

07/20/2021

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 as of July 20, 2021 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, TORCH, 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.

- 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.

UPDATE: Establishment of "STEM+DEI Speaker Series" to bring black and brown scientists, mathematicians, statisticians, STEM leaders, and JMU alumni to our community to lead discussions on the intersection of our disciplines and lived experiences. This series includes Q&A and networking opportunities for our students. The first event was held virtually in April 2021 with guest speaker Dr. Aris Winger and had over 65 attendees for the live viewing. Future events in this series are being planned for Fall 2021 and Spring 2022.

Faculty across CSM departments participated in viewing the film *Picture a Scientist*, a documentary that shares the experiences of three leading women scientists (one who is BIPOC) as they faced inequalities, harassment, and slights throughout their careers.

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: The Department of Geology and Environmental Science hosted a seminar presentation by a BIPOC geoscientist, Dr. Hendratta Ali (Fort Hays State University). The title of Dr. Ali's presentation was: "Convergence of four environmental forces in a tropical estuary: Geology, Atmosphere, Ocean & People". A few events were planned within departments where professional scientists of color across a spectrum of identities discussed with students their professions, their experiences, and how to gain access to successful careers.

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: Initial feedback from students within units (as reported by Diversity Council representatives) suggested that a virtual space for BIPOC students would be poorly attended or would not meet needs. Instead plans to host "pop-up" events will be pursued (see B below).

B. **Long-term:** Working with CISE and Academic Affairs, 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: A-Deans Davis and Tang (CISE) met with AVP of DEI Brent Lewis in Spring 2021 to discuss shared goals for east campus physical spaces. Dr. Lewis suggested we begin with "pop-up" events for student programs such as CMSS, SOGIE, ODS in our East Campus spaces in Fall 2021 Semester. These events could be coordinated with other STEM groups (i.e., BioSOC, etc.) and new partners (i.e., TORCH) and held during recruiting events such as Open Houses and CHOICES.

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.

- i. 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 (see ii below).

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

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

UPDATE: Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry IDEAS team reached out to the other CSM departments to facilitate CBC Gray Area approach adaptation to fit the needs of the individual departments.

- iii. 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.

UPDATE: Recommendation from the CSM leadership (Dean, A-Deans, AUHs) to create a common form for use by all CSM departments so the same process is used across the college. In addition, there are plans to reinstate the student council for CSM.

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 online for faculty. We will continue to develop and update these regularly with community input. In Fall 2021, the Diversity Council plans to ask for faculty input on how useful these statements have been and how they have been implemented. The Diversity Council will also collect from faculty new examples (2nd generation) to share across the college.

- 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 team of faculty from every CSM department, led by Bryce Boardman, received a Provost's Diversity grant to develop a DEI in science course. Modules will be deployed in Fall

2021 within existing courses and modified after feedback. The stand-alone course will be offered in Spring 2022 as a co-taught course by two faculty from different CSM units. This is a beta test for possible interdisciplinary courses offered in CSM.

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.

UPDATE: Faculty in CSM departments participated in discipline-specific 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; best practices for mentoring.

- 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: With the assistance of Diversity Council representatives, additional faculty “DEI Activators” in each department contributed to this specific action. For example, in the Department of Geology and Environmental Science, faculty participated in an ADVANCEGeo online workshop on 1/14/21; faculty in the Department of Mathematics & Statistics participated in an online training through the Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso in Spring 2021; and faculty in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry participated in the CFI workshop on Inclusive Design.

- 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.

UPDATE: CSM Leadership retreat in July 2021 will focus on development of “Action Plan 2.0” based on progress reports and findings of the previous year’s activities.

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.

UPDATE: Every search committee is required to develop a screening grid with criteria that is explicitly connected to the job advertisement. An HR and diversity representative must ensure the candidate pool is diverse before search committees can begin reviewing applications and must ensure the candidates in a short list are diverse before conducting phone or virtual interviews.

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

Timeline: Fall 2021 rollout.

UPDATE: Every search committee in the CSM participates in diversity training. Some departments have started the practice of blinding applications.

- 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 are advertised in a broader array of locations including venues specifically targeted at diverse audiences. This requires increased funding to support searches and networking opportunities more broadly into communities that have been traditionally overlooked.

Planned hires in Fall 2022 are intensely looking at how to expand efforts to hire and retain diverse faculty (BIO, CBC, M&S).

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. One source that has been identified are "toxic combinations" of courses that students take that may result in roadblocks to their success. Solutions still need to be identified and implemented that may involve pathways that avoid these combinations or ways to improve student success when these combinations cannot be avoided.

- 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.

The website linked to in comment in (A) has been updated quite a bit. This link for harrasment not covered by Title IX (<https://www.jmu.edu/oeo/how-to-file-a-complaint/index.shtml>) now includes 3 anonymous reporting options: Silent Witness, LiveSafe, and now Not@JMU. The final sentence now reads less like "we may do something with your submission" and more the way it was intended: "this will be sent to OEO but may have to be shared more widely in order to be reported". Also, we are looking at how incidents could be reported within units, directly to AUHs.

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: The Dean continues to do this in meetings with academic council whenever it is relevant to discussion. The Dean has also met with the 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.