

Racial Justice Task Force Implementation Highlights: Mid-Fall 2021 to Present

Division of Academic Affairs

Faculty members, librarians, staff and administrators have come together in new professional development settings to focus on growing their own capacity for equity-minded leadership. The work is taking place both in individual events as well as in longer-term, more immersive formats that will build community and impact culture (recommendations: 1-1, 1-2; 2-18, 2-21; 3-5).

Examples:

- Emerging from book discussions within the Bartlett College of Science and Mathematics and the Ricciardi College of Business, new “Equity Walk Teams” have been developed in each college to serve as an ongoing forum for professional development.
- Faculty-led groups, such as the Anti-Racism Matters group within the College of Education and Health Sciences and the Racial Justice Faculty Cooperative within the Bartlett College of Science and Mathematics, have taken the lead on facilitating department-centered dialogues for faculty.
- Academic departments in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences have created Diversity, Equity and Inclusion focused committees.
- The Minnock Institute for Global Engagement has supported faculty in developing virtual international exchange as a pedagogy to advance global cultural competence as well as equity supports for students who cannot afford to study in other nations.
- The Center for Transformative Learning has facilitated professional development on racially equitable mentoring practices for faculty affiliated with the Honors Program and Undergraduate Research.

The division continues to identify opportunities to adopt and assess racial justice student learning outcomes (recommendations: 1-6).

Examples:

- Racial justice and equity outcomes have been integrated into the development of new undergraduate and graduate academic programs. This is in keeping with the Department of Higher Education’s [Equity Agenda](#).

- The Honors Program and Undergraduate Research Program have adopted commitments to racially equitable mentoring by faculty and staff and racial justice learning outcomes for students.

The division's focus on supporting research and scholarship activities of faculty, librarians and students continues to be a vibrant source of intellectual activity around racial justice and equity (recommendation: 1-14).

Examples:

- The Center for Transformative Learning has focused on recognizing student research/scholarship that promotes racial justice and equity. The Center has prioritized these projects in the awarding of ATP grants and has highlighted student work on these themes in symposia.
- In addition to work underway in course development and activities relating to mapping and assessing of social justice student learning outcomes, faculty in the College of Education and Health Sciences have collaborated across departments on a few key scholarly projects:
 - Boivin, J., Manuel, S., Spitzman, E., Winchell, M., McGowan, K. & Ingle, J. (2022, April). *Tiptoeing Around Race Talk: Teacher Candidates' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Teaching BIPOC Students*, New England Educational Research Organization Annual Conference, virtual roundtable presentation.
 - Boivin, J., Carey Ingle, J., Manuel, S., McGowan, K., & Spitzman, E., & Winchell, M. (2022, Feb 16). "Three recommendations to increase equitable learning environments." *Faculty Focus*. <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/equality-inclusion-and-diversity/three-recommendations-to-increase-equitable-learning-environments>
 - Boivin, J., Carey Ingle, J., Manuel, S., McGowan, K., & Spitzman, E., & Winchell, M. (2022, Feb 17). "Three recommendations to increase equitable learning environments." *Bridgewater State University's President's Report*.

The division has become more intentional about the use of data to facilitate institutional change (recommendations: 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 4-7). Data infrastructure changes are in place to support responsive data disaggregation. Shifts in our approach to the use of data, including both student-focused data as well as data about BSU employees, lays important groundwork for institutional change. The Division of Academic Affairs has led progress in this area that will make future progress possible in a number of settings across campus.

Examples:

- Tableau data reporting tool has been in place for the past three years and staff proficiency in using the tool has greatly improved the availability of meaningful data reports disaggregated by racial/ethnic groups.
- The [University Factbook](#) is now published using Tableau allowing access to disaggregated student data and improved access to employee data. The requested move back to a static data set, as was available in the old print version of the Factbook, was considered and dismissed since the new reporting tool – unavailable at the time of the Task Force report – provides a richer data set than requested. Format changes to the BSU Factbook will empower campus leaders to make informed decisions that can be tied to equity-centered outcomes for the university and its students. Aggregation of students of color and faculty of color will continue on the summary sheet for the Factbook, as has been past practice, alongside the deeper disaggregated data currently available.
- A new Research Analyst has been hired and is in place to allow Institutional Research to be responsive to new data needs anticipated in the Task Force report.
- The College of Graduate Studies is collecting data on academic standing reports based on race and ethnicity. The college is also assessing funding patterns by race and ethnicity.
- Working with Institutional Research, the Bartlett College of Science and Mathematics is involved in a pilot project that aims to develop useful and actionable equity datasets focused on student success.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is committed to following its bylaws with respect to membership diversity and structure consistent with the recommendations in the Task Force report (recommendations 1-15, 1-16). Spring semester 2022 is a transition period for membership in the IRB. All but three members of the IRB ended their terms of service at the end of December 2021. The Office of the Provost is supporting the IRB with an experienced interim IRB Compliance Officer who is working with current members to recruit additional members and review researcher training materials.

The division is incorporating equity-minded language into position descriptions and acting to diversify the workforce (recommendation: 2-10).

Examples:

- The recent hiring process for the Director of the Office of Teaching and Learning presented the opportunity to revise the position description in order to prioritize equity-centered priorities.
- The Bartlett College of Science and Mathematics is pursuing an alliance with two higher educational institutions that proposes strategies for increasing representation and persistence of diverse faculty who are African Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, or Native Pacific Islanders in the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) professoriate.

Bridgewater State University is a founding member of the [North Star Collective](#). Two BSU faculty members were selected to be part of this BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) community focused on mentoring and professional development (recommendation: 2-22).

Programming offered through the division has given students the chance to expand competencies and facilitate development that is both personally and professionally relevant to BSU's equity-centered priorities. Events are too numerous to name individually, but the virtual setting has allowed the university to present many new opportunities and add the voices of new speakers to the student educational experience (recommendation: 4-9).

Examples:

- The College of Education and Health Sciences has engaged students in seminars focused on race and racial equity.
- The Racial Justice Faculty Cooperative in the Bartlett College of Science and Mathematics has invited speakers to campus to amplify Black and Brown excellence in STEM.
- The Minnock Institute for Global Engagement has offered a number of virtual panels aimed at highlighting transnational and comparative studies of race and ethnicity as well as displacement, migration and transnationalism.

Off-campus partnerships have helped to deepen relationships with local communities to diversify the professions (recommendation: 4-5).

Examples:

- The College of Education and Health Sciences has worked with faculty and the Graduate Admissions Office to create an expedited pathway to earning an initial stage license for

teachers who are employed under emergency licenses that will expire in June 2023. One-third of teachers holding emergency stage teaching licenses identify as BIPOC.

- BSU is a recipient of the MassTeach grant from the Department of Higher Education to diversify the STEM teacher pipeline.
- BSU continues to partner with Taunton Public Schools (TPS) and Bristol Community College to create a “grow your own” educator pathway for Taunton High School students with a goal to diversify the TPS educator pipeline. The pathway includes early college/dual enrollment courses.
- The university continues to expand upon its Community College pipeline program (CC2BSU). This program creates a dual admission support and coaching program for students of color.
- BSU partners with JET (Journey into Education and Teaching) to provide pathways to earning a bachelor’s degree and a teaching license for paraprofessionals from gateway cities in our service region.

The establishment of an Ombuds Office was a suggested outcome of the Presidential Racial Justice Task Force. As conversations about the establishment of a Racial Justice Center progress, it is still clear that an Ombuds Office would provide a safe, confidential and nonjudgmental space for students to share their concerns about racial justice/equity or other issues. Considerations for establishing an office include the creation of an Office Charter, marketing and branding, data collection tools, and office location, among other necessities. (recommendation: 6-2).

BSU Police Department

The Bridgewater State University/American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts Racially Just Policing Model Policy was published in September of 2021. It was adopted by Bridgewater State University and the Bridgewater State University Police Department in the same month, and significant portions of the model policy have been enacted or are currently in progress. Response to suspicious activity and to mental health service needs are areas emphasized for further development and implementation (recommendation: 5-11).

BSUPD cruiser vehicles have been redesigned in an effort to distinguish university police cruisers from town police cruisers. Modifications have also been made to individual uniforms to improve identification of individual officers. Additionally, traffic stop documentation is being redesigned to more clearly identify BSUPD officers (recommendation: 5-3).

In order to support the BSUPD response to mental health services, a community liaison was hired in January of 2022 and a grant-funded clinician is already in place. The community liaison has been meeting regularly with student groups and has taken an active lead in training and advocacy on the BSU campus. By filling an existing vacancy, the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management is also preparing to add an additional mental health position by May 2022 (recommendation: 5-4).

State university police departments are statutorily required to collect and document annual reporting on traffic stops, including racial demographics. The BSUPD is committed to continuing to meet this obligation (recommendation: 5-1).

Division of Finance

In order to understand billing trends and patterns, the division is examining data by demographic group. It is also reviewing practices regarding the awarding of contracts to minority and female owned businesses.

Division of Human Resources and Talent Management (HRTM)

The division is currently searching for an Executive Director. As a senior leader in HRTM, the Executive Director will partner with the Vice President as an equity-minded human resources leader helping to effectuate change at Bridgewater State University. The Executive Director will collaborate across the institution creating human resources and talent management programs and initiatives that support the strategic direction of the HRTM division and the university, while ensuring these initiatives are accomplished within an equity practice framework (recommendation: 2-5, 2-7, 2-8, 2-9, and a number of others related to the BSU Workforce).

In partnership with the division of Student Success and Diversity and the Office of Equal Opportunity, an equity-minded hiring workshop has been developed to inform search committees about the race and ethnicity of BSU faculty, staff, and students; to share student retention data; to bring awareness to implicit bias; to promote equity-minded practice among searches; and to actualize our institutional values in the search processes. All search committee participants for staff searches are now required to complete this workshop before commencing their search process (recommendation: 2-14).

Utilizing the LinkedIn Learning platform, the Talent Development department in the division of HRTM has curated learning content for BSU faculty, staff, and students – “Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging for All.” This learning path includes topics such as unconscious bias, confronting bias, skills for inclusive conversations, communicating across cultures, communicating about culturally sensitive issues, and bystander training (recommendation: 2-18).

Division of Information Technology

The Information Technology Project Management Office (PMO) has been engaged to assist with project planning and overall coordination for implementing the Task Force recommendations (recommendations: ALL).

Information Technology and Academic Affairs have partnered to co-sponsor the “Data Streams 2.0” project. A core focus of this project is to address the racial data and equity related recommendations in the Task Force report. This includes making data available to inform racial equity and justice-oriented student-service provision (recommendation: 4-7).

The division is working with the Office of Institutional Research (IR), HRTM and other employment entities around campus to generate, analyze and disseminate a richer, more comprehensive data set (both quantitative and qualitative) on race and diversity employment statistics (recommendation: 2-1).

The Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Committee, in partnership with Student Success and Diversity, is reviewing all risks noted in the ERM Risk Register through an equity lens to ensure they are properly scored.

Information Technology has been encouraging the use of professional development time to enable team members to increase their knowledge and awareness on a range of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) topics (recommendation: 1-2).

Division of Marketing and Communications (MarComm)

The Division of Marketing and Communications has worked with the Executive Vice President to develop a racial justice and equity communications plan. In the fall, the division plans to roll out the inaugural racial justice and equity quarterly report in a format similar to the existing Bridgewater Today e-publication. Each report will spotlight one area of focus and provide several briefs on initiatives taking place to implement the recommendations of the report of the Special Presidential Task Force on Racial Justice.

Marketing and Communications is also developing a new Racial Justice & Equity website, which will be launched in the fall, in place of the existing Racial Justice at Bridgewater site. That website will provide a dynamic single location for information, resources, activities and updates related to racial justice at BSU.

Marketing and Communications will also incorporate racial justice and equity messaging into new admissions collateral and communications in implementing Student Enrollment Management action plans. Finally, the Web Communications team has begun to assess the Center for Urban Education’s (University of Southern California) racial equity web scan [tool](#) as part of its plan to audit the bridgew.edu website.

Division of Operations

The Division of Operations is actively infusing an equity-minded framework into institutional space planning decisions and auditing the policies and procedures documents of all departments using the Center for Urban Education's document review tool. The division is encouraging participation in trainings offered by the Division of Student Success and Diversity; engaging in ongoing divisional conversations about equity issues; and participating in the Racial Equity and Justice Institute ([REJI](#)) at both the local and national levels. The division is also reviewing and revising its professional job descriptions using an equity lens and requiring all search committee members to participate in the equity-minded hiring workshop.

Division of Outreach and Engagement

The Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice has offered numerous programs and workshops in partnership with colleagues across campus on issues related to racism, racial justice and racial equity.

Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

The division is actively working on the implementation of 62 Task Force recommendations. Highlights of activities include: professional development training, student leader training, diversification of staff, and a review of all policies and practices through an equity-minded lens.

The Center for Student Engagement staff (full-time employees, student employees and graduate assistants) have attended trainings, including Decentering Whiteness, Unlearning Racism, Empowered Bystander Training, Train the Trainer, and anti-racism training offered by the Diversity and Resiliency Institute of El Paso. Residence Life and Housing holds weekly/bi-weekly DEI-focused conversations, trainings and workshops conducted during professional staff meetings which continues to deepen the awareness and development of all professional staff members (recommendations: 1-1, 1-2).

Division-wide, each department has established goals related to racial justice and equity (recommendations: 1-6, 2-7). Divisional funds are available through the Vice President's office for professional development as well as for specific programming offered through a DEI lens. External guest presenters have been brought in for both divisional professional development and student leader training (recommendation 3-6).

Additionally, the CARE (Crisis, Assessment, Referral, Evaluation) Team was able to rotate individuals to diversify the core group with the expertise needed to address student concerns. Residence Life and Housing increased the percentage of staff of color (professional and graduate) from 39% to 47%. Undergraduate Admissions increased the percentage of staff of color from 25% to 38% (recommendation 2-12).

Racial Justice and Equity is a central priority for the division as noted in its annual priorities (recommendation 4-1). Athletics and Recreation within the division continues to identify and assess the physical environment for racial equity and inclusiveness. The Wellness Center is filling a vacant mental health counselor position with a DEI specialist in the Counseling Center. This position will be posted in Spring 2022 and will liaise with key departments on campus as well as coordinate equity-focused training within the Wellness Center (recommendation 4-1).

Off-Campus and Commuter Student Services is collaborating with the Lewis and Gaines Center for Inclusion and Equity (LGCIE), Internship Office, and International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) to conduct an audit of the greater Bridgewater area with the goal of creating a listing of personal and professional resources and services that will support our diverse student body. Target date of completion is the end of Spring 2022 semester.

The Office of Community Standards is conducting a comprehensive demographic analysis of all students referred to the Community Standards process and currently evaluating data to ascertain next steps. Utilizing assessment tools provided by the Center for Urban Education, the Office is also reviewing the university's Alcohol Policy, Drug Free Policy and associated Amnesty Policy through an equity lens. Recommendations for policy revisions are expected in early Summer for AY 22-23.

The Vice President's Office provided Racial Justice and Diversity grants for departments to support racial equity and justice programs. RSU Cultural Food Festival took place on Thursday, April 14, 2022 (recommendations: 4-4, 4-5, 4-6, 4-7, 4-8, 4-9, 4-10).

Finally, the Center for Student Engagement has 14 actions items in progress. These include evaluation of pedagogies, student development theories, national program standards, and best practices for racial equity (recommendations: 5-4, 5-6, 5-7, 5-9, 5-10, 5-12, 5-13).

Division of Student Success and Diversity

The Division of Student Success and Diversity (SSD) created and is implementing scaffolded racial justice and equity competency development for BSU employees and students. This training includes a workshop on Equity-minded Leadership provided for the Board and Cabinet with plans to offer to Leadership Council in May. Post-training evaluations indicate that the trainings are increasing participants' competencies in discussing and acting for racial equity. An external consultant is assessing SSD's trainings (recommendations: 1-1, 1-2, 2-18, 2-20, 3-2, 3-3, 3-4, 3-5, 4-5, 4-8, 4-9, 5-13).

The Dr. Robert A. Daniel Award was reconceptualized from focusing on all educational equity work to an emphasis on racial justice, equity and inclusion (recommendations: 1-4, 1-14). BSU's 41-member Racial Equity and Justice Institute (REJI) team has created and is advancing a robust array of strategies to audit student service provision activities and centralize racial equity practices (recommendation 4-1). The BSU REJI's racial equity goals and mid-year progress report can be found at the link. Each goal is linked to corresponding RJTF

recommendations: [Bridgewater State University REJI Racially Equitable Action Planning Tool - format 12 14 2021.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)