

Report and Recommendations of the Identifying and Dismantling Racial Inequity Task Force

Niagara University
July 2020

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From the Co-Chairs

Dear Niagara University Campus Community,

As we close the work of the Identifying and Dismantling Racial Injustice Task Force, we want to take an opportunity to thank the subcommittee members who have dedicated their time, intellectual resources, and energy to this work. In addition, we want to say thank you to university leadership, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community stakeholders who have also contributed to this work as we continue to strive for a campus community that is not only inclusive, but one that is anti-racist and embodies the true Vincentian mission and spirit.

Father James J. Maher, C.M., officially announced the formation of this task force on June 28, 2020, to address the continued social unrest after the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Elijah McClain, all Black individuals whose killings touched on one of the many issues of systemic racism and oppression—*specifically*, police brutality. The killings of these and countless other BIPOC individuals not only sparked a national dialogue, but also allowed Niagara to look at our own culpability surrounding issues of systemic racism, both seen and unseen.

A dynamic team comprising 11 representatives from faculty, staff, executive leadership and, most notably, students, was divided into the following subcommittee groups to identify areas of growth that needed to be addressed: vocabulary and common languages; critical interdependencies; policies; BIPOC students, faculty, and staff; curriculum and education; student affairs; and communication. This team, which is composed of a majority of BIPOC individuals, is both revolutionary and inspirational as it seeks to elevate and diversify voices that are not typically heard.

Over the course of eight weeks, the subcommittees researched, evaluated, and crafted comprehensive recommendations that support the vision for a campus community that is anti-racist and embodies spaces of inclusivity, respect, and value of the human person. The task force was given a detailed timeline that emphasized the importance of this critical work. We also reached out and contacted numerous community members via phone, email, and virtual meeting platforms, for their recommendations and suggestions.

Niagara is working diligently to address these issues as we move forward to a new future. We want to sincerely thank everyone who lent their support, time, and service to this work. To quote the late civil rights icon, John Lewis:

“Nothing can stop the power of a committed and determined people to make a difference in society. Why? Because human beings are the most dynamic link to the divine on this planet.”

With sincerest regards,

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Acknowledgements

The task force would like to thank the Niagara University student body for driving change on our campus. Student participation in the life and function of a university is essential to the growth and development of all community members. In addition, we would like to thank all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members who provided feedback as we worked to identify strategies to increase racial justice on our campus. Finally, we would like to thank Father James J. Maher for his commitment to this work and for his charge to articulate in our report recommendations that can be implemented immediately so that our community can begin to model for other institutions of higher learning how to systematically address systemic racial injustices.

Report Terminology

Throughout this report, readers will notice that the task force has modeled the way language can be used to articulate recommendations that identify, target, and address systemic inequities. We recognize that this list of terms may not capture the breadth and depth of knowledge about this specific content area. Members' conversations about language were rich, insightful, and thought-provoking. In the end, it was decided that words that elevate the university's understanding of systemic change would be included in the final report. While additional words are currently in the vernacular, it was decided to move the university's approach to this work from an individual to a macro perspective. Finally, we acknowledge this list is not static, because knowledge is fluid and rapidly changing.

BIPOC—An acronym that stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Considered a more inclusive term than “people of color.”

Equity—Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus, we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race, or fail to eliminate them.²

Equitable outcome—We are told that to be fair, we must treat everyone the same (equal); however, when we recognize the legacy of institutionalized and structural racism, we understand that differing people and communities need different resources (equity). In order to be equitable, we provide specific, unique resources that will support people and communities in getting their basic needs met and reaching their full potential. Sameness is not always fairness if the oppressed group remains disadvantaged.³

Inclusion—Inclusion authentically brings traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making.²

Institutional Racism—A term that refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. The institutional policies may never mention any racial group, but their effect is to create advantages for whites and oppression and disadvantage for people from groups classified as non-white.²

Predominantly White Institution (PWI) —A term used to describe institutions of higher learning in which Caucasians account for 50% or greater of the student enrollment.⁷

Race—A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic, and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.²

Racial Disparities—Differences in measurable societal outcomes based on race. These disparities are rooted in unfairness and injustice, and are perpetuated by policies and practices with racial bias (either implicit or explicit).³

Racially Minoritized—Used in place of minority (noun) to highlight the social oppression that minoritizes individuals.⁴

Racial Justice—Working to eliminate racial disparities resulting from individual, institutional, and structural racism. Equitable outcomes for all are central to racial justice efforts.³

Racism—A complex system of beliefs and behaviors, grounded in a presumed superiority of the white race. These beliefs and behaviors are conscious and unconscious, personal and institutional, and result in the oppression of people of color and benefit the dominant group, whites. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism.²

Social Justice (Education) —A social justice education is centered in democracy and the freedom to exercise one's full humanity. Conceptions of equity and democracy have always been practically and theoretically connected to the field of education, which is often perceived as the greatest human equalizer.⁵

Structural Racism—The history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions. This combines to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.³

Systematic Racism—The policies and practices entrenched in established institutions, which result in the exclusion or promotion of designated groups. It differs from overt discrimination in that no individual intent is necessary.⁶

Sources:

¹ New York Times <https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-bipoc.html>

² Racial Equity Resource Guide Glossary
<http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>

³ Racial Equity Glossary http://depts.washington.edu/lend/pdfs/3_Racial_Equity_Glossary.pdf

⁴ IGI Global <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/fostering-allyship-in-ourselves-and-our-students/82051>

⁵ Education Week <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2019/01/23/what-is-social-justice-education-anyway.html>

⁶ Alberta Civil Liberties Research Centre (<http://www.aclrc.com/forms-of-racism>)

⁷ IGI Global <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/predominantly-white-institutions-pwis/68120>

Introduction

The work of the task force is urgent and critical. Many across different organizations and settings are calling for real policy changes and the allocation of resources that increase racial justice. Niagara University has positioned itself as an institution that is ready to embrace its past and move toward a future that promotes the empowerment of BIPOC students, faculty, staff, vendors, and community members.

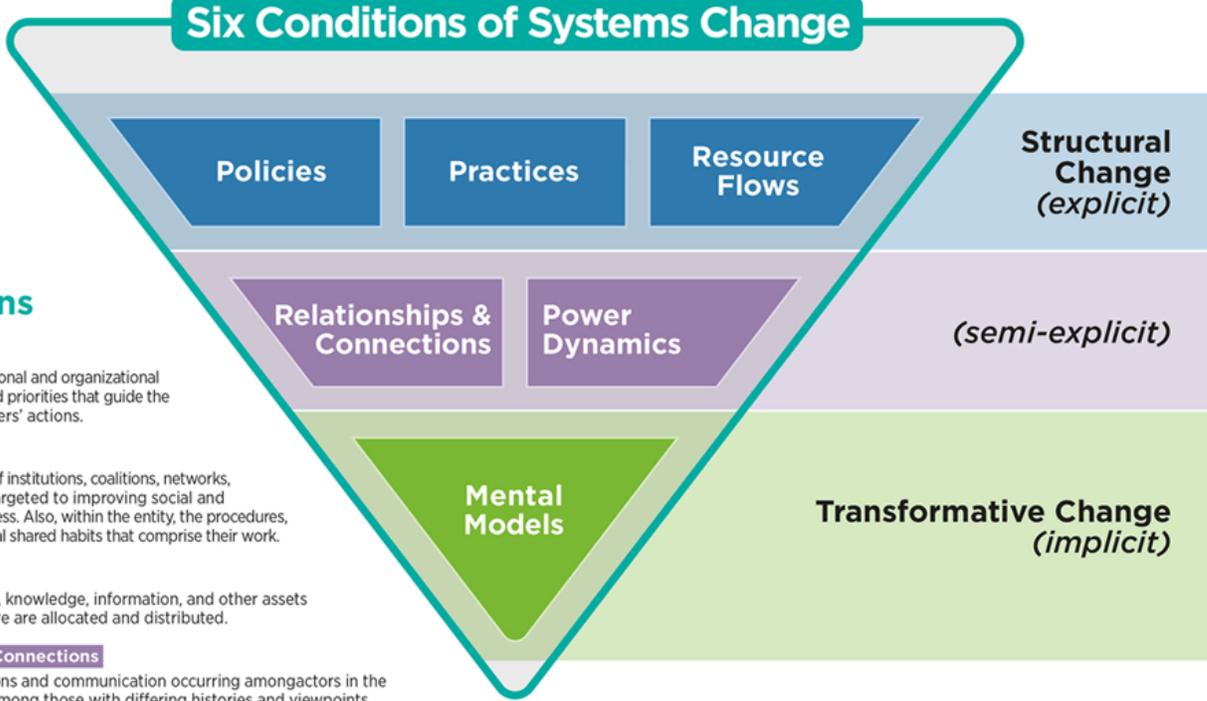
The task force used student ideas and voices to guide inquiry that would reveal what Niagara University must do to strengthen student experiences and outcomes. The task force reviewed documents that identified student concerns; spoke with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members; reviewed comments submitted via the task force's survey; collected supporting data from each sector at the university; analyzed programs, organizational structures, and policies from universities and colleges across the United States; reviewed scholarly literature to inform our understanding of race, structural racism, and racial justice; and read Vincentian and Catholic documents that articulate how the church should respond to racism through a moral and theological lens.

The charge for the entire Niagara University community is to work toward racial justice through a co-responsibility framework. Racial justice is achieved only when every office on campus operates with the same perspective. In order to achieve racial justice, it is imperative that each office and department identifies and articulates how Niagara University operates as a predominantly white institution, and how this particular cultural expression, knowingly and unknowingly, minoritizes students.

The task force set out to identify and map the experiences of BIPOC students, faculty, staff, and alumni across all sectors of the university. It was important to discover how university structures and processes produced and/or reproduced experiences that excluded BIPOC community members. In addition, it was important to reveal how the university supported and nurtured community members who are often marginalized in the larger society. In the end, the work was really about articulating how Niagara University can widen the participation of BIPOC community members and increase anti-racist knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in policies, curriculum, pedagogy, recruitment, retention, and progression practices.

The task force used Kania, Kramer, and Senge's (2018) *Six Conditions of Systems Change* to better understand how to collect and analyze data in order to make relevant and meaningful recommendations. The inverted triangle model, as outlined on the next page, illustrates how organizations can look at their policies, practices, resource flows, relationships and connections, power dynamics, and mental models.

Six Conditions of Systems Change



Definitions

Policies

Government, institutional and organizational rules, regulations, and priorities that guide the entity's own and others' actions.

Practices

Espoused activities of institutions, coalitions, networks, and other entities targeted to improving social and environmental progress. Also, within the entity, the procedures, guidelines, or informal shared habits that comprise their work.

Resource Flows

How money, people, knowledge, information, and other assets such as infrastructure are allocated and distributed.

Relationships & Connections

Quality of connections and communication occurring among actors in the system, especially among those with differing histories and viewpoints.

Power Dynamics

The distribution of decision-making power, authority, and both formal and informal influence among individuals and organizations.

Mental Models

Habits of thought—deeply held beliefs and assumptions and taken-for-granted ways of operating that influence how we think, what we do, and how we talk.

¹ John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge. "The Waters of Systems Change." FSG, June 2018. https://www.fsg.org/publications/water_of_systems_change

Timeline

Task force members met as a complete team every Tuesday at 5 p.m. via Google Meet. In addition, each team member was assigned to two subcommittees. Each subcommittee met on a weekly basis via Google Meet. Team members dedicated six to eight hours over the course of eight weeks in meetings, conducting research, or embedding themselves in scholarly literature. In addition, co-chairs Oliver and Ward met with Father Maher on a weekly basis to discuss the progress of the task force.

Day 1—June 9

Received charge from Father Maher and organized into subcommittees.

Day 8—June 16

Report back: What data have we found about the issues identified within the subcommittee? Have we moved from anecdotal accounts or stories to evidence of a need for change and improvements?

Day 15—June 23

Report back: What are NU's strengths and accomplishments in your area? What assets does NU already have that can support the growth and development of the university in your area?

Day 22—June 30

Report back: What best practices are relevant to the subcommittees' work? Do we have multiple examples of best practices?

Day 29—July 7

Report back: What best practice has emerged as the BEST practice for NU? What is the rationale for singling out that best practice for NU? Does it support the strategic plan? Does it support our Catholic and Vincentian mission?

Identify specific people for the following member-check meetings—faculty, staff, students, community members—and arrange meetings for the following week.

Day 36—July 14

Report back: What are your draft recommendations, and how can you articulate specific actions to help move the university forward to implementation? Conduct member-check meetings July 15-July 20.

Day 43—July 21

Report back: What feedback emerged from the member-check meetings? How does this feedback inform your draft recommendations? In this final meeting, please draft your final recommendations.

Day 51—July 29

Present final report to Father James J. Maher.

Task Force Recommendations Summary

Below is a summary of the recommendations of the task force, including the lead personnel and timeframes of the recommendations.

The summary uses the following abbreviation conventions for timeframe: ST—short-term; MT—mid-term; LT—long-term

Recommendation	Lead	Timeframe
Offer workshops to all sectors of the university regarding the common language terms and the importance of adopting a common language in our work. Embed common language throughout the university.	Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Marketing, Advertising, & Communications; General Counsel; university leadership; NUSGA	ST Fall 2020– Summer 2021
Consistently address issues of racial injustice and racial disparities in various communications and relate it to our Catholic and Vincentian identity and mission (university and NUSGA leadership). To position our university as a place of growth, it is important for many voices to contribute to anti-racist messages. Therefore, we suggest an expanded definition of “university leadership,” to include deans, directors, supervisors, and anyone in a position to speak on behalf of a university entity or committee.	President; Executive Vice President; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; university leadership; NUSGA; Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Public Relations; Office of Mission Integration; Operations and Facilities; Finance & Innovation	ST Fall 2020– Fall 2021
Construct a new sector for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) with resources and personnel, headed by a Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.	President; Identifying & Dismantling Racial Injustice (IDRI) Task Force; Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	ST Summer 2021
Rename the Ostapenko Center for Race, Equality, & Mission to the Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission	Institutional Advancement	ST Fall 2020
Thoroughly review policies with General Counsel and Human Resources, with a specific focus on areas such as Admissions, Financial Aid, Employment, Curriculum, and Student Affairs	General Counsel; Human Resources; Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	ST Fall 2020
Provide programming and services to BIPOC students through the collaborative efforts of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Brennan Center, and the Rose Bente Lee Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission. OMA graduate assistants	Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs; OMA Graduate Assistants	ST Spring 2021

(year-long positions) would serve as the marketing, programming, and communications coordinator for all the aforementioned offices.		
Increase campuswide visibility of Multicultural Affairs Advisory Board (MAAB), increase membership within each of the multicultural groups, and collaborate with other student groups. MAAB will connect and collaborate with public relations and marketing to improve BIPOC visibility on materials, and with other offices regarding program initiatives.	Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs; Multicultural Affairs Advisory Board	ST Fall 2020– Fall 2021
Create a website that focuses on providing Niagara University students, faculty, staff, and community members with resources centered around BIPOC. This includes, but is not limited to: anti-racism resources; racial equity tool kits; and information about restorative justice and cultural responsiveness.	Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Vice President for Mission Integration; NUSGA	ST Fall 2020– Spring 2021
Identify a faculty learning coordinator to coordinate and evaluate all sections of the social justice courses, develop criteria and select instructors based on relevant competencies and experience, serve as lead member of a faculty learning community (with a focus on anti-racist pedagogical practices), and assist course instructors with anti-racist pedagogical resources.	Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	ST Spring 2021–Fall 2021
Work with departments to identify department-specific objectives that support the embedding of a racial justice framework in departmental outcomes.	Faculty Learning Coordinator	MT Summer 2021
Provide annual racial justice training to all university employees and vendors.	Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education and Training; Operations and Facilities; Chief Financial and Innovation Officer	ST Fall 2020
Review the Africana/Black Studies minor to see how it can be better supported.	Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education and Training; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	MT Fall 2021
Create a structure for group therapy sessions focused specifically on BIPOC student needs.	Director of Health Services	ST Fall 2020
Increase Health Services visibility through various platforms, including social media and the school website, and mandate the inclusion of pertinent	Director of Health Services; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	ST Fall 2020

information regarding Health Services location, hours, and phone number on all class syllabi.		
Increase financial aid support for BIPOC students with a developed and engaged program focused in providing equal support and opportunities for non-NUOP and non-athlete BIPOC students.	Financial Aid Director; Student Lead Panel; NUOP Program Director; Enrollment Management; Institutional Advancement	MT Fall 2021
Implement BIPOC staffing/resources under the Mental Health Counselor - Student Athlete Liaison for the student athlete, with a focus on the experience and mental health.	Athletic Director; Coaches; President	MT Fall 2021
Provide a judicial advocate who can clarify the judicial process, answer questions, and emotionally support students during residence life, Dean of Students, and academic investigations.	Dean of Students; Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness	ST Fall 2020
Implement a hiring practice and policy to recruit, hire, retain, and elevate an ethnically diverse staff within the admissions department.	Vice President for Enrollment Management, Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Marketing, Advertising & Communications; university leadership	ST Fall 2020– Summer 2021
Develop a communications and marketing plan that is intentional in promoting BIPOC students, faculty, and staff, and inclusive and eager to promote activities involving BIPOC.	Enrollment Marketing and Communications; Office of Multicultural Affairs; Student Affairs; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission	ST Fall 2020– Summer 2021
Turn offices, centers, and committees that deal with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion into content creators for Enrollment Marketing.	Associate Vice President for Enrollment Marketing; Office of Multicultural Affairs	ST Fall 2020
Launch a series of forums/panels about race relations, social justice initiatives, and multiethnic culture to help the campus community understand and learn from one another while becoming more tolerant and inclusive.	Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Office of Multicultural Affairs; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Alumni Office	MT Fall 2021
Streamline the process to accelerate official university responses to critical issues.	Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; President	ST Fall 2020

Task Force Recommendations Full Report

The recommendations of the task force are grounded in primary and secondary analysis of university data and best practices. Committee members identified the strengths, needs, and gaps in the university's practices, policies, programs, and resources. The recommendations listed on the following pages are offered with some degree of caution, because the scope of the initial charge was broad, and the timeframe for completion was confined in order to respond to urgent calls for organizational change. The task force respectfully offers a starting point for university growth and transformation. This document is not rigid, static, nor unamenable. Recommendations can change as the needs of the university change.

Readers will note that similar recommendations will be found across subcommittees. The task force decided it was important to allow recommendations to emerge naturally. Therefore, like or similar recommendations were kept. When appropriate, connections to other subcommittees were noted.

The task force decided that it was not only important to include recommended actions and assessment strategies, but also a timeframe for the completion of recommendations. Including a timeframe makes it easier to hold the university accountable. Accountability is an essential component of community change.

Finally, the task force recognizes that Father Maher will use this report to prioritize how racial justice will be sought at Niagara University.

Vocabulary and Common Language

Common Language Goal 1: Infuse common language regarding race and racial issues throughout the university.

Recommendation: Offer workshops to all sectors of the university regarding the common language terms and the importance of adopting a common language in our work. Embed common language throughout the university.

Lead: Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Marketing, Advertising & Communications; General Counsel; university leadership; NUSGA

Observation: It is of critical importance that NU employees understand the meaning and context of anti-racist language, and to apply an anti-racist framework to the work in their sector. The first standard identified by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education in its 2020 *Standards of Professional Practice for Chief Diversity Officers 2.0* is: “Chief diversity officers have ethical, legal, and practical obligations to frame their work from comprehensive definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion—definitions that are inclusive with respect to a wide range of identities, differentiated in terms of how they address unique identity issues and complex in terms of intersectionality and context” (Worthington et al., 2020).

The urgent need to confront institutional racism and to actively engage in anti-racism has been increasingly recognized across multiple academic disciplines. The American Public Health Association (2020) identifies racism as an ongoing public health issue that attacks the physical and mental health of people, and the American Sociological Association (2020) asserts that “institutional racism in all its forms must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.”

The American Political Science Association (2020) expressed the legacy and depth of the problem as follows:

A more just society will require more of this knowledge but also action by all of us within the discipline to examine and address how our own programs, procedures, teaching, and scholarship may be shaped by or contribute to upholding, rather than dismantling, systems of oppression.

As with any discipline, shared purpose requires a shared language. For NU to effectively and efficiently move forward to identify and dismantle racial injustice, it is critical that we employ a shared vocabulary. This will allow us to define the parameters of these terms and refine our conceptualizations of the elements of this work. A common language provides clarity to understand our own work, and allows us to communicate with others who are also working toward our shared goals. In addition, a shared language allows us to measure outcomes in meaningful and impactful ways.

Desired end state: The implementation of common language across the university will remove the stigma of traditionally taboo conversations, and will promote open conversations about key issues and concerns. It becomes a clear expectation that sectors will continuously evaluate the work they do within an anti-racist framework. In time, sectors will account for this work in annual reports.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Release an annual primer on common language in the academy, racial justice and equity, and establish what we need to know as a community (Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission). This primer would serve as an educational tool to keep the university apprised of work and current events on racial disparities, justice, and equity. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 2](#)]
- 2) Develop a permanent section on the Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission website to serve as an education and training resource regarding common language, racial justice, and anti-racist practices. The Office of Marketing, Advertising, and Communications should delegate a portion of its resources, in coordination with Crowley Webb, to contribute to the development and maintenance of this section on an ongoing basis. Once the section is finished, other university websites (Mission Integration; Student Affairs; Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; academic departments; colleges; NUSGA; Admissions, etc.) should link to it. [See [BIPOC Goal 3](#); [Communication Goal 2](#)]
- 3) Deliver workshops for sectors beginning in fall 2020 and continuing into spring 2021. Example topics for workshops: What is a racial justice framework, and how can it inform our work? What racial disparities exist at Niagara University and in higher education? Developing a deeper understanding of contemporary terminology and concepts: BIPOC, anti-racism, racial equity. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 3](#); [Student Affairs Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 1](#) and [Communication Goal 4](#)]
- 4) Review policies and procedures to determine and develop alignment with racial justice practices to promote equitable outcomes and ensure that anti-racist principles are being applied to policy development (led by the appropriate functional officers, and in conjunction with the General Counsel and Human Resources, and including deans, directors, and NUSGA) [See [Policies Goal 1](#)]

Timeframe:

- 1) Primer—Fall 2020
- 2) Website section—Summer 2021 (ready for launch in Fall 2021)
- 3) Workshops—Fall 2020 and on
- 4) Policy reviews—Spring 2021

Assessment:

- 1) Primer—Timely development and annual updating of the primer; downloads or uses of the primer
 - 2) Website section—Website metrics, such as links to, page views, etc.
 - 3) Workshops—Learning outcomes assessments from workshop participants
 - 4) Policy reviews—Alignment with anti-racist practices
-

Common Language Goal 2: Connect anti-racist messages to Catholic perspective and Vincentian mission.

Recommendation: University and NUSGA leadership consistently address issues of racial injustice and racial disparities in various communications and relate it to our Catholic and Vincentian identity and mission. In order to position our university as a place of growth, it is important for many voices to contribute to anti-racist messages. Therefore, we suggest an expanded definition of “university leadership,” including deans, directors, supervisors, and anyone in a position to speak on behalf of a university entity or committee.

Lead: President; Executive Vice President; Vice President for Academic Affairs; university leadership; NUSGA; Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Public Relations; Office of Mission Integration; Operations and Facilities; Finance & Innovation

Observation: Within the last three years, Father Maher has increased the clarity with which he has directly spoken out about a range of problems on campus and in society at large. This is in alignment with Catholic concerns about racism. Catholic Social Teaching speaks clearly to the dignity of all people, promotes cooperation toward a common good, works against injustice, and seeks opportunities for the marginalized and excluded (e.g., George, 2001; Association of Catholic Colleges & Universities, n.d.).

Desired end state: Similar to the way that the NU community is accustomed to receiving messages from senior leadership about the importance of addressing poverty on our campus, in the local community, and in society generally, we envision a situation where expanded leadership communicates how critical it is to address matters of racial injustice and racial disparities. Working in service to end racial inequities should be as endemic to the NU identity and mission as service to those living with economic inequity.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Embed anti-racist language in formal and informal university communications (expanded university leadership). [See [Communication Goal 5](#)]
- 2) Review executive communications for direct and clear language regarding racial injustice and recommend direct language when the language is vague (Public Relations in coordination with the Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion). [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#)]
- 3) Develop workshops to educate university members—faculty, staff, administrators, and students—about the connection between our Catholic and Vincentian heritage and racial justice (Office of Mission Integration). [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 5](#)]
- 4) Recognizing that the university’s reach includes individuals who are not employed directly by the university, it is essential that vendors are asked to acknowledge and support the university culture we are creating. Therefore, a statement of values should be created, with which candidates for employment, as well as contracted vendors, must agree (university, in coordination with the Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion).

Timeframe:

- 1) Embed anti-racist language—Fall 2021
- 2) Executive communications review—Fall 2020
- 3) Mission Integration workshops—Spring 2021
- 4) Statement of values acknowledgement for outside vendors—Spring 2021

Assessment:

- 1) Embed anti-racist language—Qualitative assessment of communications from various leaders across campus
- 2) Executive communications review—Qualitative assessment of communications from executive leadership
- 3) Mission Integration workshops—Participant surveys
- 4) Statement of Values acknowledgement for outside vendors—Inclusion of values statement in various documents such as RFP/RFQs, vendor agreements, and employment contracts

Critical Interdependencies

Critical Interdependencies Goal 1: Erect and/or integrate the functions necessary to build an equitable and inclusive campus across all sectors, and one that projects equity and inclusion beyond its boundaries.

Recommendation: Construct a new sector for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) with resources and personnel, headed by a Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, to effect change in the overall campus culture, evidenced by changes in behaviors and outcomes on and off campus.

Lead: President; Identifying & Dismantling Racial Injustice (IDRI) Task Force (initially); then Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (or interim) and IDRI Task Force

Observation: The task force collected sector reports and examined them for racial justice content. There are multiple examples of the university's investment in external social justice efforts such as economic insecurity, educational achievement, housing insecurity, and economic development, but there was little evidence that this work is being undertaken through the lens of racial equity and justice. Additionally, there are few examples of how the university is attempting to address systematic racial disparities internally, such as through hiring practices, graduation outcomes, student engagement, vendor selection, and university education and training. The current incarnation of the university's diversity, equity, and inclusion work has an outward appearance of separated functional units and provides an opportunity to re-examine titles and reporting structures. These observations demonstrate that senior leadership is needed to guide the university in identifying policies, procedures, and practices that promote racial inclusion on and off campus. Although there are varied models of conducting equity and inclusion efforts—varying from pure student services plus Title IX work to a fully integrated equity and inclusion structure, the most effective equity and inclusion models implement, explicitly or implicitly, the standards of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education (NADOHE; Worthington, Stanley, & Smith, 2020). This implementation is achieved most thoroughly when the equity and inclusion functions are gathered into a unified sector, with a chief officer at least at the vice presidential level, responsible to the president.

Desired end state: A fully unified equity and inclusion sector, led by a vice president responsible to the president of the university, with specific functions under their direct authority, and "dotted line," mandatory consultation with equity and inclusion efforts that are embedded in other sectors.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Identify the disparate campus equity and inclusion efforts, initiatives, and functions, and group these functions under direct report and dotted-line authority. This will provide the basis for understanding the scope, potential reporting structure, and related functions for the new DEI sector. These efforts and functions include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Title IX compliance
 - b) Faculty pedagogy and content
 - c) Employee education and training
 - d) Policy review and development
 - e) General hiring and onboarding
 - f) Student education and training
 - g) Student inclusion programming

- h) Equity impacting external relations (formal university presence, service, internships, and practical training, etc.)
- 2) Build new DEI sector structure (under Vice President)
- a) Combine existing Office of Equity & Inclusion (OEI) and Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) into a new function for DEI education and training. The new office for education and training will focus on training, community service workshops, and conferences in order to continue to educate the campus and surrounding community on issues regarding diversity, equity, and inclusivity. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 3](#); [Student Affairs Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 1](#) and [Goal 4](#)] The remaining structures are:
 - i) Office for Title IX training and Compliance (Director)
 - ii) Office of Multicultural Affairs (Director and Program Director)
 - b) Establish a faculty coordinator position to guide pedagogy and curriculum reform. [See [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 1](#) and [Goal 2](#)]
 - c) External relations and education and training programs will be conducted by the Vice President utilizing campus and necessary contracted resources, focusing on, but not limited to: community outreach; coordination with university centers (e.g., Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Levesque Institute); instigating, assisting, and utilizing faculty research.
- 3) Identify related functions that will remain in their existing structures but coordinate activities with the new Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:
- a) General hiring and onboarding (HR)
 - b) Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission (ED)
 - c) Levesque Institute (ED)
 - d) Marketing and public presence (public relations, website content development, etc.)
- 4) Conduct new Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion search
- a) Write sector divisional and vice presidential job descriptions
 - b) Appoint interim Vice President
 - c) Form DEI hiring committee
 - d) Recommend appointments and conduct divisional head searches
 - e) Hire for/appoint DEI divisional personnel
 - f) Open search for Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 - g) Hire Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Timeframe: Summer 2021

Assessment: Have a new hire by summer 2021

Critical Interdependencies Goal 2: Align university naming conventions with recommended common language.

Recommendation: Rename the Ostapenko Center for Race, Equality & Mission to the Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#)]

Lead: Institutional Advancement

Observation: Society's understanding of equality now includes the comparative of equity. Equity is used when discussing racial disparities in order to describe how additional resources are warranted to address the impact of structural oppression and marginalization. To that end, the use of the word equality in the center's name does not correspond to current terminology.

Desired end state: The center will be renamed to reflect the university's commitment to racial equity and its use of common language to underscore that commitment.

Recommended action: Review and revise the endowment agreement as necessary.

Timeframe: Fall 2020

Assessment: Name change; updating the center's name on various media (website, brochures, etc.)

Policies

Policies Goal 1: Create diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policy/policies for the entire university.

Recommendation: Thoroughly review policies with General Counsel and Human Resources with a specific focus on areas such as Admissions, Financial Aid, Employment, Curriculum, and Student Affairs.

Lead: Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; General Counsel; Human Resources; Office of Equity & Inclusion; and university leadership

Observation: Niagara University does not have a separate policy that contains statements about diversity and inclusion. The committee reviewed 30 websites of higher education to locate campus policies regarding diversity and inclusion. After reviewing 259 policies on the NU website, the following policies were found:

- Legal Issues & Disability
 - Addresses discrimination; missing from the policy is diversity, race, and inclusion.
- Equal Employment Opportunity
 - Addresses discrimination based on race, age, sex (gender), national origin, religious preference, sexual orientation, predisposed genetic disorder, status as a veteran, or disability; missing from the policy is diversity and inclusion.
- Non-discrimination Policy and Grievance Procedures
 - Address harassment; discrimination based on a protected category including sex, race, age, disability, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, or expression; sexual orientation; marital or familial status; military or veteran status; domestic violence victim status; pregnancy; or other category protected by law; missing from the policy is diversity and inclusion.
- Harassment & Discrimination (Involving Students) Policy
 - Addresses harassment; discrimination based on a protected category including sex, race, age, disability, color, creed, national origin, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, or expression; sexual orientation; marital or familial status; military or veteran status; domestic violence victim status; pregnancy; or other category protected by law; missing from the policy is diversity and inclusion.
- Standards of Conduct Policy
 - Addresses committing intimidating acts or threats or using abusive language toward other employees, including acts of sexual harassment; missing from the policy is diversity, race, and inclusion.

Desired end state: Establish an all-encompassing DEI policy and resources to support and sustain the spirit and word of the policy.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Establish a multicultural/multi-racial committee to write policy under the auspices of the DEI. Evaluate and identify best practices for policies that address social justice and

racial equity and promote anti-racism. Work with the Common Language Subcommittee to ensure the use of appropriate language. For example, the use of “they/their” as opposed to “his/her.” Identify an educational plan for implementation of the policy aligned with the education of social justice. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum and Education Goal 3](#)]

- 2) Conduct workshops on culturally responsive teaching and culturally relevant curricula. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 1](#) and [Goal 2](#)]
- 3) Make training on diversity mandatory for all students, staff, and faculty—including race, equity, gender, religion, disabilities, etc. Educate and inform Niagara University community of the DEI policy. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 3](#); [Student Affairs Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 1](#) and [Goal 4](#)]

Timeframe:

- 1) Policy review—Fall 2020
- 2) Appointment of Interim Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion—Fall 2020
- 3) Campus Climate Survey—Fall 2020 and Fall 2021

Assessment:

- 1) Policy completed in fall 2020 assessing for diversity, equity, and inclusivity
 - 2) Develop long-term partnerships with surrounding community for institutional change
 - 3) Conduct a campus climate survey results
-

BIPOC Students, Faculty, and Staff

BIPOC Goal 1: Foster collaboration on programming among campus offices that serve BIPOC students.

Recommendation: The existing offices (Office of Multicultural Affairs; Brennan Center; Rose Bente Lee Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission) must collaborate to provide programming and services to BIPOC students. Graduate assistants (year-long positions) would serve as the marketing, programming, and communications coordinator for all the aforementioned offices.

Lead: Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs; graduate assistants

Observation: Currently, the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA), the Brennan Center, and the Rose Bente Lee Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission provide programming to BIPOC students and the campus community. In the 2018-19 academic year, OMA successfully coordinated approximately 56 social, educational, work training, and cultural programs. However, many of the scheduled programs had low attendance due to multiple events being scheduled for the same days and times.

Desired end state: Communication and collaboration will be strengthened and/or established. All events/programs will be on one calendar managed by the OMA graduate assistant.

Recommended action: Hire additional staffing (an assistant director and two year-long graduate assistants) for marketing, establishing communication, and coordinating monthly meetings with office representatives to share and maintain the calendar of events. [See [Communication Goal 2](#)]

Timeframe:

- 1) Short Term—Hire an assistant director and two graduate assistants
- 2) Intermediate—Promote the assistant director to associate director and promote graduate assistants to assistant directors.
- 3) Long Term—Locate office space in high-traffic area central to all of these offices

Assessment: Added staff to the Office of Multicultural Affairs and a comprehensive calendar of events with numerous programs/events that are accessible to the NU community.

BIPOC Goal 2: Include representatives of all BIPOC student groups on the student Multicultural Affairs Advisory Board (MAAB), and have this group collaborate with other NU student groups (i.e., NUFTA, Sustainability, etc.).

Recommendation: Increase MAAB's campuswide visibility, increase membership within each of the multicultural groups, and collaborate with other student groups. MAAB will connect and collaborate with public relations and marketing to improve BIPOC visibility on materials and with other offices regarding program initiatives [see [Communication Goal 2](#) and [Goal 3](#)].

Lead: Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs; Multicultural Affairs Advisory Board

Observation: The Multicultural Affairs Advisory Board is a student board created a year ago to establish a unified effort between multiple student organizations on campus. This board promotes campuswide student involvement, develops and collaborates on programs related to BIPOC students' issues, equity, and inclusion. It currently consists of representatives from five different multicultural groups—Black Student Union (BSU), NU Alliance, Latinos Unidos, Muslim Student Alliance, Feminism Today—and the NUSGA Diversity and Inclusion Chair.

Desired end state: Increased awareness of BIPOC student issues, recognition of their contributions to the campus community, and their assistance with retention and recruitment of BIPOC students.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Waive membership fees and dues for members of these groups due to the expectation of their efforts to provide learning opportunities to the NU community.
- 2) Allocate additional funding and staffing to support MAAB program initiatives and expansion to include representatives of the multicultural student groups.
- 3) MAAB should hold one meeting per semester with Father Maher.

Timeframe:

- 1) Short Term—Waive membership fees for group members (Fall 2020)
- 2) Intermediate—Connect with PR and marketing to increase BIPOC visibility (Spring 2021)
- 3) Long Term—Develop additional BIPOC student organizations such as the Native American Student Association and/or International Student Association (Fall 2021)

Assessment:

- 1) Retention and enrollment of BIPOC students will increase.
 - 2) Marketing materials will demonstrate our diverse community.
 - 3) The number of student complaints regarding incidents of discrimination and inequity will decrease.
-

BIPOC Goal 3: Develop online anti-racist/racial justice tools and resources.

Recommendation: Create a website that focuses on providing Niagara University students, faculty, staff, and community members with resources centered around BIPOC. This includes but is not limited to: anti-racism resources, racial equity tool kits, and information about restorative justice and cultural responsiveness.

Lead: Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Vice President for Mission Integration; Student Affairs (NUSGA)

Observation: After careful review of the Niagara University website, we found no indication that there was a resource on our website that exclusively addresses anti-racist tools and resources. While the NU Mission page did recently add a robust list that includes various anti-racism resources, research of other institutions, such as Holy Cross, New York University, University of North Carolina, SUNY Cortland, Loyola University Maryland, University of Washington, Glendale Community College, and SUNY Plattsburgh, showed that they all have websites specifically for anti-racism resources (see Appendix D for a list of links). According to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women International Perspectives: Women and Global Solidarity, anti-racism is defined as the “**active process** of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes, so that power is redistributed and shared equitably” (as cited by Wheaton College, n.d.). To combat racial inequality, we have to focus on the ways in which higher education policy can result in racist outcomes (Bensimon, 2020). Part of addressing racism within our campus is to have resources for students, faculty, and staff that are both readily accessible and explicit.

Desired end state: This website should be a collaborative effort between various offices to ensure that multiple sectors are represented in this work. In addition, the site should include various multimedia resources, such as, but not limited, to: links to books, scholarly articles, journals, television, magazines, etc. Finally, students, faculty, and staff should have these resources readily available.

Recommended action: Work with Information Technology (IT) to create an interactive web page that directly addresses anti-racism. Links to this page should be included on the following web pages as well: Student Affairs; NUOP; Office of Equity & Inclusion; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Office of Multicultural Affairs; the Brennan Center; the College of Arts and Sciences; the College of Business Administration; the College of Education; the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management; Career Services; and Admissions. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 2](#)]

Timeframe:

- 1) Short-term—September 2020 (formation of the Racial Justice Resource group)
- 2) January 2021 (Spring Semester)

Assessment:

- 1) Publication of the website for the Niagara campus community once data and the necessary resources are collected and organized
- 2) Track website traffic and visitors using software such as Google Analytics
- 3) Conduct quarterly Racial Justice Resource working group meetings to assess and update website resources.

Curriculum and Education Goal 1: Implement a social justice course.

Recommendation: Identify a faculty learning coordinator to coordinate and evaluate all sections of the social justice courses, develop criteria and select instructors based on relevant competencies and experience, serve as lead member of a faculty learning community (with a focus on anti-racist pedagogical practices), and assist course instructors with anti-racist pedagogical resources.

Lead: Vice President of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Observation: The course is already in development as General Education requirement. The ideal situation would be to enact a cap to ensure small class sizes, which will allow for thorough discussion of sensitive and challenging subject matter and enable small group activities. Smaller class sizes tend to be more interactive and engaging, thereby facilitating attentive listening, and rely less on lecturing, which often results in passive listening (Johnson, 2010). Cohorts of faculty can participate in a faculty learning community designed to focus on anti-racist pedagogy. A faculty learning community can foster collaborative and collegial relationships, develop a deeper understanding of pedagogy, and provide valuable opportunities for faculty to reflect upon the challenges and complexities of teaching (Cox, 2004; Glowacki-Dudka & Brown, 2013). It's essential to provide support for anti-racist pedagogy (McMurtrie, 2020), to help faculty build awareness about racial biases they may have and how to contend with those biases (Starck et al., 2020), and to think critically about what constitutes anti-racist pedagogy and how to handle resistance when teaching about institutional racism and power relations (Kandaswamy, 2007).

Desired end state: All first-year students will take the new social justice course within their first year. In the short term (phase 1), those classes should be capped at 25 students, and instructors, faculty fellows, and professors should be identified to serve as instructors. For phase 2 of the course, class sizes should be reduced to 20 students; by this time, more instructors will have been trained with pedagogy.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Select a faculty coordinator who has content expertise and pedagogical experience in implementing a social justice course, and incentivize this person with a course reduction each semester and a \$12,000 annual stipend. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 2](#)]
- 2) Have the social justice course reside within the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.
- 3) Determine incentives and compensation for instructors, who will agree to participate in three instructor meetings per semester.

Timeframe:

- 1) Phase 1: Hiring of the faculty coordinator—Spring 2021
- 2) Phase 2: Inaugural social justice cohort—Fall 2021

Assessment: Link social justice courses evaluations and common language assessment to demonstrate student knowledge and perceptions of changed behaviors.

Curriculum and Education Goal 2: Expose students to racial justice concepts at the departmental level within each course.

Recommendation: The faculty coordinator will work with departments to identify department-specific objectives that support the embedding of a racial justice framework in departmental outcomes.

Lead: Faculty Learning Coordinator

Observation: There is no “one size fits all” approach to teaching racial justice content and assessing student learning, but there are ways to incorporate anti-racist pedagogy in any course (Kishimoto, 2016). While traditional assessment methods (quizzes, exams) will be appropriate for some departments, there are a variety of assessment methods to consider, and it must be understood that students have a broad range of attitudes and knowledge. Realistically, learning will be modest for some students, and some may cling to uninformed perspectives (Thurber et al., 2019). Yet it is critical to commit to an anti-racist curriculum and to recognize that long-term engagement is required from students, faculty, and administrators. Ongoing evaluation is needed to measure progress and guide future initiatives (O’Neill & Miller, 2015). Creating institutional change and fostering educational growth in pursuit of racial justice will require persistent collective effort and action (Demond & Emirbayer, 2012).

Desired end state: Niagara University students will be versed in racial justice knowledge within departmental courses.

Recommended actions: Deans will appoint a standing committee (which should include student representatives) to coordinate and collect departmental data demonstrating infusion of racial justice content. Data will then be sent to the faculty coordinator for analysis to demonstrate the university’s cultural shift. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 1](#)]

Timeframe: Phase 2 implementation and assessment—Summer 2021

Assessment: Once learning objectives are integrated into syllabi and linked to an assessment component measuring student learning and progress, departments will collect this data, which may include qualitative and/or quantitative data. The faculty coordinator can assist with the creation of assessment tools. Analysis will be included in departmental level annual reports, leading to college-level analysis of departmental level data. The process of developing objectives and assessments will likely differ at both the department and college level. Colleges will report the outcomes to the Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Curriculum and Education Goal 3: Provide training and opportunities for all university employees to increase knowledge about racial justice.

Recommendation: All university employees and vendors should receive annual racial justice training.

Lead: Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education and Training; Operations and Facilities; Chief Financial and Innovation Officer

Observation: Training is an essential component of building a culture of anti-racism. A deliberate plan to train employees (recognizing that the needs of different sectors will vary) is a necessary step for creating institutional change. There is a wealth of information on this subject in the College of Holy Cross Anti-Racism Action Plan (<https://www.holycross.edu/campus-life/diversity-and-inclusion/additional-resources/anti-racism/anti-racism-action-plan>).

Desired end state: We can envision a culture change that results, for example, in a pedagogical shift in curriculum that incorporates content supporting racial empowerment, sector assessment of racial disparities, more contracts with minoritized vendors, improvement in hiring practices leading to more BIPOC employees, improvement in retention and promotion of BIPOC employees, and improvement in campus safety personnel interactions with BIPOC students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Appoint a Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education and Training, who will develop an education and training initiative for faculty, staff, and vendors in preparation for employee searches, annual performance reviews, and other relevant topics. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#)]
- 2) Appoint a Director of Education and Training who will conduct annual and at request training throughout the university and work with departmental diversity advocates. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#)]
- 3) Schedule a “Day of Learning” for racial justice training, setting aside days for administrative staff and faculty. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Student Affairs Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 1](#) and [Goal 4](#)]
- 4) Provide restorative justice and cultural responsiveness education to campus safety personnel. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 4](#)]

Timeframe: Fall 2020

Assessment: Learning outcomes assessments from participants

Curriculum and Education Goal 4: Broaden students' academic choices.

Recommendation: Review the Africana/Black Studies minor to see how it can be better supported.

Lead: Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education and Training; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Observation: The Africana/Black Studies minor was reconstituted in 2016. Since that time, students have had the opportunity to take courses that provide academic inquiry about historical and contemporary issues related to the Black diaspora. While the reinstatement provided additional minor choices, the minor has only a select few courses available to students outside of the history department.

Desired end state: Students will have the opportunity to take interdisciplinary courses that can fulfill the Africana/Black Studies minor. In addition, they will have opportunities to integrate their course scholarship through internship opportunities.

Recommended actions: Use resources at St. John's and DePaul universities to generate a plan about how to support students' desire for additional learning opportunities for the Africana/Black Studies minor.

Timeframe: Fall 2021

Assessment: Course catalogue will reflect changes to the minor.

Student Affairs

Student Affairs Goal 1: Implement group therapy sessions offered by Health Services.

Recommendation: Create a structure for group therapy sessions focused specifically on BIPOC student needs.

Lead: Director of Health Services

Observation: Currently, group sessions occur only once a student request has been made. When the request is made, students are asked to commit to sessions before Health Services begins the search for a counselor. Although the option for group counseling exists in theory, there are no prearranged options available at the time that students may require the services. Other schools, such as Canisius College, Iona, Fairfield, and Ithaca College, have group therapy sessions for BIPOC students. According to The [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#), “racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. are less likely to have access to mental health services, less likely use community mental health services” which has been found to “contribute to poor mental health outcomes, including suicide, among racial and ethnic minority populations.” (<https://www.minorityhealth.hhs.gov/omh/content.aspx?ID=9447>) This data supports the idea that the onus of responsibility for proper mental healthcare should not be on the students themselves to request, but instead needs to be readily accessible and marketed to students of color as those students are less likely to use mental health services.

Desired end state: This is an immediate goal. Before the 2020-21 school year, regularly scheduled and staffed group therapy sessions for BIPOC students should be available. This cultural competency training should be in accordance with the common language committee.

Recommended actions: Assign a counselor who has participated in the equity and diversity training offered to NU faculty and staff to implement, schedule, and facilitate group counseling sessions that are focused on BIPOC student needs regularly throughout the school year. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 3](#); [Communication Goal 1](#) and [Goal 4](#); [Student Affairs Goal 4](#)]

Timeframe: Group sessions should be scheduled to begin during the first semester of this school year.

Assessment: Yearly data tracking of student demographics to assess the impact of the changes and resources being provided. Data should be used as a reference to further cite areas of improvements for the school, rather than to determine if the programming is necessary, as statistics show that BIPOC are less likely to use mental health services.

Student Affairs Goal 2: Market Health Services more comprehensively.

Recommendation: The visibility of Health Services should be increased by marketing through various platforms, including social media and the school website, as well as by mandating the inclusion of pertinent information regarding the location, hours, and phone number of Health Services on all class syllabi.

Lead: Director of Health Services; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Observation: Currently, the only marketing of Health Services that exists is via Twitter. According to the [Pew Research Center](#), 90% of adults between 18-29 use social media platforms. Based on this percentage, it would be advantageous for Health Services to engage in a more poignant and visible social media campaign across multiple platforms in order to reach a larger population of students. Many college students who are in need of mental health services express their thoughts and feelings on social media platforms, as opposed to reaching out for services. This increased online presence would allow for counselors to engage more meaningfully with, and reach out to, students in need of services, especially those related to mental health. Best practices support that expanding our social media platforms can lead to more real-time response. Health Services can use its social media page and other social media management tools, like Hoot Suite and Social Bro, to track and prevent suicide-related posts or posts that indicate any signs of distress by our students. It's imperative that Health Services become more proactive in reaching and finding all of our students and specifically, our BIPOC students, who are in need, rather than waiting for that student to come knocking on their door. Washington University and [University of Waterloo](#) offer best practices in support of the mental well-being of their students of color on campus.

Professors have a direct line to every student on campus. As such, their syllabi are currently underutilized resources in providing pertinent Health Services information to all students, every semester. The dissemination of this information to all students would provide increased accessibility and awareness.

Desired end state: The use of multiple social media platforms, such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as the Niagara University Health Services web page, to share health-related resources and support options available to students of color. The implementation of social media management tools to track and assist students who communicate various forms of distress. The publication of Health Services information on all class syllabi.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Health Services to create social media accounts on additional platforms. [See [Communication Goal 3](#) and [Goal 5](#)]
- 2) Professors to include contact information for Health Services within their syllabi.

Timeframe: Prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year

Assessment: Creation of NU Health Services Facebook and Instagram pages and compliance of all professors regarding the inclusion of Health Services information on course syllabi.

Student Affairs Goal 3: Increase financial aid support for BIPOC students.

Recommendation: Increase financial aid support for BIPOC students with a developed and engaged program focused in providing equal support and opportunities for non-NUOP and non-athlete BIPOC students.

Lead: Executive Vice President; Financial Aid Director; student lead panel; NUOP Program Director; Enrollment Management sector; Institutional Advancement.

Observation: While BIPOC students are heavily represented in two sectors on campus—Athletics and NUOP—there is a lack of inclusion and support of those students who do not fit into either of these areas yet have a great need for additional financial aid support. Currently, there are very limited BIPOC-specific scholarships. Based on the research and data provided by the Financial Aid Director (email communication, 2020), the following are scholarships that are currently available:

- **Argy**—Established by Joseph R. Argy, in memory of Michael J. Argy, this scholarship helps deserving graduates or staff from Niagara Falls High School with their educational cost at Niagara University. One award is for an undergraduate studying early childhood development, and one is for a graduate student, with preference to someone completing his or her master's degree in education, and preference to a student of diversity.
- **Garret**—Awarded to students who have an interest in pursuing a career in healthcare and are from the central NY area, specifically Oneida, Herkimer, Lewis, Madison, Otsego, Oswego, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence, in this order. In an effort to provide greater access and opportunity for Native Americans to pursue higher education, the Brian Garrett Memorial Scholarship will also consider qualified applicants who are members of an American Indian tribe recognized by New York state.
- **Patterson**—Awarded to students with financial need who are American Indian from the Iroquois Nations of Tuscarora, Seneca, Cayuga, Onandoga, Oneida, or Akwesasne. Students may be undergraduate or graduate, and must have a minimum 2.5 GPA.
- **Waterbury**—Awarded to a student with financial need with high academic achievement, with preference to a minority student pursuing a degree in chemistry, physics, or earth science. Renewable. First preference to eligible graduates of Blessed Sacrament-St. Gabriel High School in New Rochelle, N.Y.

Desired end state: A program established to support -NUOP, non-athlete BIPOC students with funding and financial assistance.

Proposed name: *The Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom Scholarship/Grant*

Why? After the tragic death of George Floyd in May 2020, SUNY Buffalo State College immediately released the [George Floyd Memorial Scholarship](#). The endowed \$10,000 scholarship will be awarded to one BIPOC student, who will be able to renew it during their projected four-year tenure at the college (\$40,000). In addition, this scholarship seeks to create access to education for BIPOC students who are in financial need and may not meet the criteria for additional funding. Other institutions, listed on the next page, currently have similar grants/scholarships programs:

Examples:

Canisius College-[Martin Luther King Scholarship/Grant](#)
Canisius College-[The Urban Leadership Learning Community Grant](#)
SUNY State University at Buffalo-[UB Diversity Scholarship](#)
SUNY State University at Buffalo-[Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarship](#)
State University of New York-[Native American Initiative](#)
University of North Carolina-[UNC Harvey Beech Scholarship](#)

Why name it the Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom Grant? [Fannie Lou Hamer](#) (1917-1977) was “a civil rights activist whose passionate depiction of her own suffering in a racist society helped focus attention on the plight of African-Americans throughout the South. In 1964, working with the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Hamer helped organize the 1964 Freedom Summer African-American voter registration drive in her native Mississippi. At the Democratic National Convention later that year, she was part of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, an integrated group of activists who openly challenged the legality of Mississippi’s all-white, segregated delegation.” (History.com, 2020)

As Niagara moves forward as a community and understands how systemic racism in the form of voter suppression has affected the civic engagement of BIPOC people, we are reminded of the tireless work of Fannie Lou Hamer. As we move toward a more just and equitable society, it is imperative that we honor and pay tribute to her and the work of others just like her to directly address the issue of access and equity for BIPOC students.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Find additional funds for this scholarship for students of color to assist in their post-secondary educational endeavors at Niagara and to increase diversity on campus.
- 2) Elevate future African American leaders who support racial justice and equity efforts in their communities. [[See BIPOC Goal 2](#)]
- 3) Work with Financial Aid, Admissions, and community stakeholders to identify students who fit the criteria below:
 - a) Are first-, second-, or third-generation college students who identify as BIPOC;
 - b) Present an economic need (this requires proof of income from both independent and dependent students and their families);
 - c) Are active leaders in their community and will pledge to embody the Vincentian mission and values. In addition, they will display a passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

While the award winner does not have to have a specific high school GPA to be awarded this scholarship, the recipient will need to maintain at least a 2.0 or 2.5 college GPA depending on their respective college/major.

Timeframe: Anticipated—Fall 2021

Assessment: A fully established need-based scholarship program for underserved BIPOC students that better assists them academically and financially. While there are no specific merits necessary to be considered for this scholarship or enrolled into the program, students will need to maintain one once accepted for data and tracking purposes. This scholarship program can also lift up future African American leaders who support racial justice and equity efforts in their communities and help take the lead in bridging the racial and equity gaps that are present in the community.

Student Affairs Goal 4: Increase staff and student-athlete diversity within the Athletics Department and create extra mental health resources in the department.

Recommendation: Implement BIPOC staffing/resources under the Mental Health Counselor-Student Athlete Liaison for the student athletes with a focus on the experience and mental health.

Lead: Director of Athletics; coaching staff of each team; President

Observation: The data revealed the lack of BIPOC student-athletes and staff within Niagara's Athletic Department. There is one administrative staff member—the assistant director—and six coaches, most of whom represent men's and women's basketball. There are only 50 athletes out of 333 who identify as BIPOC. Data also showed that with males, and especially black males, there is gender stereotyping, where talking about your emotions can be seen as weak. For an athlete, "weak" is the last word they want to be associated with. *"If you're not strong mentally, then you won't be strong on the field"* is a fear that Dr. Brackette identifies as holding back many young, African American male athletes. [Black Student Athlete Mental Health: How Sports Culture Helps and Hurts](#) . According to [Mind, Body and Sport: The psychologist perspective](#) there is a lack of training and expertise of mental health providers in the domain of sport and performance psychology. Many schools lack the tools necessary to provide the necessary mental health help for their athletes; however, a few programs train students to be doctoral-level psychologists and provide graduate training/experience in the domain of sport psychology (the University of North Texas and Indiana University, Bloomington, do so, for example, both in counseling psychology).

Desired end state: To continue to acknowledge the lack of diversity and gradually become more diverse in the Athletics Department. Having a diverse staff working under the current student athlete liaison will allow BIPOC students more access to supportive and culturally relevant mental health support. In addition, to elevate and uplift BIPOC athletes by making them feel more comfortable and encouraging them to become more vocal about their experiences.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Every year, all athletics teams are encouraged to be more open minded about recruiting outside of their normal areas (extend recruitment zones). [See [Communication Goal 1](#)]
- 2) Coaches are encouraged to look into hiring people of color onto their staff as well. [See [Communication Goal 1](#)]
- 3) BIPOC staff needs to be hired under the Mental Health Counselor-Student Athlete Liaison for the student athletes to feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns. [See [Student Affairs Goal 1](#)]

Timeframe: By the start of the 2021-2022 school year, at least one extra resource who identifies as a person of color should be working with or under Michelle.

Assessment: Conducting quarterly assessments with the mental health liaison/staff to ensure that they are properly working closely with BIPOC student athletes. In addition, ensuring the mental health liaison/ staff is receiving the proper training. These assessments will be looked at frequently to ensure that these student-athletes are getting the help that they need and that assistance is readily accessible and centered around anti-racist practice with a social justice framework. [See [Common Languages Goal 1](#)]

Student Affairs Goal 5: Support students during academic and residence life judicial investigations

Recommendation: Provide a judicial advocate who can clarify the judicial process, answer questions, and emotionally support students during residence life, Dean of Students, and academic investigations.

Lead: Dean of Students, in conjunction with Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & Institutional Effectiveness.

Observation: Currently, Niagara University does not offer students assistance during judicial processes. Students at Niagara University should have access to an advocate during academic and judicial investigations, especially those students who do not have parents/guardians or families in the immediate area. Buffalo State College identifies the responsibilities of the judicial advocate in the following manner: “The Judicial Advocate is a member of college faculty or staff, who will advise the accused student(s) of their rights and responsibilities, resources that are available to them, and college judicial procedures preparatory to informal resolution of a judicial hearing.”

Desired end state: All students will understand their rights and responsibilities before engaging either the academic or residential judicial process. Students will feel supported during a time of crisis.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Identify a well-rounded and diverse group of faculty/staff advocates for students that best represent that individual’s needs.
- 2) Train advocates on disciplinary procedures, deadlines, and protocols, as well as culturally responsive practices [[Curriculum and Education Goal 1](#)]; [[Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#)]
- 3) Create an email template to be sent to the involved student that outlines the individual student’s rights and responsibilities prior to the hearing and provides a list of advocate choices. If the student does not have a preference, an advocate most suited to his/her/their personal needs will be assigned by the Dean of Students and the Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Timeframe: Fall 2020

Assessment: Student Satisfaction Inventory will indicate positive numbers regarding belonging and support.

Communication

Communication Goal 1: Add diversity to staff in the areas of Communications/Public Relations, Enrollment, Admissions and Marketing; more specifically, Admissions

Recommendation: Implement a hiring practice and policy to recruit, hire, retain, and elevate an ethnically diverse staff within the Admissions department.

Lead: Vice President for Enrollment Management; Executive Vice President; Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Marketing, Advertising & Communications; university leadership.

Observation: It is imperative that there is representation within Admissions/Communications/Public Relations. At the time of our assessment of Niagara's Enrollment Management sector, there were no BIPOC staff members that were identified in any office, which includes the following:

- Admissions
- Career Services
- Enrollment Marketing, Communications, Finance, and Operations
- Financial Aid
- Graduate Studies

Admissions

According to the Admission Enrollment Sector report (email communication, 2020), during the 2019-2020 academic year, 850 BIPOC students were accepted into Niagara University. That number increased by 150 students in the 2020-2021 academic year, where approximately 1,000 BIPOC students were accepted into the university. During the 2019-2020 academic year, 128 students deposited, and during the 2020-2021 academic year, 114 BIPOC students deposited. The practice of race-conscious admissions, albeit "controversial," is generally implemented by college admissions offices across the country to better scout and recruit a racially/ethnic diverse student population. According to evidence gathered by the Century Foundation (Khalenburg, 2015), racially integrated classrooms can reduce students' racial bias, improve satisfaction and intellectual self-confidence, and enhance leadership skills. These benefits may translate to better economic outcomes and, among other payoffs, prepare students to work in a diverse global economy, increasing the productivity, effectiveness, and creativity of teams.

According to Uerling (2004), [...] race-conscious admissions programs adequately insured that all factors that may contribute to student body diversity were meaningfully considered alongside race in admissions decisions. Furthermore, all underrepresented minority students admitted were deemed qualified in regard to other factors, such as test scores and grade point averages. Also, the program gave substantial weight to diversity factors other than race, frequently resulting in the admission of nonminority applicants whose test scores and grades were lower than those of underrepresented minority applicants who were not admitted. According to the Maryland Independent College Independent College and University Association (MICUA) In best practice for recruiting a diverse student population, [...] colleges hold on-campus recruitment events for prospective multicultural students and their families. During these sessions, institutional representatives provide general college information, as well as details about admissions requirements and applying for financial aid. Some institutions waive the application fee for low-income students from underrepresented groups.

Niagara University has implemented some of the aforementioned practices in their recruitment process for students; however, there is still more work to be done in this area. Niagara, like many Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), struggles to recruit diverse staff of color and now, more than ever, it is critically important that staff reflects the ever-growing diverse populations on college campuses. This is especially important, in the Enrollment Management sector, where Admissions representatives serve as the face of the university and are responsible for the future direction of the university. According to an article by David Hawkins and Tara Nicola (2017) studies have found more generally that despite higher education institutions increasingly championing the importance of diversity on their campuses, their staff is overwhelmingly homogenous. In fact, 2013 employment data from the U.S. Department of Education indicated that minorities represented only a quarter of all student affairs employees in postsecondary institutions (Snyder et al., 2016).

Desired end state: Niagara will be a more robust and competitive institution by implementing direct student recruitment practices centered around diversity, equity, and inclusivity initiatives.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Expand the recruitment and hiring process for racially diverse candidates within Admissions. [See [Student Affairs Goal 4](#)]
- 2) In conjunction with the Common Languages Subcommittee recommendations, coordinate training centered around BIPOC student recruitment, retention, and education through quarterly training and professional development opportunities. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 3](#); [Student Affairs Goal 1](#); [Goal 4](#)]
- 3) Improve Admissions staff's interactions with potential BIPOC students and require them to take part in annual culturally responsive recruitment strategy training. [See [Student Affairs Goal 4](#)]

Timeframe:

- 1) All current staff complete DEI training geared specifically toward Admissions and diversity—Fall 2020–Spring 2021
- 2) All current staff complete an online implicit bias training before the end of fall semester—Fall 2020
- 3) Start the recruitment process for the position of a diversity, equity, and inclusion admissions specialist—Spring 2021
- 4) Have a diverse candidate pool identified and a new hire start before the beginning of the 2021 fall semester—Summer 2021.

Assessment: Increase in the percentage of BIPOC admissions staff.

Communication Goal 2: Enhance the overall communications and marketing strategy to highlight diversity initiatives

Recommendation: The communications and marketing plan should be intentional when it comes to promoting BIPOC students, faculty, and staff. The plan needs to be inclusive and eager to promote activities involving BIPOC.

Lead: Enrollment Marketing/Communications sector, in conjunction with Office of Multicultural Affairs, Student Affairs, and the Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission.

Observation: The university’s public relations and marketing functions provide solid content throughout several different media channels and are proactive in telling the “story of Niagara.” However, the current public relations and marketing strategy seems to miss the mark when it comes to showcasing the diversity of students, faculty, and staff. Students report less discrimination and bias at institutions where they perceive a stronger institutional commitment to diversity (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). There are several groups on campus that have events, but they are rarely publicized, unfortunately. It would be beneficial to share and explain the events and programming that these groups offer, but there has been little publicity in the past. For example, from May 2019–May 2020, there were ZERO posts about any “diverse or ethnic programs” on the official Instagram account (@niagarauniversity). Also, the marketing collateral often has the same person (POC) on it, which seems like tokenism. However, just placing a black/brown face on a pamphlet doesn’t address or tell the story; students and prospective students and families can see right through this.

Desired end state: The entire campus, not only BIPOC, will benefit from the renewed focus on these initiatives, as it will lift the energy of students, faculty, and staff. It will also confirm the intentional efforts made by the university when it comes to a welcoming campus community. Studies have shown that when mission and diversity goals are not linked with campus action, students can perceive that the message is “hollow talk” and that the institution has a weak commitment to diversity; as a result, the benefits of diversity may be diminished (Antonio, 2001).

Recommended actions:

- 1) Have a series of interviews/stories showcasing the diversity of the people (race, religion, etc.) on campus and have them tell ***their*** story and why they chose Niagara. [See [BIPOC Goal 2](#); [Communication Goal 3](#)]
- 2) Revise the campus calendar to highlight BIPOC activities. The calendar should act as the campus repository to collect diversity and inclusion events. [See [BIPOC Goal 1](#)]
- 3) Redesign the niagara.edu website to better illustrate diversity initiatives. [See [Common Language Goal 1](#); [BIPOC Goal 3](#)]
- 4) Consider public art on campus as a way to promote and value diversity.

Timeframe:

- 1) Summer—Finalize plans about how/when/where these initiatives will occur
- 2) Fall—Roll out implementation across campus
- 3) Winter (break) —Review fall semester and prepare for spring semester
- 4) Spring—Continue with plan and begin to work on next season’s agenda

Assessment:

The ratio of the representation of BIPOC populations on all media channels will be increased (e.g., raise the percentage of the appearance of Black population to a certain percentage above the national percentages. If the Black population of the USA is 13.4%, consider raising its NU media image occurrence to 15% over a three-month rolling average.)

Communication Goal 3: Create better dialogue between Marketing/Communications and Public Relations offices with the Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Recommendation: Turn offices, centers, and committees that deal with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion into content creators for Enrollment Marketing.

Lead: Associate Vice President for Enrollment Marketing; Office of Multicultural Affairs

Observation: Social media calendars have become an essential part of any modern-day marketer's armory. Because of the volume of content brands produce, it's practically impossible for any marketing team to plot their activities without one. A scheduling calendar has the potential to support your entire content strategy by reinforcing goals and messaging, facilitating collaboration, and enabling more efficient, effective publishing. (<https://urgemedia.com/the-importance-of-a-social-media-content-calendar/> and <http://prsay.prsa.org/2015/11/04/5-tips-to-leverage-social-media-and-content-marketing-as-pr-tools/>)

The key here is creating a mutual need for better dialogue. Much of this depends on setting up adequate "feeding" mechanisms for the exploitation of social media by OMA and the D&I committee that will be seen as assistance by Enrollment Marketing.

Desired end state: OMA and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee constantly feed prepared content to Enrollment Marketing, which has established a calendar days/times for distribution.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Enrollment Marketing uses Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) and other resources to train marketing/communications/public relations staff and persons responsible for social media in colleges, programs, NUSGA, and student clubs, and assist them in becoming auxiliary content creators. [See [Student Affairs Goal 2, Communication Goal 5](#)]
- 2) OMA and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee produce "social media ready" content including: (1) a one-paragraph OMA highlight each week, with two high-resolution photographs; and (2) a diversity and inclusion 12-month calendar of educational issues in social media (image/infographic) format. The establishment of these communications structures and necessary training would be facilitated by Enrollment Marketing. [See [BIPOC Goal 2; Communication Goal 2](#)]

Timeframe: Change should be demonstrable by December 2020

Assessment: Conjointly, with Goal 2 above.

Communication Goal 4: Create opportunities for dialogue about BIPOC within Niagara University (students, faculty, staff, and alumni) and local community

Recommendation: A series of forums/panels about race relations, social justice initiatives, and multiethnic culture should be established to help the campus community understand and learn from one another, while becoming more tolerant and inclusive.

Lead: Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion; Office of Multicultural Affairs; Ostapenko Center for Race, Equity & Mission; Alumni Office

Observation: The campus already holds monthly forums, but rarely addresses racism and bigotry on campus. A few people who asked to speak with the committee suggested having open panels where people can ask questions and seek ways to support those who are affected by racist behavior and actions.

Examples

Brown: <https://www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/students-of-color/heritage-series>

Wisconsin: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/diversity-forum-history/>

Louisiana Monroe: https://www.ulm.edu/news/2020/diversity_forum_6820.html

Desired end state: Opportunities for the campus community to interact in diverse groups and topics, and opportunities for BIPOC students, staff, faculty, and alumni to feel included and welcomed around campus.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Hold public forums on campus about racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion issues with President Maher and other administrators and staff, and livestream these on the university intranet (*TV and MyNU*). [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#); [Policies Goal 1](#); [Curriculum & Education Goal 3](#); [Student Affairs Goal 1](#); [Communication Goal 1](#)]
- 2) Highlight community engagement efforts of institutes, centers, and faculty/student research. [See [Critical Interdependencies Goal 1](#), [Communication Goal 2](#)]
- 3) Work with Alumni Relations on ways to increase engagement with BIPOC alumni.

Timeframe:

- 1) Year-round programming
- 2) At least one forum per semester
- 3) Hold alumni chats (virtually and in person) several times a semester

Assessment: An increased cultural awareness and understanding of the BIPOC community at Niagara University—which includes the local community and alumni.

Communication Goal 5: Improve the process for addressing racial and social justice issues

Recommendation: Streamline the process to accelerate official university responses to critical issues.

Lead: Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (or acting); President

Observation: Effective crisis communication can help organizations maintain trust, inspire confidence, and build competitive advantage. It's a win-win situation for Niagara to speak on issues of race. "It's important to align your organization's efforts to engage in the conversation and improve your audience's comprehension and understanding of your position on racial justice issues..." (<http://prsay.prsa.org/2020/06/18/how-to-contribute-to-conversations-on-racial-justice-issues/>)

Desired end state: Niagara University becomes the preeminent regional higher education voice on issues of racism. The university speaks clearly and immediately about issues of concern across *all* its main media channels.

Recommended actions:

- 1) Make communications more nimble: Empower the Vice President for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion to immediately publicly address issues around racism and anti-racism efforts, and to provide talking/writing points to the President and the head of Public Relations. [See [Common Language Goal 2](#)]
- 2) Make communications more comprehensive and coordinated: Task the Public Relations with creating social media ready versions of presidential letters and press releases around social justice, especially when those issues involve racism. [See [Student Affairs Goal 2](#); [Communication Goal 3](#)]
- 3) Build university community support for this effort: Communicate to the university about how anti-racism research is clearly founded in principles of Catholic Social Teaching. [See [Common Language Goal 2](#)]

Timeframe: Should be implemented immediately—August 2020

Assessment: Niagara becomes a known regional voice on issues of anti-racism and racial inclusion, as evidenced by who the media turn to for comment.

Presidential Initiatives

The following are the community leadership priorities of Niagara University's president, the Rev. James J. Maher, C.M., in relation to the work of the Identifying and Dismantling Racial Injustice Task Force.

Assessment of the Police Academy on Campus: Father Maher has called for the formation of a task force to assess the police academy on the campus of Niagara University. The task force, led by a member of the Board of Trustees, will include members of the campus and external community, as well as students. They will conduct their work around the following questions:

- 1) In light of recent events highlighting police violence in communities of color, concerned members of the university community have asked if the police academy should be located on the Lewiston campus of Niagara University.
- 2) Are there ways in which the police academy curriculum and training can be shaped by the mission and values of Niagara University, as well as by the academic research, teaching, and service that is found on a university campus? Can Niagara University, in working with state and national initiatives on police reform, facilitate best practices for education and development?
- 3) Might Niagara University, in partnership with the appropriate public and elected officials, facilitate the cultivation of career opportunities for BIPOC in law enforcement?

Mayor's Commission on Social Justice: Father Maher was appointed to serve on the newly established Mayor's Commission on Social Justice. He chairs the education committee and works across committees on core systemic issues of law enforcement, education, healthcare, housing, and employment. Niagara University will seek to align and integrate recommendations and expected outcomes from the commission where appropriate.

Deeper Integration of the Academy and Mission with a Focus on Niagara Falls: The presidential strategic initiative to focus and align the interests of the city of Niagara Falls' North End with Niagara University's Joseph L. Levesque, C.M. Institute for Civic Engagement and Ostapenko Center for Race, Equality & Mission, as well as with poverty relief efforts centered on teaching, service, and learning, is at the forefront of state and city initiatives. The Downtown Revitalization Project (DRI) includes the university's proposal/project to expand our commitment to advancing the city's north end of Main Street. Through Father Maher's commitment, Niagara University will further seek to "connect interdependencies" through our existing partnership with the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area and Underground Railroad Heritage Center and poverty relief efforts with a deep focus on creating a Niagara presence for residents and student organizations focused on BIPOC initiatives. Further efforts will be made to more deeply integrate the university's efforts in the downtown revitalization initiative with the needs of residents and the planning directions of the city of Niagara Falls. This includes, among other areas, creating an academic hub at a historic site in the North End of the city and extending the

engagement of residents and students in actions related to housing, poverty alleviation, education/training, and job incubation (through the Niagara Global Tourism Institute).

Extending Outreach for Pell Eligibility: In keeping with our Vincentian mission, Father Maher has elevated his emphasis on Pell-eligible student scholarships, extending outreach to BIPOC students in the Western New York region and beyond. Specific partnerships are being established with the Posse Foundation to identify students with extraordinary leadership and academic accomplishments who are living in underserved, poverty situations. In addition, the university will partner with community-based organizations to engage potential students from partnership schools, community-based schools in the Bronx, and other schools throughout the state which sponsor both high-needs and academically gifted students. Admissions and Enrollment Management are implementing strategies to specifically recruit BIPOC students through these partnerships. The university will be transparent about the number of students recruited and the total dollars allocated in the form of scholarship support.

Financial and Partnership Commitment: A continuing priority of the president is the dedicated endowment of the Ostapenko Center. Established with an endowed faculty director, the contributions and impact of the center are far-reaching and serve as an opportunity to elevate the impact and leadership in this region and beyond. Priorities include expanded financial support, to include external funding through grants and foundations; opportunities for institutional advancement; expansion of partnerships with racial equity initiatives of regional leadership boards (including the Buffalo Niagara Partnership and Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo); and expanded interdependencies with Niagara's Levesque Institute and the Edward A. Brennan Center for Language, Culture, and Leadership.

Trustee Leadership: Father Maher continues to work toward building a Board of Trustees and a Board of Advisors that are diverse in race, ethnicity, and gender. He has called for continued generative educational opportunities of both boards in the best practices of diversity and inclusion.

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Appendices

Appendix A. NADOHE Standards of Professional Practice

Appendix B. “Dwell in My Love: A Pastoral Letter on Racism”

Appendix C. “Catholic Higher Education and Catholic Social Teaching: A Vision Statement”

Appendix D. University anti-racism websites

Appendix D

University anti-racism websites

Niagara University

<https://mission.niagara.edu/catholic/anti-racism-resources/>

College of the Holy Cross:

<https://www.holycross.edu/campus-life/diversity-and-inclusion/additional-resources/anti-racism>

DePaul University

<https://libguides.depaul.edu/antiracism>

Glendale Community College:

<https://www.glendale.edu/academics/academic-divisions/social-sciences-division/anti-racism-resources>

Loyola University Maryland:

<https://www.loyola.edu/departments/equity-inclusion/anti-racism-resources>

New York University:

<https://www.nyu.edu/life/global-inclusion-and-diversity/anti-racism.html>

SUNY Cortland:

<https://www2.cortland.edu/about/diversity/resources.dot>

SUNY Plattsburgh:

<https://www.plattsburgh.edu/plattslife/diversity/terms-and-definitions.html>

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:

<https://diversity.unc.edu/yourvoicematters/anti-racism-resources/>

University of Washington:

<https://www.washington.edu/raceequity/resources/>