey, which remains open until Nov. 13. The results will help to inform our future perspectives and actions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott R. Pilarz, S.J." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Scott R. Pilarz, S.J.
President