

Anti-Racism Action Plan

Progress Report - Early Spring 2021



02/08/2021

The following progress report summarizes activities to date associated with the Anti-Racism Action Plan of the College of Science and Mathematics at James Madison University. **UPDATES are highlighted.**

Actions & Updates:

1. Add a student resources section to the CSM Diversity and Inclusion webpage.

<https://www.jmu.edu/csm/diversity-inclusion/studentresources.shtml>

Specific Actions:

- A. Links to student organizations: BioSOC, SACNAS, (NOBBChe in future), NABG (National Association Black Geoscientists).
- B. Offices and resources on campus. – Multicultural center, Office of Access and Inclusion, the Beacon Newsletter
- C. Links to other JMU locations including JMU diversity council page, new Task Forces etc.
- D. Advocate for a JMU list of events at JMU and in the community. Such a list can be populated using Cascade events tags.

Timeline: end of Fall 2020.

UPDATE: These student resources are now available. We will continue to develop and update these regularly with community input.

2. Host presentations/talks and/or seminars by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color) scientists, mathematicians, statisticians, STEM leaders, and JMU alumni that will include diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in STEM conversations and networking opportunities. Note that this is the one action plan item where we are intentionally inclusive of indigenous people and people of color.

Specific Actions:

- A. Plan a Spring 2021 event: one pre-recorded seminar rather than a F2F event. Virtual pre-recorded format will reduce the burden on BIPOC leaders and scientists, and be conducive to pandemic situation. Structured discussion following this seminar on DEI in STEM at JMU. Perhaps as a way to flesh out this Action Plan.

Timeline: Planning completed by end of Fall 2020.

UPDATE: CSM Diversity Council is reaching out to candidates, with plans to invite an available candidate for the first seminar in the series for a Spring 2021 event.

- B. Plan annual event hosted by the college.

Timeline: Completed by end of Spring 2021. *Ideally the college events would be post-gray area discussion, so that awareness and nomenclature is understood.*

- C. Plan events for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 within departments.

Timeline: Completed by end of Spring 2021/fall 2021.

3. Encourage Departments to increase invitations to Black researchers for colloquia or research collaborations

Specific Actions:

- A. CSM Dean will add accountability to this as a measurable outcome to annual STAR (strategic planning annual report) for DEI related outcome. Units will be asked to address this in annual report.

Timeline: now.

- B. CSM assist with honorarium.

Timeline: now.

- C. Item (2) is related.

UPDATE: In Progress

4. Create both virtual and physical safe spaces for Black STEM students

Specific Actions:

A. **Shorter-term:** Recognizing that a physical space ask is a long-term goal as well as the realities of COVID-19, create a virtual space in the interim for Black students. In addition to the opportunities to network, feel safe, and be themselves, use it as a forum for planning physical space.

- Ask students what they would potentially like to see in these virtual spaces.
- Coordinate with existing student groups.

Timeline: Virtual space available to students in Spring 2021.

UPDATE: We will schedule a virtual forum for CSM STEM students in Spring 2021 to gather their thoughts on how a physical space for Black STEM students would be used. Initial feedback from students suggests that a virtual space for BIPOC students would be “awkward” and wouldn’t be used. Students would, however, feel comfortable attending a virtual seminar or forum to discuss these ideas. We are discussing next steps during early 2021 CSM Diversity Council meetings.

B. **Long-term:** Working with CISE and AA, identify a physical space on East Campus for Black students to network, feel safe, and be themselves. Combining efforts with CISE creates power of numbers in two senses: the increased total number of students served makes success more likely, and combining across multiple STEM majors results in community for those in smaller majors.

Timeline: conversations begin in Fall 2020, but securing space likely a long-term goal.

UPDATE: Conversations continue towards the long-term goal of east campus physical spaces.

5. Formalize a process for listening to student stories and experience through student-led meetings on how they see exclusion in their classrooms and our STEM community

Specific Actions:

A. For departments with a large enough BIPOC student population to provide “safety in numbers”: use the Gray Area approach for a student-led inclusion task force used in CBC.

- CBC representatives describe Gray Area at a Monday leadership meeting.
 - Units need to decide on focus e.g. Black, BIPOC, discrimination/inclusion in general.

Timeline: Fall 2020.

UPDATE: Meeting occurred and informed further actions (below).

- Develop an approach to implement Gray Area or an alternative, in spring 2021.

Timeline: work done in Fall 2020. Implementation begins Spring 2021.

UPDATE: In Fall 2020, the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry IDEAS team reached out to the other CSM departments and have begun conversations about what they (Chemistry) have done in their Gray Area approach and how they can be adapted to fit the needs of the individual departments. Spring 2021 should see early implementation, as planned.

- A student leader from each of these unit task forces is asked to serve on the Dean’s student council with specific charge to represent concerns and action items.

Timeline: Spring 2021.

B. Determine a way to hear these experiences and stories for programs without safety in numbers. E.g. direct representation on Dean’s council?

Timeline: Spring 2021.

6. Add a faculty resources section to the CSM Diversity and Inclusion webpage and encourage Departments to advertise activities and resources on their own.

<https://www.jmu.edu/csm/diversity-inclusion/facultyresources.shtml>

Specific Actions, Timeline etc: as for Action (1). Add diversity in hiring and retention information.

UPDATE: These faculty resources are now available. We will continue to develop and update these regularly with community input.

7. Actively incorporate anti-racism work in CSM classes.

Specific Actions:

A. Source (perhaps from a JMU wide body) or write a CSM version, an anti-racism statement for course syllabi. Faculty may use their own version.

Timeline: source or write for inclusion in spring 2021 syllabi.

UPDATE: Syllabus statements are now available for faculty online. We will continue to develop and update these regularly with community input.

- B. Diversity Council, AUHs and CSM Dean actively encourage inclusion of this statement in course syllabi.

Timeline: end of Fall 2020.

UPDATE: These statements were promoted for inclusion in Spring 2021 syllabi. We will continue to encourage inclusion, sharing, and further development of these statements.

- C. Encourage affirmative inclusion statements as part of course introductions e.g. "This is an inclusive learning environment".

Timeline: Long-term. Recognizing that such statements are empty if there is no real recognition behind them nor if the opportunity to use this as a discussion prompt does not exist, this will likely have to follow training on identifying and creating inclusive learning environments. Faculty who feel able to do this, should be encouraged to. Ask facilitators of any training to address the "how do we action it on the first day"?

- D. Support the development of DEI in science courses and course content. (NEW)

Timeline: Long-term.

UPDATE: A course is in the proposal stage and a curriculum development grant has been submitted.

8. Encourage/incentivize departmental participation in professional development, training, and educational programs such as workshops or book clubs on best practices for dealing with racism and empowering faculty and staff to speak up when a racist statement or action is made; best practices in instruction for inclusive pedagogy; microaggressions; the experience of Black students, faculty and staff in the academy.

Specific Actions:

- A. Support professional development related to diversity, equity and inclusion e.g. Teaching to Increase Diversity and Equity in STEM (TIDES) workshop.

Timeline: long-term.

- B. Assist units in identifying and deploying one additional program for faculty for the 20-21AY e.g. a workshop, a book club.

Timeline: Identify - Fall 2020, Deploy - Spring 2021.

UPDATE: Additional faculty "DEI Activators" in each Department are contributing to this Specific Action. Department of Geology and Environmental Science – Faculty participated in an ADVANCEGeo online workshop on 1/14/21; Department of Mathematics & Statistics – Preparing for online faculty training through Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso in Spring 2021; Department of Biology – Working with HHMI Inclusive Excellence Group to identify a program; Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry – Department IDEAS group is working to identify a program; Department of Physics & Astronomy – Working to identify a program.

- C. Engage in a reflection process that uses these educational experiences to update the unit's diversity action plan, as well as CSM's plan. Use CSM retreats: August and beginning of spring to update and renew action plan. Report back to CSM community about the changes.

Timeline: ongoing.

9. Remain committed and expand efforts to hiring of a diverse group of faculty and staff. Support departmental efforts for the retention of Black and underrepresented minority faculty and staff.

Specific Actions:

- A. What are current efforts? Are they formalized?

Timeline: Fall 2020.

- B. Provide training to faculty so that they *recognize* the bias and implicit racism in their current hiring practices.

Timeline: Fall 2021 rollout.

- C. What are other schools doing for recruitment? Examine if there are venues for recruitment that we are not already using and the reasons why.

Timeline: Spring 2021.

UPDATE: Current searches have advertised in a broader array of locations. This involves increasing the

funding provided to support searches.

10. Use College faculty meetings and communication channels to advertise opportunities in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and highlight new initiatives.

Timeline: begins Fall 2020 opening meeting. Ongoing.

UPDATE: The CSM Leadership Team (Dean, Acting DEI Director, A-Deans, Academic Unit Heads) work with the Diversity Council to communicate DEI initiatives and opportunities from University levels and above, and those from our own disciplines, to students, faculty and staff. We anticipate these communication pathways will continue to become more efficient as our collective DEI missions and goals evolve.

11. Hold ourselves (CSM community members including administration, faculty, staff, and students) accountable for student success.

Specific Actions:

- A. Examine DFW rates by race for gateway (for 2-year and 4-year student) courses in CSM.

Timeline: Has begun.

UPDATE: These data have been collected and are being examined by College leadership, and in some cases, departments.

- B. Identify possible sources of gaps seen in the DFW data and seek solutions.

Timeline: 2021-22.

UPDATE: Initial identification of gaps and solution seeking has begun. An A-Dean is working with Institutional Research and Registrar to “plug the gaps” and understand the data better.

- C. Seek and implement solutions for the sources of the gaps. Comment: Eventually the action plan should address solutions directly, and these could tie into other items on this current plan e.g. seminars, workshops.

Timeline: long-term.

- D. Assist in identifying resources to implement solutions.

Timeline: long-term.

- E. Advocate for the hiring of a Student Success Coordinator.

Timeline: now.

12. Hold people (CSM administration, faculty, staff, students) accountable for their words and their actions.

Specific Actions:

- A. Find out how these issues are dealt with at present.

Timeline: Fall 2020.

UPDATE: The resources are somewhat disjointed in web presence but are summarized at <https://www.jmu.edu/academic-affairs/faculty-resources/reporting-resources.shtml>. Of note is that the options for discrimination and harassment that are not covered by Title IX (seen here: <https://www.jmu.edu/oeo/how-to-file-a-complaint/index.shtml>) include both anonymous and identified options. However, neither appears particularly oriented towards student complainants, and the anonymous options (LiveSafe and SilentWitness) both have informational pages that link to Public Safety. Other options for reporting exist within units (talking to advisors, colleagues, unit head etc).

- B. Inform and train faculty members on reporting protocols - in particular clarify how information moves from faculty or students up the ladder.

Timeline: Fall 2020.

UPDATE: Dean decided to do this once some other changes had taken place.

- C. Advocate for a JMU wide reporting system whereby all community members can make/report racist incidents without fear of repercussions. What would the goals be? The results? The process? Is this best done at another level?

Timeline: long-term

UPDATE: The Dean has spoken to several members of the Provost's office to advocate for a system that is more accessible, more student-friendly, and has the potential to accept anonymous reporting. These

conversations are ongoing and positive.

13. Increased advocacy for transparency and equity in the admission process and in support of mental health resources for Black students.

Specific Actions:

- A. Continue to advocate for increased transparency and equity in admissions process, including asking questions to examine existing systems. Venues could include those available to CSM Dean personnel, JMU diversity council.

Timeline: ongoing.

UPDATE: Dean has done this, and continues to do this, in meetings with academic council whenever it is relevant to discussion. Dean has also met with Vice-Provost for Student Access and Enrollment Management regarding these issues.

- B. Advocate for increased mental health resources for Black students. Venues could include those available to CSM Dean personnel, faculty senate.

Timeline: ongoing.

UPDATE: Nothing of note on this as yet. The Counseling Center reported that they had identified the need for this in Spring 2020 and stood up new programs for the support of Black students.

Note:

We recognize that assessment/accountability is inadequate at this stage and will be a long-term goal once we have a better handle on what to assess.