



SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON RACIAL JUSTICE

Inaugural Meeting

August 20, 2020

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

— James Baldwin

Framing Question

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Today's Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Mary Grant, Davede Alexander, Carolyn Petrosino

Framing Question

President Clark, Mary Grant

Mission & Focus

President Clark

Core Values

Carolyn Petrosino

Five-Minute Break/Stretch

Time Frame for the Work & Framework for Action

Davede Alexander

Commitments

Davede Alexander

Initial Themes: What We've Learned from the RJ Forums, Amplify

Mary Grant, Sydné Marrow

Subcommittees

Carolyn Petrosino

Discussion

All

Closing

Mary Grant

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**What elements of policy,
practice, and culture are
impeding racial equity
at Bridgewater State University?**

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It is the mission of the Special Presidential Task Force on Racial Justice (RJTF) to:

1

Determine elements of policy, practice, and culture that are impeding racial equity at BSU

We will listen carefully to our campus community; initiate sometimes difficult conversations across the university; and learn from the experiences of students, alumni, faculty, librarians and staff of color.

2

Offer remedies and recommendations for corrective action

We will identify opportunities for improvement and research wise practices to help us do better; and develop a set of action-oriented recommendations to direct our efforts to build, as Congressman John Lewis said, the “Beloved Community” on our campus.

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To achieve this mission, we will strive to:

encourage the voices of all members of the BSU community and fully invite and support the voices of Black and Brown students, alumni, faculty, librarians, staff, and administrators on the issue of racial equity

validate their experiences, perceptions, insights, and suggestions

seek all relevant evidence regarding the state of racial equity at BSU

demonstrate courage and faithfulness to the Task Force's mission, while remaining introspective and honestly evaluating how we can do better

thoughtfully develop recommendations for an action agenda to make change

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To achieve this mission, we will strive to:

analyze the data and contextualize their meaning to form the basis of recommendations in ways that broaden understanding and further the unity of the BSU community

develop a framework for action and accountability that remains faithful to the mission of the Task Force and underscores the value of the proposed changes for all segments of the BSU community

work to fully inform, connect, and empower all members of the BSU community to be stakeholders in racial equity, giving way to the dissolution of the Task Force itself

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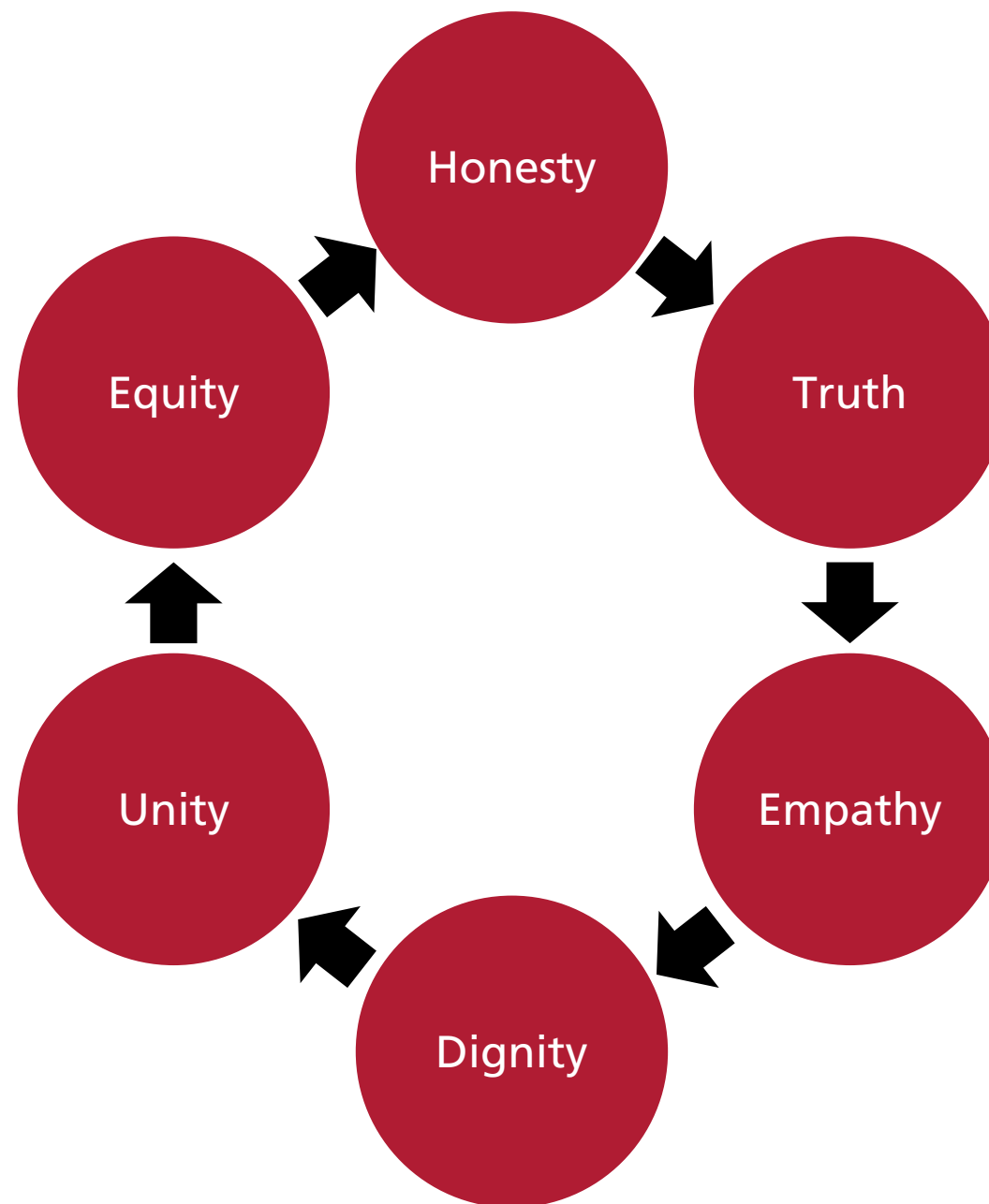
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Core Values Guiding Our Work



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Core Values Guiding Our Work

Honesty Truth Empathy Dignity Unity Equity

We begin with an absolute commitment to interrogate any essential ongoing policies, practices, and cultural dynamics that, in whole or in part, negatively impact students of color and foster racially disparate experiences. The Task Force will not turn a blind eye to areas in BSU, which may be negatively impacting students of color.

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Honesty Truth Empathy Dignity Unity Equity

The Task Force is committed to fully identifying and describing those patterns caused by policies, practices, or cultural dynamics that negatively impact students of color. Likewise, we will also fully identify those patterns that address the impacts of systemic racism.

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Honesty Truth Empathy Dignity Unity Equity

Among the shared experiences of oppressed communities are being ignored, neglected, disbelieved, questioned, viewed with suspicion, devalued, and treated disparagingly. The stance of the Task Force is to believe and to validate the accounts of students, alumni, faculty, librarians, and staff of color of unequal treatment at BSU.

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Honesty Truth Empathy Dignity Unity Equity

The Task Force will remain mindful of the need to reaffirm the dignity of students, staff, administrators, and faculty of color as we consider corrective measures and recommendations to address areas of impediments to racial equity.

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Honesty Truth Empathy Dignity Unity Equity

It is the goal of the Task Force to provide remedies and corrective measures that will not only address racial inequity but will also work toward unifying the BSU community. The Task Force will examine any unearned benefits to dominant groups while identifying disbenefits that adversely impact and marginalize people.

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Racial equity is achievable if the Task Force progresses in a way that meets each of the steps, as mentioned above, needed to affect the goal while observing the values that inspire and inform our work. When we have equity, we make progress towards achieving/living the Beloved Community.

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Five-Minute Break / Stretch

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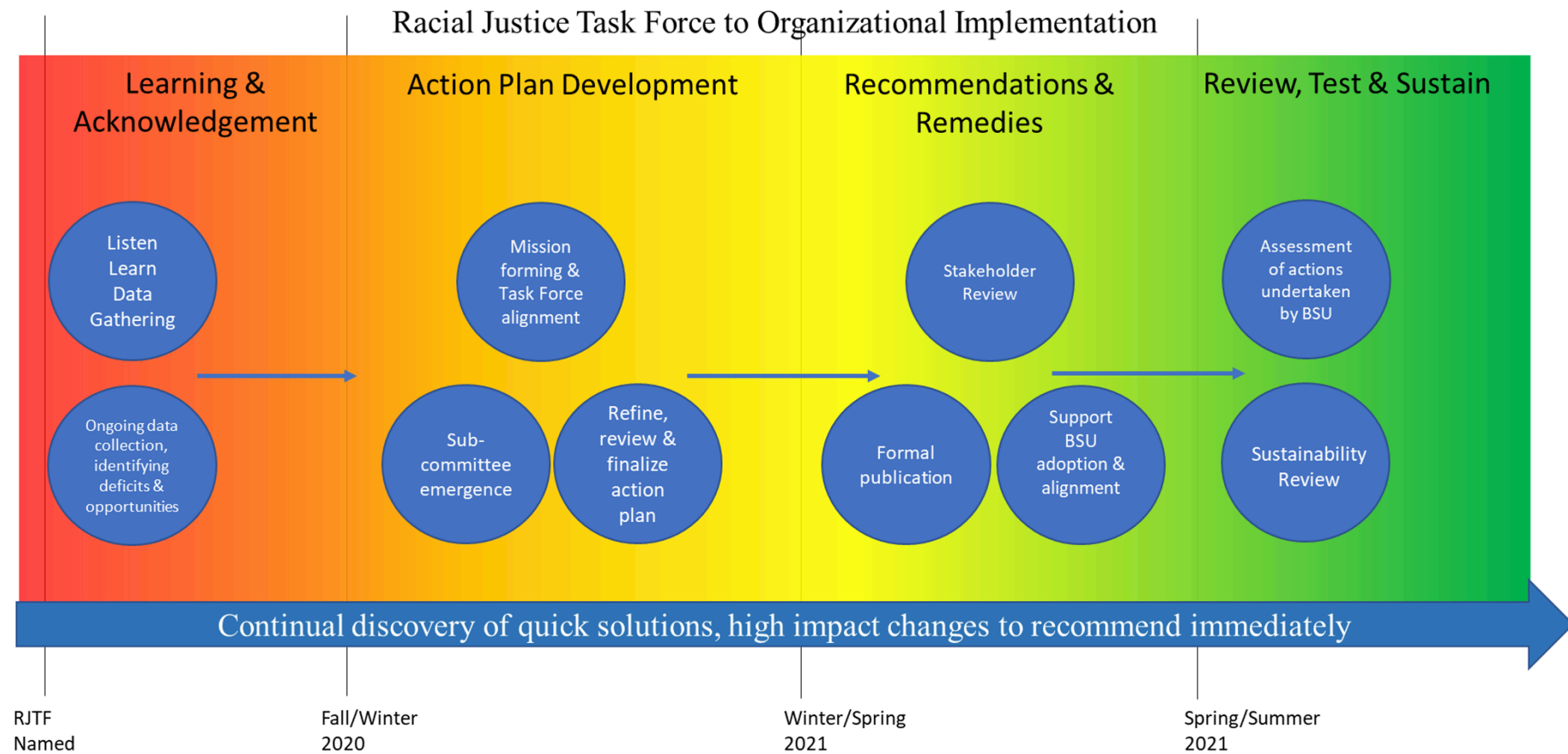
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Throughout the process, we commit to:

building a framework for consistent and sustainable change; our impact must not fade away when our efforts are concluded

making programming highly visible and transparent both on campus and in the surrounding community; ensuring it reflects those who have historically been marginalized and discriminated against

being transformative; our efforts must lead to change, both for the people who participate and for the structures that perpetuate and institutionalize racism

grounding our work in BSU's inherent strengths: the ability to educate and embed racial justice throughout the curriculum; a strong sense of community; an ability to creatively solve problems; and a robust existing infrastructure (i.e. CMA, MRISJ, Division of SSD, EEOC, and others)

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Throughout the process, we commit to:

being courageous and showing no fear;
programs should be truthful and call out lies,
distortions, and distractions... the discomfort
of participants should not be allowed to
detail the objectives

expressing love... the strongest pillar of
BSU's foundation is the genuine care and
concern that we have for one another; we
must embed this quality into all programs
and dialogue on racial justice and make it
preeminent

inspiring BSU leaders to recognize the
critical role they play in achieving and
sustaining racial justice and equity

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Initial Themes & Calls to Action

- 1 | Increase racial diversity among faculty and staff (professional and student)
- 2 | Implement campus-wide professional development, training, and education on antiracism; ensure specific training and development programs for BSU police
- 3 | Improve curriculum and co-curricular offerings relating to racial justice
- 4 | Continued, sustained opportunities for listening and engagement
- 5 | Prioritize racial justice in planning and budgeting decisions

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Initial Themes & Calls to Action

- 6 | Increase supports for Black students and other students of color
- 7 | BSU should intentionally seek and regularly utilize student feedback
- 8 | Protect Black students and other students of color
- 9 | Develop and maintain safe and welcoming spaces across campus for students of color
- 10 | BSU needs to improve its institutional response to specific incidents

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TO BE COMPRISED OF RJTF MEMBERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE BSU COMMUNITY

1. Curricula and Co-Curricula

What and how are we teaching both within and outside of the classroom about racial justice (high-impact experiences)?

Each of the summaries acknowledged the request to have the curriculum reflect race scholarship: The Black Experience in America; the History and Culture of Black America; the History and Contributions of Africa; Blacks and the Economy; etc. The development of a Black Studies major or department was proposed. Co-curricular activities, programs, and opportunities should include more choices that reflect the cultural and community interests of students of color. For example: Study Abroad Program, Service-Learning Opportunities, Internships — staff need racial awareness/racial sensitivity training.

Sample Question(s)

To what extent are Afrocentric topics presently presented in the curriculum?

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2. BSU Workforce

Recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion, and support of faculty, administration, and staff of color — diversity, equity, inclusion

Each summary mentioned the observation of deficiencies in the number of staff, administrators, and faculty. This is so important as students of color feel unsupported, not understood, and isolated. Mentoring (or coaching) is harder to come by as they see few faculty of color to have a social connection with.

Sample Question(s)

What methodology do we employ to advertise positions in order to increase or improve the representation of candidates of color?

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3. Education, Training, and Continued Learning Opportunities for Faculty, Staff, and Students

Racial Sensitivity Training / Anti-Racist Training / Cultural Competency / Implicit Bias Training

A repeated demand is for this type of training to be provided by BSU and offered to EVERYONE (i.e. students, staff especially in student services, faculty, campus police, and administrators). There is a need for workshops, seminars, etc.

Sample Question(s)

Does BSU periodically offer workshops on racial sensitivity?
If not, why not?

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4. Investing in and Supporting Students

Administrative and Organizational Support Structures for Students

There were accounts provided of frustrating experiences and unequal treatment provided to students of color from various student support functions and programs, including: Admissions, Student Success, Academic Retention Committee, Financial Aid, Registrar, Dining Services, Academic Achievement Center, Tutoring, Wellness Center, and Athletics. Policies governing these services should be clear and accessible, and the staff should be more inclined to work with students of color rather than have the tendency to frustrate their efforts to access services.

continued...

Sample Question(s)

Are there unique conditions confronting ESL or students of color that are taken into account upon advising? If not, should there be?

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4. Investing in and Supporting Students

Student Community / Social Life

Residence halls have been reported as an area where students of color perceive to be treated unequally and more harshly.

There is a lack of consistent and equal treatment in student clubs for students of color.

Students need experienced counselors to help them process racial traumatizing events. Is that available in the Wellness Center? What is the state of mental health services relative to racial trauma/stress/depression? How prepared are they to be service providers for students of color in an intimate setting?

Increase funding for the Center for Multicultural Affairs.

Erect/install images, symbols, statues of major Black figures, cultural expressions.

Sample Question(s)

How are RAs chosen? Are there adequate numbers of RAs that are from diverse backgrounds?

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5. Police and Public Safety

Ability of BSU police to understand students of color and present in a manner that is less threatening and more supportive

Comments described a need for more implicit bias training for BSU police and for them to have a better understanding of the needs of students of color.

Sample Question(s)

Do the campus police initiate contact with students of color in order to build relationships throughout the academic year? If so, how do they approach that? Is it continual or sporadic?

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6. Creating a Place for Ongoing Support, Problem Solving, Reporting Resolution, and Response

Seeking input from students of color; co-building and co-facilitating BSU initiatives with students of color; creating a space where students can directly report racial harassment, alleged discriminatory treatment, or other sensitive issues related to racial and ethnic abuse

Students of color need to have a place for ongoing dialogue, listening, student circles, etc.

Sample Question(s)

Does BSU need to establish a “homebase” for students (especially students of color) to report negative race-related experiences on this campus?

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1. Curricula and Co-Curricula
2. BSU Workforce
3. Education, Training, and Continued Learning Opportunities for Faculty, Staff, and Students
4. Investing in and Supporting Students
5. Police and Public Safety
6. Creating a Place for Ongoing Support, Problem Solving, Reporting Resolution, and Response

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Discussion & Next Steps

Whose voices are we missing?

What are we missing?

Additional Discussion

Next Steps