

Memorandum

To: Senior Leadership

From: Office for Diversity & Inclusion – Authored by Dr. Leslie Williams & Patrick Russell

Regarding: Anti-Racist Efforts at Public Traditionally White Institutions

Date: January 25, 2021

Background

We identified the top 28* public research universities in the United States based on the US News and World Report Top Public Universities rankings. We cross-referenced this list with others such as the Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education's US College Rankings Best public universities in the United States 2020. There a fair degree of overlap. We focused only on universities that were similar to UCONN so excluded institutions like the military academies or Cal Tech.

Our data suggests that 26 of these 28 universities show evidence of responding to the current wave of anti-Black state sanctioned violence.

Primary Themes

Reviews and/or Changes to Institutional Policies, Practices and Structures

All 26 of these universities have engaged in some form of review or actual changing on institutional policies, practices and structures. The most common were:

- Fifteen institutions were reviewing, revising or reforming their campus policing policies, practices and structures.
- Twelve institutions had established bodies such as advisory boards, commissions, councils, task forces and working groups to examine existing diversity equity and inclusion policies, practices and structures and offer recommendations.
- Ten institutions were planning to or had launched DEI assessments such as climate surveys and diversity audits, and/or accountability measures.
- Eight institutions had established new offices or staff positions to design, implement and assess DEI efforts across various academic and administrative units, such as associate deans, equity advisors, and ombudspersons.
- Seven institutions were reviewing, revising and/or expanding their counseling centers and capacity to serve underrepresented members of the community, especially Black students.

Increasing and Retaining Structural Diversity

All 26 of these universities have engaged in efforts to recruit, hire or enroll and retain faculty, students and staff, with some explicitly focused on Blacks/African Americans. The most common were:

- Fourteen of these universities had established new initiatives to recruit, hire, mentor, and promote faculty of color, with several explicitly focused on Black/African American faculty.
- Twelve of these universities had established new initiatives to recruit, enroll, mentor, and retain undergraduate and graduate students of color, with several explicitly focused on Black/African American students.
- Seven of these universities had established new initiatives to recruit, hire, mentor, and promote staff of color, with several explicitly focused on Black/African American staff.

Improving the Climate for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

All 26 of these universities have engaged in efforts to improve the climate for diversity, equity and inclusions, with several explicitly focused on improving the experiences of Black/African American members of the campus community. The most common were:

- Twenty-two of these universities offered co-curricular programs such as book clubs, brown bags, conferences, dialogues, forums, lectures, panels, seminars and town halls to explore and enhance knowledge about DEI issues on campus and in society.
- Twenty of these universities offered some type of DEI trainings and workshops for faculty, students, staff and administrative leaders.
- Five universities had or were reviewing and revising policies on buildings and monuments on their campuses to ensure that those structures met standards and values of equity, justice and inclusion.

Enhancing and Expanding Academic Offerings Focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Eleven of these universities are enhancing or expanding academic offerings on diversity, equity and inclusion. The most common were:

- Six universities offered new courses on diversity, equity and inclusion, including two courses on anti-Blackness.
- Six universities had or were reviewing their diversity general education requirements with the goal of enhancing or expanding them.
- Two universities established new institutes and research centers to focus on racial equity and justice.

Providing or Pursuing Financial Resources to Support These Initiatives

Seventeen of these universities identified funding or established fundraising efforts to support these initiatives outlined above. The most common were:

- Thirteen universities offered general funding or established fundraising efforts for DEI initiatives.
- Eleven universities offered grants for research on DEI issues.

- Eight universities offered funding for fellowships and scholarships to attract and retain students of color.

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