

# **Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee**

**Draft Report**  
**March 24, 2021**

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

**Faculty Senate**

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
Key Recommendations	4
<b>Institutional Racism Subcommittee Draft Report and Recommendations</b>	<b>9</b>
Executive Summary	10
Recommendations for the Faculty Senate	11
The Charge of Institutional Racism Subcommittee	12
Rationale	12
The Problem	12
Barriers	15
Some Historical Context	16
Presidential Goals and the Goal of Becoming an Antiracist Institution	18
A Framework for Examining Institutional Racism	20
Mission, Governance Documents, and Constituency	24
Structure	25
Policies and Procedures	26
Programs and Services	26
Curriculum	27
Scholarship and Artistry	27
Personnel Composition	28
Personnel Development	28
Context	29
Recommendations for the Faculty Senate	30
Recommendation 1	30
Recommendation 2	32
Recommendation 3	35
Conclusion	37

<b>Academic Affairs, Diversity, and Inclusion Draft Report and Recommendations</b>	<b>38</b>
Executive Summary	39
Introduction	41
The Charge of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee	41
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Defined	41
Definitions of NIU Faculty	43
Putting Things in Perspective	44
Literature Review	45
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education	45
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at NIU	47
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee Action Plan	51
Best Practices and Recommendations	51
Learning About Ourselves	65
References	67
Supplemental Readings	69
<b>Academic Affairs Subcommittee Draft Report and Recommendations</b>	<b>70</b>
Executive Summary	71
Charge to the Academic Affairs Subcommittee	73
Learning from Others	73
Updating and aligning the HTP system can contribute to social justice and antiracist goals of the university	74
Best practice review – what are other institutions doing?	77
Learning about Ourselves	79
Review of the 2014 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Report	80
Current HTP Data at NIU	81
Review of the Policies Which Guide the Current HTP System at NIU	82
Current Perceptions of Black Faculty of NIU’s HTP System	84
Recommendations	98

References	102
Appendices	104
Appendix A. Focus Group Prompts	104
Appendix B. Alignment of Recommendations with Presidential Goals	105

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## **Executive Summary of Faculty Senate Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee's Draft Report and Recommendations**

At its September 30, 2020 meeting, Faculty Senate endorsed and approved a motion establishing an Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee (ADHSJC) composed of 12 members described below. The charge to the Ad Hoc Committee was to “identify factors contributing to institutional racism at NIU, particularly policies, procedures, and practices and take actions to correct them.” This executive summary is based on three subcommittees reports created by the Ad Hoc Committee following the expression of such need by the committee members. The goal for the Ad Hoc Committee to submit a draft report and actionable recommendations to Faculty Senate by March 24, 2021, limited the scope of the work to what could be accomplished during the time available.

### ***Context of the Report***

In the aftermath of the summer of 2020 that witnessed nationwide antiracist mobilization sparked by the senseless killing of George Floyd in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Faculty Senate responded to Black students demands calling for prioritizing antiracism efforts and concrete actions to address racism against the Black community at Northern Illinois University (NIU). Because institutional racism creates arduous systemic barriers and social inequities, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) students, faculty, and staff are disproportionately unable to achieve their full potential as members of NIU and its broader community. Not only are individual academic success, inclusion, and well-being impacted, but the BIPOC community and the university as a whole suffers from loss of talent, knowledge and skills as individuals from BIPOC communities are inhibited from becoming full participants in the life of the university.

### ***Why the Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee (ADHSJC)?***

The purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee is to assess and identify current policies, procedures and practices perpetuating institutional racism at NIU and to make actionable recommendations to hold ourselves and our institution accountable to address and eradicate them. The ultimate goal is to confront deep-rooted inequities stemming from institutional biases in policies, procedures, and practices that privileges White and disadvantages BIPOC students, faculty and staff. This objective is central to NIU's ongoing and evolving mission, as set forth in Goal 4 of President Freeman's AY 2021 Presidential Goals outlining "commitment to social justice, equity and inclusion" to "eradicate inequitable practices" for all Huskies. NIU's 2021 Presidential Goals statement has enshrined closing equity gaps as a key priority to eliminate disparate outcomes for all Huskies. These goals offer a way forward and respond to the current calls for social justice initiatives. Those calls are forcing higher education institutions across the nation to re-examine their institutional policies, practices, and procedures. Sustainable solutions to systematic problems can only be reached by moving systematically away from pre-drawn conclusions. It is imperative that Faculty Senate leverage its position as a shared governance body to work with the administration and stakeholder groups to address these issues in a meaningful and sustained way. NIU must move beyond diversity and inclusion to proclaim antiracism as our core value and institutional norm.

The barriers and inequities hindering the success of BIPOC students, staff, and faculty did not emerge overnight and will require collective will to dismantle. Much like other higher institutions in Illinois and across the US, the roots of these barriers and inequities at NIU are inextricably tied to the ideals of White supremacy setup to propagate racist beliefs and values that continue to inform and influence our institutional structures, domains, policies, and

practices. To address these historical and structural foundations of institutional racism encoded in policies, practices and procedures that cause BIPOC students, faculty, and staff's struggles at NIU, the Ad Hoc Committee pursues a collaborative approach to engage our shared governance bodies (Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI), Human Resource (HR), Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity (AAEO), antiracist organizations across campus, and engagement with BIPOC community) to collectively address our problems of institutional racism. This collaborative approach and interactive process is vital to enable the Ad Hoc Committee to address these pressing issues from the current institutional available dataset. The Ad Hoc committee also drew from existing reports and community resources, including prior efforts already undertaken to implement equity, diversity in hiring, tenure, and promotion (HTP) system at NIU as outlined in the 2014 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Report. The Ad Hoc Committee will also ensure that perceptions of our BIPOC faculty are adequately represented in this work moving forward.

### ***Reports of the Subcommittees***

Over the course of this 2020-2021 AY, the Ad Hoc Committee worked collectively on a bi-weekly basis to review policies, practices, procedures, identify key issues, and explore the various methods to carry out our charge in greater depth through three subcommittees: (1) Institutional Racism, (2) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and (3) Academic Affairs. Each subcommittee conducted weekly meetings in smaller conversations and reprioritized the key issues within the realm of its focus. While all three subcommittees drew on the current available institutional data, current and existing reports, and quantitative data from focus groups, each subcommittee used additional data, reports, and resources pertinent to its focus within the charge from Faculty Senate.

## **Key Recommendations**

1. The Faculty Senate should create a standing Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee (IR1).
2. The Faculty Senate, in response to the President's First Goal calling for empowerment and shared responsibility, should institute an ongoing critical process to examine the domains of the University, recognize those that reproduce traditional oppressions, and then dismantle them (IR2).
3. The administration should facilitate the development of new kinds of data and new analyses of data to better understand how institutional racism functions at NIU. These new data sets and approaches should support the work of the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee (IR3).
4. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to set measurable goals towards the alignment of faculty diversity with student body diversity (AA1).
5. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to create a unified policy document which addresses faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, aligns each component with the others and with university goals, and embeds equity and social justice principles throughout (AA2).
6. The Faculty Senate should work with the administration to develop a University-wide Principles of Inclusivity which encompass NIU's ideals reflecting a culture of belonging, a sense of value, respect, acceptance and encouragement by the entire Huskie community (DEI1).
7. The administration should establish a 5-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Process (DEI2).
8. The administration should develop a one-page Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for NIU to be distributed and posted at workspace (DEI3).

The following links provide access to the full subcommittees Draft Reports:

- [Institutional Racism Subcommittee Draft Report and Recommendations](#)
- [Academic Affairs, Diversity, and Inclusion Draft Report and Recommendations](#)
- [Academic Affairs Subcommittee Draft Report and Recommendations](#)

**Institutional Racism subcommittee:**

David Valentiner (Chair), Beth McGowan, Kristen Borre, Antonio Johnson

**Aims and Scope:**

- explore how to coordinate and reinforce the institutional capacities of antiracist initiatives across NIU.
- create a path to correct how racism is encoded in NIU's mission, governance documents, structure, policies, practices, programs, constituency, personnel, and relationships with other institutions within the Illinois education system.
- collaborate with the administration toward the goal of creating and implementing a strategic plan to transform NIU into an antiracist institution.
- begin to collect knowledge of, concerns about, and remedies to racist history, practices, and attitudes by giving voice to the lived reality of racism experienced by NIU community members, and identify a means to document and provide this information about the concerns and remedies to the administration on an on-going basis.
- identify a means to address institutional racism at NIU and make recommendations for data collection, management, analysis, and reporting.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion subcommittee:**

Elisa Fredericks (Chair), Biagio Palese, Natasha Johnson, Zacery Bills

**Aims and Scope:**

- identify factors contributing to institutional racism at NIU -- particularly policies, procedures, and practices hampering diversity, equity and inclusion;
- study best practices by select institutions at the forefront in higher institutions in US and Canada for implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- review current practices on diversity, equity, and inclusion at NIU;
- engage BIPOC faculty for their current perceptions of NIU's diversity, equity, and inclusion practices;
- review current data for BIPOC student-faculty ratio and retention at NIU.

**Academic Affairs subcommittee:**

Benjamin Creed (Chair), Xiaodan Hu, Rich Grund, Ismael Montana

**Aims and Scope:**

- identify factors contributing to institutional racism at NIU -- particularly policies, procedures, and practices in hiring, tenure and promotion, retention, and other professional opportunities with a particular objective to make NIU an anti-racist institution with a diverse faculty;
- examine current HTP data at NIU;
- examine key policy documents relevant to hiring, tenure and promotion (HTP) practices: (policies, procedures and practices (PPP), Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures

Manual (APPM), Policy Library, the Faculty Senate Bylaws and Board of Trustee's Policies for the relevant sections related to the HTP system.);

- explore best practices and framework that can effectively address the HTP challenges;
- engage BIPOC faculty for their current perceptions of NIU's HTP system;
- Aligning work with the FY 2021 Presidential Goals to ensure greater complementarity of having a faculty which is reflective of the diversity of the communities and students we currently aspire to serve.

### **Recommendations and Action Plans**

The recommendations listed above prioritized by the Ad Hoc Committee's subcommittees has each identified action steps as well as responsible bodies to facilitate coordination between Faculty Senate and our shared governing bodies to implement these recommendations. The intention is to urge Faculty Senate to undertake the initiative to encourage decision making bodies across NIU (Board of Trustees, Human Resource, Affirmative Action, Provost Office, Research and Innovation Partnership) to draw up plans to implement these recommendations. While this report concludes the Ad Hoc Committee task, they are a beginning of the next steps to lay the groundwork to establish benchmarks to hold us accountable.

### **FS Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee Members:**

1. Ismael Montana Chair, (Faculty, LAS)
2. Elisa Fredericks (Faculty, BUS)
3. Biagio Palese (Faculty, BUS)
4. Benjamin Creed (Faculty, EDU)

5. Xiaodan Hu (Faculty, EDU)
6. David Valentiner (Faculty, LAS)
7. Beth McGowan (Faculty, LIB)
8. Rich Grund (Faculty, VPA)
9. Kristen Borre (Instructor, LAS)
10. Natasha Johnson (Operating Staff)
11. Zacery Bills (Student)
12. Antonio Johnson (Student)
13. Kendall Thu, FS President (Nonvoting member)

### **Acknowledgements**

The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee would like to acknowledge our appreciation to Patricia Erickson (Administrative Assistant, Office of Faculty Senate and University Council) for lending her extensive administrative skills to the committee and to Jeff Reynolds (Director, Decision Support and Analysis at the Office of Institutional Effectiveness) for providing and assisting with data request and analysis. Special acknowledgement and appreciation to Janice Hamlet for facilitating our focus groups conversation sessions and to the participants for communicating their lived experiences with the Ad Hoc Committee.

**Institutional Racism Subcommittee**  
**Draft Report and Recommendations**

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## Executive Summary

Northern Illinois University (NIU) has institutional barriers that are difficult for those in power to see but that reinforce systemic racism and many other oppressions present in American culture and society. Bureaucratic domains of the institutions (i.e., mission, governance documents, and constituency; structure; policies and practices; programs and services; curriculum; scholarship and artistry; personnel composition; personnel development; and context, including relationships with other Illinois educational institutions and the local community) reinforce the social, educational, and economic disparities that arise from our national history of oppression. The recommendations below present a long-term process to acknowledge and correct embedded racism and other oppressions. These include the classism that the poor of all races experience. These recommendations also address sexism, heteronormativity, ableism, and ageism found across all of the above referenced domains of the University. To simplify, we will use Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and institutional racism as a shorthand to refer to all these disparities in the document that follows.

After reviewing the historical foundation of NIU, relevant current institutional data, critical race theory (CRT), and antiracism literature as well as participating in antiracism training, we have found that institutional racism is widely present throughout our institution. Despite its prevalence, those who hold power within the University do not acknowledge, understand, or address institutional racism. These institutional failures result in multiple barriers, reduced opportunities, and burdens of work upon those disadvantages by positionality determined by the intersections of race, class, gender, disability, and age. To dismantle racism within the institution requires that NIU critically assess and transform all parts of the institutional framework described within this report.

The Presidential Goals (2020) require institutional transformation to begin to correct institutional inefficiencies, including those barriers that contribute to institutional racism. We implore the Faculty Senate to use its role in shared governance to embrace institutional change to build equity and share power, to work to more fully acknowledge racism at all levels, to invest in learning, to enact best practices to build an antiracist institution, and to commit to work with other campus and community antiracists.

### **Recommendations for the Faculty Senate**

The Institutional Racism Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate's Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee offers the following three recommendations:

1. The Faculty Senate should create a standing Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee.
2. The Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee, in response to the President's First Goal calling for empowerment and shared responsibility, should (1) institute an ongoing critical process to examine the bureaucratic domains of the University, (2) recognize those that reproduce traditional oppressions, and then (3) dismantle them.
3. The administration should facilitate the development of new kinds of data and new analyses of data to better understand how institutional racism functions at NIU. These new data sets and approaches should support the work of the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee in its three-part process.

A full discussion of these recommendations can be found in the section starting on page 30.

## **Charge**

The Charge of this subcommittee is:

1. We will create a path to correct how racism and other oppressions are encoded in NIU's structures.
2. We will collaborate with the administration toward the goal of creating and implementing a strategic plan to transform NIU into an antiracist institution.
3. We will begin to collect knowledge of, concerns about, and remedies to racist history, practices, and attitudes by giving voice to the lived reality of racism experienced by NIU community members. We will identify a means to document and provide this information about the concerns and remedies to the administration on an on-going basis.
4. We will identify a means to address institutional racism at NIU and make recommendations for data collection, management, analysis, and reporting.

## **Rationale**

### **The Problem**

In the summer of 2020 when a White police officer asphyxiated George Floyd, placing his knee on Floyd's neck and crushing Floyd's windpipe while Floyd lay prone on a public street in Minneapolis, the US was reminded that African Americans experience daily life very differently from White Americans. We know that Floyd's death in Minneapolis was part of a pattern: we remember Trayvon Martin in Florida, Breonna Taylor in Kentucky, Tamir Rice in Ohio, and Sandra Bland in Texas among many, many more. This pattern defies the notion that these deaths were aberrations caused by "a few bad apples" or a few bad police departments, rogue institutions in the US system of justice. Even George Floyd repeatedly begging near the end of his life, "I can't breathe," echoed the last words of another victim of police brutality, Eric

Garner, asphyxiated by New York City police in 2014. Because of the irrefutable pattern among police officers and departments across the nation, the US witnessed mass protests calling for deep reform of the system of policing that has led to this unconscionable repetition of death. Policing is one system of racial disparity ending in recurrent pain, sometimes death, among an interlocking set of systems that recreate and enforce historical racial disparities within our nation. These systems together have caused and continue to cause death and injuries that are physical, economic, and psychic.

When we consider NIU, a single institution within the US educational system, we can also point to patterns that cannot be reduced to the failure of individuals or even our own institution. For example, in comparison with White students, BIPOC students do not thrive at NIU, just as they fail to thrive at most other institutions across the nation. To name a few areas of disparity: BIPOC students do not stay at NIU through graduation at the same rates as White students; BIPOC students do not graduate on-time as frequently as White students; and BIPOC students are poorly represented in the honors program that includes the most privileged students on our campus. What are the structures that reinforce these poorer outcomes for our BIPOC students? Some of the issues that face BIPOC students that may contribute to these outcomes include harsh realities. BIPOC students are more likely to suffer from health and housing inequities. BIPOC students are likely to suffer from food insecurity. As students who are less likely to have sufficient financial resources, BIPOC students are often unable to pay their tuition early and thus register early. BIPOC students more often need financial aid, and that aid may only be used to purchase textbooks if purchased from the campus bookstore. These financial aid receiving BIPOC students cannot realize savings from other vendors as student with more resources can. This arrangement reflects a national tax on poverty penalizing those least capable

of paying the price, whether on the high cost of food in food deserts, higher interest charged on loans to the poor, or municipal fines to finance police. The barriers mentioned are just a few examples of what might be considered contributing factors to BIPOC students' academic struggles at NIU and other colleges and universities. Many of these barriers originate beyond the system of higher education, beyond NIU, but nonetheless have direct impact on student success. Like the police brutality of African Americans across the nation and the failure of African American students to thrive at NIU and other colleges and universities, these patterns reveal our nation's legacy of racial disparity and pain.

The racial disparities in policing, education, housing, healthcare, economic opportunity that African Americans experience stem from the nation's history of slavery and Jim Crow. However, we know that there are other groups whose histories reveal oppression that are also reinforced by institutions and systems and the set of systems that are US society. Under the previous administration, for example, US immigration policies mistreated and injured immigrants and refugees and denied them their rights. The families, parents, and children subjected to the immigrant family separation policy have experienced severe, at times irreversible, physical and mental health consequences. However, these cruel, inhumane practices did not originate in 2017. US immigration policy has for decades resulted in the development of different levels of citizenship, largely along ethnic lines. These practices must be understood within the history of the colonialism, patriarchy and exploitation of Mexico, Central America, South America, and other colonized regions. This unmistakable pattern reveals a disregard for the humanity of these vulnerable communities that represents not the fault of a few individuals or even a single institution, but the historic will of a nation.

The exercise of institutional powers and responsibilities is complicated not only by a legacy of racial injustice and White supremacy, but also by a history in which power has been misused against other vulnerable individuals and communities. The moral and ethical fulfillment of our professional roles and the functions of our institution require that we transform. We need to stop perpetuating the inequities related to gender, race, ethnicity, ability, spirituality, sexuality, and age, the intersection of these identity characteristics, and other aspects of identity. Institutional factors that contribute to racial injustice contribute to other injustices and to institutional inefficiencies more generally. Although the charge given to this committee focuses on racism, efforts to address institutional factors that perpetuate inequities for BIPOC individuals and communities also address the roots that racism shares with sexism, xenophobia, ableism, homophobia, and many other social justice issues, and with institutional inefficiencies more generally.

### **Barriers**

We know that these racial disparities and pain must be addressed and that it is our duty as a Faculty Senate to work toward ending them. We also know that we have a limited understanding of how to end them and limited understanding of the contours of the structures that contribute to the disparity of outcomes that we may no longer ignore.

We may not know exactly what institutional racism entails, but we do know that battling racism does not principally depend upon the expulsion or conversion of a few miseducated individuals. We also know that invoking diversity and stating that we are an inviting institution that does not discriminate does not dismantle structures that cause a disparity of outcomes.

Because we know that refraining from overtly racist behaviors and stating our endorsement of diversity have not led to a change in racial disparity of outcomes, if we are

serious about the task ahead of us, we need to grapple with the structures that reproduce the disparities that we witness and that are the actual problem. We have come to understand that individual prejudice matters and is hateful, and that it results from a culture that relies upon racial disparities for maintaining the existing power relationships within American society. Individual racism undergirds the institutional racism of our national and campus culture. It is a symptom and a support, but not the entirety of our problems. We need to understand the structures on our campus that have led to and perpetuate disparities and try to interrupt their effects. To interrupt the effects is necessary to become antiracist institution.

Much of the work of becoming an antiracist institution requires the endless task of analyzing and then re-analyzing what is causing harm and intervening in the processes that reproduce racial disparities and racism. We do not have a clear map to follow in this work ahead of us. Yet, we do know that we have a past. The past can reveal to us our origins and our patterns. We must begin, therefore, with that past and the implications of the racial systems that it reveals.

### **Some Historical Context**

NIU's campus is built upon a racist ideology and a war of aggression that stripped the original inhabitants of their ability to live here.

The Blackhawk Wars of the early-19th Century

pushed the Chief Shabbona Band of the Odawa People from their ancestral lands. As a result, White settlers claimed the lands as their own and incorporated them into a capitalist economic system of private property from which other races were effectively excluded. The racism of the wars that deprived the Odawa people of so much similarly harmed African Americans and

*. . . they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know it. . . . But it is not permissible that the authors of devastation should also be innocent. It is the innocence which constitutes the crime.*

— James Baldwin, [The Fire Next Time](#)

endured long into the 20th century. Prior to and during the Civil War, the city of DeKalb supported returning enslaved persons fleeing slavery to slave states and stood in opposition to the underground railroad that was active in Mayfield, Sycamore, and St. Charles communities. When NIU was founded in 1896, the Plessy v. Ferguson decision by the U.S. Supreme Court established racial segregation within the public school system. Synchronized with that racist law, NIU was established as a normal school to train teachers to work in a segregated school system, to pass on the values, beliefs, and knowledge of the day to subsequent generations. The values, beliefs, and knowledge that dominated US society were racist. Even NIU's location was chosen, in part, because DeKalb was secluded and far from the city, affording an opportunity for educators to shape the hearts and minds of their young students far from the cares of urban life. In 1896, the local community was quite homogenous and inhospitable to people of color. During the revival of the Ku Klux Klan during the early twentieth century, at the time NIU was established, Chicago, Rockford, and northern Illinois counties, including DeKalb County, were locations of public KKK events and activities. Even as late as the 1960s, DeKalb was a 'sundown town.' In short, NIU was created by racists for the purpose of propagating racist beliefs and maintaining racism for years to come.

Thankfully, this account is not our whole history. The history of the University attests to many exemplars of courage and foresight among the students, faculty, staff, and administrators at NIU, and among members of the surrounding community, who have wanted to broaden and diversify our student body. Even so, NIU's past inadvertently includes many structures and policies designed for a racist (or, more recently, an unintentionally racist, aka "non-racist") agenda. Those structures and policies have never been reevaluated and redesigned for an

antiracist agenda. The time has come for us to uncover the structures and policies that continue to reify our racist past and dismantle them.

### **Presidential Goals and the Goal of Becoming an Antiracist Institution**

The President of NIU, Lisa Freeman, has recently outlined a set of goals that, if fully embraced, are aligned with the work of antiracism. President Freeman's goals statement emphasizes the importance of providing Empowerment and Shared Responsibility to all constituents (Goal 1A) and recognizes the need for streamlining and aligning administrative aspects of the University within, top to bottom, and throughout the University. The bureaucratic inefficiencies at NIU contribute to the disempowerment of constituents. Efforts to improve university functioning typically rely upon the very bureaucratic structures, procedures, and policies that such efforts seek to modify. President Freeman's goals statement recognizes that help from outside consultants and workshops are needed (1B). We argue that true institutional reform will require working with consultants who have a deep understanding of social justice and how to enact antiracism.

The work of institutional reform with regard to racism will require that NIU identify and track social mobility outcomes. These data can help NIU engage with the larger community (Goal 2A), allow for improvements to close gaps in degree attainment and other outcomes (Goal 2B), and help us understand which policies and practices best support learning and student engagement (Goal 2C).

An understanding of antiracism and of institutional inefficiencies both point to the isolation of NIU units from the larger goals and vision of the university that recreate structural barriers that inhibit transdisciplinary scholarship, innovation, and multi-unit cooperation. We need to eliminate such barriers to create equity for BIPOC faculty (Goal 3A), to close the

achievement gaps for students (Goal 2B), and to strengthen our graduate programs and enhance graduate student experiences (Goal 3C).

The University-wide critical self-appraisal of all burdensome administrative processes provides an excellent opportunity to examine the policies that unduly burden BIPOC faculty, staff and students. The workshops and consultants, therefore, should not only include efficiency experts, but they must include social justice experts. Social justice expertise needs to be disseminated throughout NIU through education and training (Goal 4A) and should inform other actions called for in President Freeman's vision, including diversifying NIU (Goal 4B) and revising NIU's website (Goal 4C).

A deep understanding of antiracism, including institutional racism, should inform other actions called for in President Freeman's goals statement. These actions include the development of a strategic plan to improve research, scholarship, artistry, and engagement (Goal 5); the development of a multi-year budget, financial planning, and resource allocation (Goal 6A); reconsideration of NIU's physical footprint (Goal 6B); and increasing readiness for fundraising (Goal 6C). These actions will be constrained by limits placed on NIU by the systems within which NIU is embedded. Advocating for changes in these limits and changes in the relationships among different parts of these systems (e.g., coordinated action with other educational institutions) has the potential to serve an antiracist agenda. An understanding of how these systems reproduce social inequities should inform this advocacy.

These Goals, beginning with the first goal, have the potential to remake our institution into an antiracist, empowering university. However, the goals require that we (1) honestly and consistently assess the structures in which we do our work, (2) learn to recognize the oppressive structures for what they are, and (3) consistently try to dismantle oppressive structures and

replace them with those that empower all constituencies within our institution. We understand that oppressions are mutually reinforcing, whether we are discussing racism, sexism, classism, heteronormativity, ableism, or ageism, none can be dismantled while the others stand. In order to begin this work, we need a framework from which to begin to address the structures that support inequity in all its forms. What follows is a framework for examining our institution, a methodology with which to begin.

### **A Framework for Examining Institutional Racism**

Contemporary understanding of the ways in which racism perpetuates itself through our institutions is limited. Institutions are complex; institutional problems require institution-wide solutions. When individual parts of an institution act to solve institutional problems, they sometimes inadvertently make the problem worse or create new problems. A holistic understanding of the contexts and systems within which the problem is situated is needed to identify solutions to complex, institutional problems. Parts of institutions, such as individual departments at NIU, have limited perspectives that prioritize their own needs and objectives. Attempts to align unit-level objectives with the NIU mission are laudable but have not produced the kinds of outcomes we would like regarding racism.

Departments are embedded within the educational institution and the educational institution is embedded within the educational system. Antiracism will require changing the roles of each component within its superordinate organization and the relationships among the components of that organization. The existing roles and relationships have both desirable and undesirable effects; they are functional in that they help the institution or system function, and dysfunctional in that they center a White supremacist mindset. Addressing the dysfunctional nature of these roles and relationships without disrupting their functionality will be challenging.

NIU has relatively more control to effect changes of within-NIU processes, but NIU's capacity for redefining roles and relationships within NIU will be limited by the resources, opportunities, and demands that come from the educational system within which it exists. Being an antiracist institution will lead us to disrupt the racism in the systems within which we are embedded.

Antiracism work at NIU needs to be shared. Development of an understanding of institutional racism that is equal to the task of dismantling racism is likely to require that members of the NIU community need to find new ways to relate to each other, building a greater capacity for understanding each other's perspectives. NIU needs to belong to the members of the NIU community (e.g., students, staff, faculty, administrators) in a way that it does not currently belong to them, and the members of the NIU community need to belong to NIU in a way that they currently do not. Antiracism partnerships are needed.

One concrete way to achieve such partnerships might begin with an antiracism committee comprised of individuals with diverse perspectives from across NIU. We note that ADEI has recently created an NIU Antiracism Coordinating Committee which might become the kind of committee that is needed and/or facilitate the kinds of partnerships that are needed. This committee could develop strong relationships among members and work collaboratively to build a shared understanding of institutional racism at NIU. We need to develop a shared understanding of institutional racism that is equal to the task of dismantling racism at NIU. Notable challenges to this work include:

- If those working on antiracism efforts at NIU relate to each other in the same ways that members of the NIU community have related to each other in the past, results that differ from those of the past are not likely.

- The definition and consequent analysis of antiracism at NIU needs to be sufficiently sophisticated and effectively shared.
- Antiracism efforts need to be resourced adequately. This work is likely to require substantial investment.
- This need is urgent but will require time. Patience and action need to be balanced.
- NIU's understanding of institutional racism needs ongoing development, revision, and renewal.
- Initiatives should incorporate all perspectives, be based on consensus as much as reasonably possible, and be the result of shared decision-making.
- For NIU to become an antiracist institution requires addressing the racism in the educational system.

Antiracism partnerships at NIU could develop an NIU-specific approach to addressing institutional racism. These partnerships could develop, implement, and maintain an antiracism strategic plan. Although the decisions about which specific activities and approaches will be used need to be the product of collaboration, we offer four sets of observations about how an antiracism committee might approach the problems of institutional racism at NIU.

First, we note that the work of transforming NIU to become an antiracist institution will require more resources than is typically available to a standing committee of the Faculty Senate. Standing committees of the Faculty Senate are reconstituted annually and the level of involvement of each of its members is limited to a few hours each month. The creation of a Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee would demonstrate the Faculty Senate's commitment to providing leadership and advocating for antiracism within the University, but that leadership and

advocacy will almost certainly require creating new structures and securing new resources to accomplish its goals. It is not clear at this time what new structures and resources are needed.

Second, there are many resources that already exist at NIU that can be used to help transform the University. One notable resource is the 2014 Report of the Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce. Since the hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer, ADEI has developed other resources to move NIU toward becoming an antiracist institution. ADEI is the existing NIU structure that is most related to the work of addressing institutional racism. A Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee could work with ADEI to facilitate the development and ongoing refinement of an NIU-specific approach to addressing institutional racism. Although that work is likely to be led by ADEI, it will require participation of all units at NIU; the compartmentalization of tasks has allowed units to insulate themselves in ways that undermine work toward the common mission. For NIU to become a truly antiracist institution, every unit needs to be involved. There is much work to be done and the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee will need ensure that those efforts are appropriately resourced.

Third, we note that many antiracism leaders across the NIU campus have recently viewed and discussed a two-hour webinar that introduces an analysis of institutional racism by Crossroads Antiracism in Chicago. The webinar (*Beyond Diversity: How to Build a Truly Anti-Racist Organization / Understand How Your Organization is Complicit in Systemic Racism and White Supremacy Culture*; see <https://everydayfeminism.com/build-anti-racist-organization/>) introduced a “Borderlands” theory which provided a language for understanding how many institutions have centered a White, male, upper-to-middle class perspective. The webinar also proposed that four values can be especially useful for addressing institutional racism. These values are:

1. “And” and “both” (rather than “either” and “or”)
2. Abundance (rather than scarcity)
3. Transparency (rather than secrecy)
4. Cooperation (rather than competitive individualism)

We hope that the antiracism committee considers the Crossroads analysis of institutional racism.

We also describe a framework for examining institutional racism that includes nine domains.

This framework, developed in part from a framework described in other training material from Crossroads, includes the following nine domains:

- Mission, Governance Documents, and Constituency
- Structure
- Policies and Procedures
- Programs and Services
- Curriculum
- Scholarship and Artistry
- Personnel Composition
- Personnel Development
- Context

### **Mission, Governance Documents, and Constituency**

Although the NIU mission statement is a living document that addresses concerns about equity and inclusion, the bureaucratic domains of the University do not embody these bold words. These noble words need to be given visible life in University policies, programs, services, and actions. As our understanding of institutional racism at NIU develops, the NIU antiracism committee should work to ensure that revisions of NIU’s mission statement reflect the

evolving understanding of institutional racism at our university and in the larger US society. In addition to participating in the continual revision of the NIU mission, the NIU antiracism committee should ensure that NIU's governance documents are aligned with the antiracism aspects of the NIU mission, and that the mission is shared and understood throughout the NIU community.

The constituents of NIU include students and their parents who in many cases assist those students financially. It also includes the state of Illinois, the nation, and the world. One challenge in the work of dismantling racism is to align the implicit understanding of constituency that each individual in the institution uses to guide their decision-making with the broader understanding of constituency that is encoded in the mission and other governing documents.

### **Structure**

The structures of NIU generally tend to make solving problems and addressing concerns time-consuming and labyrinthine processes. For example, students who have concerns can appeal within the NIU system by talking with individuals providing those services and their supervisors, and by talking with the Ombudsman. Alternatively, students can file concerns with Affirmative Action, a system that created because other mechanisms of accountability are not always adequate. As a last resort, students also have the right to appeal to the court system. Whether the design of these mechanisms inadvertently encodes White supremacy views or prioritizes White values and interests, these mechanisms are inadequate and burdensome, and therefore fail our students.

NIU is also accountable to BIPOC communities through the Board of Trustees, who are accountable to the Governor, who is accountable through the electoral process. BIPOC individuals and communities often do not have the same basis for confidence in these

mechanisms, including the court system and the electoral process. These mechanisms are slow, inefficient, and not adequate to address problems of institutional racism; new and more direct mechanisms are needed.

The institution creates incentives for units to compete with each other and therefore ignore the shared mission and the common good. NIU's shared mission is not optimally accessible to unit-level decision makers when unit-level decisions are made. The current structure fosters a myopia that undermines cross-unit cooperation and transdisciplinary work. The interests and priorities of BIPOC individuals and communities often require approaches that transcend traditional boundaries between academic disciplines and units as they are currently conceived. The structural factors that maintain institutional racism also impede transdisciplinary efforts and, more generally, greater efficiency of the institution.

### **Policies and Procedures**

NIU has many policies and procedures that have not been assessed to determine how they contribute to inequities at our institution. These policies and procedures exist within units, within colleges, and university wide. It is not clear which policies and procedures inadvertently encode White supremacy views or prioritize White values and interests. It is not clear how policies and procedures need to be modified to dismantle racism at NIU. Every policy, procedure, and governance document requires review.

### **Programs and Services**

Similarly, most programs and services at NIU have not been evaluated with an eye toward their reification of inequity. Program design and program prioritization involve decision-making that should be informed by a richer understanding of how White supremacy has become embedded within the dominant culture and the modus operandi of most of the institutions in the

US, including NIU. Programs include degree and certificate programs and advising, as well as services provided to the campus and broader communities. The modes and means of program and service delivery to members of the University community are mired in bureaucratic procedures. Instead, program and service delivery should prioritize access, availability, and affordability to ensure inclusivity and equity.

### **Curriculum**

We recognize that the curriculum of many, perhaps, most academic disciplines center White values, priorities, and perspectives, and therefore reinforce White supremacy. Some values and goals have been selectively prioritized and some have been selectively neglected. These disciplines have naturally centered on the values and perspectives of those who have held power at the expense of the values and perspectives of those who have not had power. Some have described the shift from a White supremacist mindset, and the ensuing reappraisal of the discipline and its curriculum, as a “decolonization” of the curriculum.

### **Scholarship and Artistry**

Individual scholars and artists determine their scholarship and artistry activities. The nature of academic freedom gives wide berth for biases to affect the process of creating new knowledge and artistry. Compromising academic freedom, however, does not preclude actively prompting scholars to align their activities with the values that scholars hold that are aligned with NIU’s shared mission. Scholars and artists would generally welcome assistance and support in pursuing scholarship and artistry that is consistent with social justice and impacts communities that have not been well served in the past. Social justice impact is a criterion that is undervalued.

## **Personnel Composition**

NIU must recognize that the percentages of students, staff, faculty, and administrators that are from BIPOC and marginalized communities is insufficient and not representative of our student body. Discrepancies among these percentages, and between these percentages and the percentages found in the larger community, can inform our evaluation of how much progress we have made and how much we need to make.

## **Personnel Development**

Within the University, there are many employees who implement university policies and procedures, design and oversee its services and programs, who have no or limited familiarity or understanding of the history and contours of US racism. The decisions that they make have the potential to perpetuate the problematic aspects of our culture and to inhibit the sharing of new values, beliefs, and practices. The degree to which racial prejudice exists within the individuals responsible for implementing policies and procedures, and overseeing programs and services, reduces their effectiveness and contributes to institutional racism. Professional development that promotes an understanding of all forms of racism is needed at all levels. We offer the following cautions in addressing racism in the personnel domain:

- Attempts to promote individual development and to reduce individual-level racism (e.g., implicit bias) are needed, but do not substitute for or replace the need to address racism in the bureaucratic domains of mission governance documents, constituency; structure; policies and procedures; services and programs; curriculum; scholarship and artistry; personnel composition; personnel development; and context, including relationships with other Illinois educational institutions.

- The topic of racism is often associated with anger, guilt, and defensiveness. We need methods to address individual-level racism without activating destructive blame, anger, self-blame and guilt.
- Training resources are needed so that personnel throughout the NIU community, particularly those who have decision-making responsibilities, understand, and share the NIU-specific approach to addressing institutional racism. A fuller discussion of this need can be found in the Presidential Goals section, above.

ADEI has made substantial gains in developing trainings for personal and professional development. ADEI could develop trainings to disseminate the NIU approach to addressing institutional racism. NIU might find ways to incentivize participation in trainings. The work of these “trainings” are not and should not be understood as merely vocational know how. These trainings are meant to create within personnel, whether administration, staff, or faculty, a paradigm shift in thinking from a neoliberal perspective to a decolonial one. The evidence of such a paradigm shift will be manifested through new qualitative and quantitative data that track the performance of our institution as we learn, grow and become antiracist. Continuous collection and analyses of these data will, in turn, guide further progress toward becoming an antiracist institution. This work needs to be mindful, intentional, and proactive.

### **Context**

NIU is embedded within an educational system that perpetuates problems of racial injustice which is itself part of a state and a nation built upon theft of land from Native Americans and the unpaid and underpaid labor of BIPOC communities. Therefore, while NIU must confront its own institutional racism at NIU, to be a truly antiracist institution will require NIU to play an increasing role in addressing racism within the broader educational system, of the

state of Illinois and the nation. For example, NIU could partner with other educational institutions to address racism in the educational system. Becoming an antiracist institution requires recognition of and response to the society and culture in which we are embedded.

NIU is also embedded within a society and a history that perpetuates racial injustice. This context affects the ways in which the institution is perceived and experienced. Why should individuals who have been oppressed in other institutions in our society expect anything different at NIU? How have we changed to become an antiracist institution? How have we communicated that we have changed or are changing to become an antiracist institution?

The framework described above requires (1) that we learn more and continuously about racism, (2) that we honestly assess the structures in which we do our work and that we recognize and name the oppressive structures for what they are, and (3) that we consistently try to dismantle oppressive structures and replace them with those that empower all constituencies within our institution. We must commit to continual repetition of these steps because the oppressions we reference are ancient, reside in psyches, institutions, and systems and have a way of reproducing themselves. These oppressions are mutually reinforcing, whether we are discussing racism, sexism, classism, heteronormativity, ableism, or ageism, none can be dismantled while the others stand. What follows are our recommendations to begin this process.

### **Recommendations for the Faculty Senate**

The Institutional Racism Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate's Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee offers the following three recommendations:

**The Faculty Senate should create a standing Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee (Recommendation 1).**

The NIU-specific approach to be developed by the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee, in partnership with others at NIU, will need to include strategies and resources for addressing institutional racism within each unit at NIU, including each academic department. The NIU-specific approach will also need to address institutional racism that transcends specific units, i.e., college-specific and institution-wide concerns. Although the details of the NIU-specific approach are yet to be determined, we encourage the committee to consider the framework described above as they develop their approach. We also encourage the committee to consider working with Crossroads Antiracism. Crossroads is a non-profit organization in Chicago that works with various institutions, including public universities in Illinois, to address institutional racism.

The collaboration to develop and implement an NIU-specific approach for addressing institutional racism at NIU will likely be facilitated by existing resources and recent developments. Of particular relevance, a university-wide structure for addressing institutional racism appears to be emerging. This structure includes an Antiracism Coordinating Committee (ACC) that is convened by Dr. Vernese Edgehill-Walden and includes representatives from different groups across campus, including members of the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee. Thus far, the ACC has functioned primarily as a forum for sharing information to facilitate coordination of initiatives across campus primarily located in administrative units within schools and colleges. Dr. Edgehill-Walden holds the position of the Chief Diversity Officer of NIU's Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI). In addition to facilitating CC, ADEI also has developed a variety of professional development workshops. ADEI will be an important partner for developing an NIU-specific approach to addressing institutional racism at NIU and will likely play a central role in disseminating that approach

throughout the NIU community. In addition, an informal, non-governance organization, the Antiracism Collective, has been formed from unit-specific diversity-related committees that meet regularly to share resources, goals, and progress on antiracist initiatives, and to give each other feedback and support on their progress toward addressing institutional racism within their units. The charge to the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee shall be to ensure that an NIU-specific approach to address institutional racism is developed and implemented, and to determine how to coordinate with and contribute to antiracism efforts across campus, including those of faculty, staff and students from all units in those efforts. The Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee shall develop a strategic plan that includes the antiracism work done through campus and community partnerships that represent faculty, staff, and students.

This recommendation will be carried out by the Faculty Senate within the spirit of shared governance. The Faculty Senate Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee will make this recommendation to the Faculty Senate by March 16, 2021 and the Faculty Senate will act on the recommendation on or before May 1, 2021. If approved, the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee will convene by the first meeting of the Faculty Senate in the Fall of 2021.

**The Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee, in response to the President's First Goal calling for empowerment and shared responsibility, should institute an ongoing critical process to examine the domains of the University, recognize those that reproduce traditional oppressions, and then dismantle them (Recommendation 2)**

We understand that Recommendation 2 will necessarily be an iterative process, require learning, recognition, and change and then a repetition of these steps if our University is to become a non-oppressive, truly empowering institution. Therefore, we urge the University to embed antiracist, antisexist, anticlassist, antiheteronormativity, and antiabelist work into the

mission, governance documents, and constituency; structure; policies and procedures; programs and services curriculum; scholarship and artistry; personnel composition; personnel development; and context of the institution as we go forward. These efforts should include but are not limited to Training, Valuing the Antiracism Work, and Dismantling Structures of Oppression.

### ***Training***

Institutional racism is complex and is often misunderstood. Individuals who do not have an understanding of racism that informed by direct experience with being oppressed and disadvantaged by institutional racism often have difficulty developing an understanding of institutional racism. In addition, having power creates challenges for understanding the potential negative effects of power differentials. For these reasons, ongoing training are needed in which those who have power come to understand the experiences of BIPOC individuals at NIU. ADEI needs to be appropriately resourced to meet the rather substantial training needs that exist in the NIU community.

### ***Valuing the Antiracism Work***

As we take the work of dismantling racism seriously with expectations of institutional change at all levels of operation, we recognize that simply attending training sessions is not sufficient to disrupt the many forms of institutional racism within all levels of the university. We, therefore, acknowledge the need to address the burden of these trainings and the investment in changes that must be made at the level of units within the university and recommend that faculty and staff time devoted to antiracism training and the application of those trainings to creating antiracism policies, programs, services, curricula, courses, and activities within the

university and community be evaluated and rewarded as a part of the staff and administration annual evaluation, and the tenure and promotion evaluations that occur.

It is recommended that units require faculty evaluations to include antiracism work as a component in each of the three areas of evaluation: teaching, research, and service. Faculty time to develop, transform, and evaluate departmental policies and programs is recommended to be evaluated as a form of academic service. Incentives to develop or transform courses are recommended including course release time with additional funds to hire other faculty to maintain the coursework required for students to graduate on time in academic programs. Professional development funds should be made available to faculty to enhance the practice of antiracist methodologies in teaching and research in addition to funding for the faculty member's current research program. Funding for faculty unit retreats and trainings is recommended to be provided through administrative funds. The funding for these efforts is recommended to be beyond the funds required to maintain departmental unit integrity for the education of our students.

It is recommended that the Office of the President oversee this transformative work and allocate funds as well as rewards to the faculty and staff doing this work. This work will be included in evaluations for tenure and promotion of faculty according to the weight agreed upon by the faculty member in discussion with the Departmental Chair. The recommendation will be addressed by August 22, 2021.

### ***Dismantling Structures of Oppression***

As NIU realigns “decision-making at all levels with the university’s strategic priorities” we should “identify and revise practices, policies, and procedures that need to be transformed, simplified, or eliminated” (Goal 1b) in order to eradicate all forms of oppression.

The priorities and interests of BIPOC and other marginalized and/or disadvantaged communities should be central as NIU reviews the policies and practices that NIU uses to “recognize and allocate resources (including but not limited to funding and space) to student groups and activities; and those used to address academic, residential, student conduct and disciplinary conflicts” (Goal 2C); We need to discover and dismantle the structural barriers oppressed, marginalized, or disadvantaged faculty face and “that inhibit transdisciplinary scholarship, and discourage curricular innovation and experimentation” (Goal 3A). Efforts to build a foundation of equity within all domains of the University must value and respect diverse forms of intellectual practice and products. Equitable access to and the availability of University resources to all members of the faculty and their students must be assured and demonstrated.

All work within the institution should be informed by an understanding of institutional racism. This prescription applies especially to the work that involves NIU’s structures, policies, programs, services, and practices. The costs of an inefficient bureaucracy fall most heavily on those who are most stressed and least resourced.

**The administration should facilitate the collection, management, analysis and reporting of new forms of data to better understand how institutional racism functions at NIU which are necessary to support the work of the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee**

**(Recommendation 3)**

Current institutional data are insufficient to understand and document institutional racism within the university structure. If we do not have adequate kinds of data to be able to objectively observe biases due to institutional racism within the system, we will not be able to measure the problem nor monitor progress in correcting it. These data are needed to address President Freeman’s Institutional Goals effectively. Data that goes beyond basic demographics are needed

to address the full impact of all forms of institutional racism and biases on members of those institutions and the larger society.

Data are powerful tools that can tell the “truths” institutions wish to see and those of who do not have power. Antiracism requires data that will support the goals of an antiracist institution and protect the vulnerable. Institutional data should be required to be accessible and available for analysis and interpretation by NIU antiracism committees. Routinely having multiple interpretations of data available for consideration offers some protection to those who do not hold power

The data observation, collection, and management as it currently exists allows institutional racism to remain hidden within the university structure. Data that goes beyond required Affirmative Action categories of data reporting are required. For example, in addition to quantitative demographic data collection for the purposes of assuring fair hiring practices, both qualitative and quantitative data will be needed. This form of research includes narratives of experiences of administrators, faculty, staff, and students that allow monitoring of progress toward de-racialization and decolonization of the domains of the University. Funding for this kind of institutional research could come through current faculty and student research programs, as well as through external funding sources. For example, the current READ grant program for undergraduate research has projects examining equity issues within and without the NIU community. Other internal sources of funding could proportion a percentage of funds to studying institutional racism at NIU. The Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee will need to decide what data will be collected, how it will be maintained and analyzed, how it will be used, and how the work with these data will be supported.

## Conclusion

These three of these recommendations form an integrated approach to address the iterative process of de-racialization and decolonization of the bureaucratic domains of the University to move toward becoming an antiracist University. The Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee shall be responsible for developing, managing, criticizing, and updating an ongoing strategic plan addressing an ongoing critical process to examine the domains of the University, recognize those that reproduce traditional oppressions, and then dismantle them. To carry out this responsibility the Faculty Senate will require research reports created from both secondary and primary data sources using antiracism paradigms of analysis and theories such as Critical Race Theory to develop the knowledge required to accomplish its support of the Presidential Goals to foster the development of a more equitable and just University.

We must commit ourselves to a long-term iterative process that requires humility and patience as we come to recognize our shortcomings and correct them. We will encounter resistance from our own inertia, from other institutions within the educational system in which participate, and from the larger social world in which NIU resides. We will stumble. We do not know this geography. We have lived in a land of scarcity, competition, exclusion and secrecy as a nation for hundreds of years. We do not know our way around this promised land of abundance, cooperation, inclusion and transparency. We must make our way to this land by creating it. We must be the change we want to see in the world.

**Academic Affairs, Diversity, and Inclusion**

**Draft Report and Recommendations**

DRAFT

## Executive Summary

The charge of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee is to (a) identify factors contributing to institutional racism at NIU, particularly policies, practices and procedures hampering, equity and inclusion; (b) study best practices by select institutions at the forefront in higher institutions in the US and Canada for implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion; (c) review current practices on diversity, equity and inclusion at NIU; (d) engage BIPOC faculty for their perceptions of NIU's diversity, equity, and inclusion practices; and (e) review current data for BIPOC student-faculty ratio and retention at NIU.

This was accomplished through an understanding of the meaning of diversity, equity and inclusion as seen through the eyes of selected higher education learning institutions including University of Waterloo at Ontario, Canada, University of Michigan, Penn State University, and Georgia State University. Best practices and recommendations are noted. A review of NIU's vision, mission, and statements of diversity, and inclusion provided an understanding of the University's perspectives on the issues.

Several short falls were noted in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion. To rectify these deficiencies, the following foundation recommendations are proposed.

### **Recommendation #1 - Develop a Statement of Principles of Inclusivity**

Develop Principles of Inclusivity which encompass NIU ideals reflecting a culture of belonging, a sense of value, respect, acceptance and encouragement by the entire community. Include Principles of Inclusivity in employee orientation and training programs. Inclusivity Performance standard should also be included in yearly appraisals, internal hiring and generally incorporated into NIU policies and practices while reflecting NIU mission and goals.

**Recommendation #2 Establish a Certificate of Inclusivity Certificate Training Program**

Establish a Certificate of Inclusivity Certificate Training Program which aids NIU employees to developing their own action plan to reinforce and be an agent of change in the area of inclusivity.

**Recommendation # 3 Develop a 5-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan**

**Process**

Develop a 5-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Process.

**Recommendation #4 Develop a Yearly Summit to Discuss Progress on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives.**

Develop a yearly summit to discuss progress on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Summits can be conducted at the department level and then one big summit with discussions on NIU accomplishments held. This provides an opportunity to updated information with success stories noted. The NIU DEI Summit is a campus wide initiative with a keynote speaker, a community update event that highlights segments of the annual DEI report, and college and unit events across campus.

**Recommendation #5 Develop a Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for NIU**

**Action**

Develop a Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for NIU. This is a one-page document to be distributed and posted at workspace. This proposal contains 14 recommendations and is in no way exhaustive. We suggest the above 5 as those most impactful improvements for NIU in the area of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

## **Introduction**

### **The Charge of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee**

The charge of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Social Justice Committee is to (a) identify factors contributing to institutional racism at NIU, particularly policies, practices and procedures hampering diversity, equity and inclusion; (b) study best practices by select institutions at the forefront in higher institutions in the US and Canada for implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion; (c) review current practices on diversity, equity and inclusion at NIU; (d) engage BIPOC faculty for their perceptions of NIU's diversity, equity, and inclusion practices; and (e) review current data for BIPOC student faculty retention and retention at NIU. This was accomplished through an understanding of the meaning of diversity, equity and inclusion as seen through the eyes of selected higher education learning institutions including Georgia State University, University of Michigan, Penn State University, and University of Waterloo at Ontario, Canada. Best practices and recommendations noted. In addition, focus groups were conducted with Black faculty at NIU regarding their experiences during hiring and the promotion process. Those insights are also included. A review of NIU's vision, mission, and statements of diversity, and inclusion provided an understanding of the University's perspectives on the issues.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Defined**

*A general definition of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is provided below*

- *Diversity represents the full spectrum of human demographic differences -- race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status or physical disability. Many organizations chose to consider different demographics as well -- lifestyles,*

*personality characteristics, perspectives, opinions, family composition, education level or tenure elements of diversity.*

- *Equity means everyone receives fair treatment. Everyone knows what to expect in terms of consequences and rewards. When equity exists, people have equal access to opportunities. There is an understanding that each of us come from different cultural background and may possess a different perspective on a given situation. Equity sets up an advantageous environment for students, faculty, and staff.*
- *Inclusion refers to a cultural and environmental feeling of belonging. It is the extent to which students, faculty and staff are valued, respected, accepted and encouraged to fully participate.*

The following provides NIU diversity, equity and inclusion statements.

### ***Diversity at NIU***

Northern Illinois University celebrates diversity in all its forms. We feel that diversity in gender, ethnicity, physical ability, religious beliefs, age and sexuality is what makes the world an interesting place. Creating an environment in which those differences are not only acknowledged but celebrated is our goal. Diversity makes the educational experience richer and makes NIU the ideal place to learn.

By learning in an environment that is filled with students, faculty and staff from a wide range of backgrounds, we create an environment where stereotypes are challenged, experiences are shared and minds are opened. This experience lays the groundwork for working and living with people from all backgrounds.

By giving you the skills you need to understand and accept these differences, we open your minds to new areas of study, open your awareness to the needs of the underserved, and give you the tools you need to affect social change.

### ***NIU Equity Statement***

Northern Illinois University strives to improve outcomes for all students by identifying and removing barriers that disproportionately hinder the academic achievement and student experience of historically and currently underserved populations.

### ***NIU Values and Practice***

- **Equity and inclusion**
  - We seek and are strengthened by the diverse perspectives and experiences of our university community members.
  - We use an inclusive decision-making process.
  - We appreciate and respect every member of our community.

### **Definitions of NIU Faculty**

For the purpose of this document faculty at NIU is defined in the following manner: The university faculty consists of all full-time staff members holding the ranks of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, or clinical faculty. The instructional and research core of the university shall consist of five categories of members hereinafter referred to as: 1) tenure track faculty, 2) instructional faculty, 3) clinical faculty, 4) research faculty, and 5) limited term faculty.

*Tenure Track Faculty* of the university includes the tenure/tenure eligible faculty of the university who have appointments as professor, associate professor, assistant professor, departmental chairpersons and professional librarians other than the dean of the University

Libraries. *Instructional Faculty* includes instructors, adjuncts, lecturers, associate lecturers, and assistant lecturers and faculty with a limited contractual relationship with the university, including part-time and non-compensatory faculty. *Clinical Faculty* includes all persons with appointments as clinical professor, associate clinical professor, assistant clinical professor and clinical instructor. The primary responsibilities of faculty in this category are clinical supervision or clinical instruction, oversight or delivery of professional services to individual patients or clients. *Research Faculty* includes all persons with appointments as research professor, associate research professor, and assistant research professor and include other appointments that are focused on research, scholarly, and technical activities. *Limited-Term Faculty* include those that have limited-term appointments, including adjuncts, visiting faculty, post-doctoral fellows and other affiliated faculty. These positions may be engaged in the research, teaching or engagement missions of the university, but with time-limited association with the university and minimal roles and privileges.

### **Putting Things in Perspective**

It is hard to think of the name Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. without thinking of orator, civil rights activist, proponent for the poor, advocate for freedom and peace for all people and of course his death. In an essay written by King, he states “if physical death is the price that a man must pay to free children and his white brethren from a permanent death of spirit, then nothing can be more redemptive.” In the documentary, *The Black Church*, host Henry Louis Gates, Jr. poses this question, if King were to appear and ask what has happened since I was gone, what would we say? Whether we have reached the Promise Land or continue to drift in the wilderness is a matter of perspective.

Our beloved American continually practices the anthesis of equity and inclusion through countless exclusionary policies, practices and procedures designed to block BIPOC from freedom of expression and participation in the America dream. Lynching under Jim Crow was designed to reinforce the power of white supremacy visibly by keeping Black People in place through burning and hanging bodies into the minds of black people and the memories of mainstream America. Today the results of many exclusionary policies persist. The problems of poverty, high rates of unemployment and imprisonment, family stress and strain, violent crimes and persistent racial and economic inequality remain largely undiminished.

In recent years, particularly since the fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, police brutality has become a hot button issue in the United States. In 2020, there were 1,004 fatal police shootings, and in 2019 there were 999 fatal shootings. Additionally, the [rate of fatal police shootings](#) among Black Americans was much higher than that for any other ethnicity.

However, despite these startling statistics, gains in education attainment continue to rise. In 2019, 40.1% of non-Hispanic whites age 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher, up from 33.2% in 2010. During the same period, the percentage of Blacks age 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher rose from 19.8% to 26.1%; Asians from 52.4% to 58.1%; and Hispanics from 13.9% to 18.8% (US Census Bureau, 2020).

## **Literature Review**

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education**

#### ***Student/Faculty Diversity-Do You Look Like Me?***

While educational gains are on the rise, there is plenty of room for improvement in higher education institutions. Research suggests when students have teachers of the same race as them,

they reported feeling more cared for, more interested in their schoolwork and more confident in their teachers' abilities to communicate. They put forth more effort and have higher aspirations of succeeding in college and in the workforce. Teachers of color are positive role models for all students in breaking down negative stereotypes and preparing students to effectively function in a complex, challenging world. While evidence suggests that students of color benefit from having teachers of color, it is also important for our white students to see teachers of color in leadership roles, in their classrooms, and communities. Improving teacher diversity can help all students.

Both in high school and college math and science courses, research has shown that when women have a female instructor, they get higher grades, participate more in class and are more likely to continue to pursue the subject. Researchers say it's not entirely clear why teachers' gender and race make a difference. It is likely to be a combination of things. Students tend to be inspired by role models they can relate to. Same-race teachers might be able to present new material in a more culturally relevant way. Also, teachers sometimes treat students differently based on their own backgrounds and stereotypes. Social scientists call this implicit bias, when stereotypes influence people's thinking, often unconsciously.

One problem is the growing number of students do not have teachers who look like them. The majority of students in public institutions are students of color, while most teachers identify as white. This so-called teacher-diversity gap likely contributes to racial disparities in academic performance (Boisrond, 2017). A recent report shows that despite the critical role that teachers of color can play in helping students of color succeed, every state has a higher percentage of students of color than teachers of color. Students of color make up 53% of the population in the United States (Miller, 2018). However, 80% of teachers are White. Within 43 states, the

diversity gap is 10% or higher. The gap reaches 20% or higher in 21 states, while Washington, D.C., Louisiana and Mississippi's gap extends to 30%.

Diversity and a favorable institutional climate impact faculty retention, which is a concern for many public universities. Discrimination, lack of support, lack of collegiality, and other climate-related factors were found to have a negative impact on faculty retention (O'Meara, Lounder, & Campbell, 2014), particularly among minority faculty where turnover is already high (Piercy et al., 2005; Price et al., 2005). Research shows that a diverse faculty body improves the teaching and learning environment for all students (Piercy et al., 2005). Minority and female faculty are also more likely to use active learning techniques and participatory teaching practices (Milem, 2003).

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at NIU**

#### ***NIU Diversity Statement***

"Northern Illinois University celebrates diversity in all its forms. We feel that diversity in gender, ethnicity, physical ability, religious beliefs, age and sexuality is what makes the world an interesting place...Diversity makes the educational experience richer and makes NIU the ideal place to learn...This experience lays the groundwork for working and living with people from all backgrounds. Not only does one third of our student body come from a diverse ethnic background, approximately 900 international students call themselves Huskies. We encourage our students to celebrate their culture on campus, which helps make their first experience away from home more successful and familiar.

"We strive to improve access, retention and completion for all students and to uphold the NIU mission to value "A community of diverse people, ideas, services, and scholarly endeavors in a climate of respect for the intrinsic dignity of each individual."

### ***NIU Equity Statement***

Northern Illinois University strives to improve outcomes for all students by identifying and removing barriers that disproportionately hinder the academic achievement and student experience of historically and currently underserved populations.

### ***NIU Equity and Inclusion***

In pursuing NIU's vision and fulfilling its mission, NIU values and practices equity and inclusion in the following manner:

- By seeking and are strengthening by the diverse perspectives and experiences of our university community members.
- Using an inclusive decision-making process.
- Appreciating and respecting every member of our community.

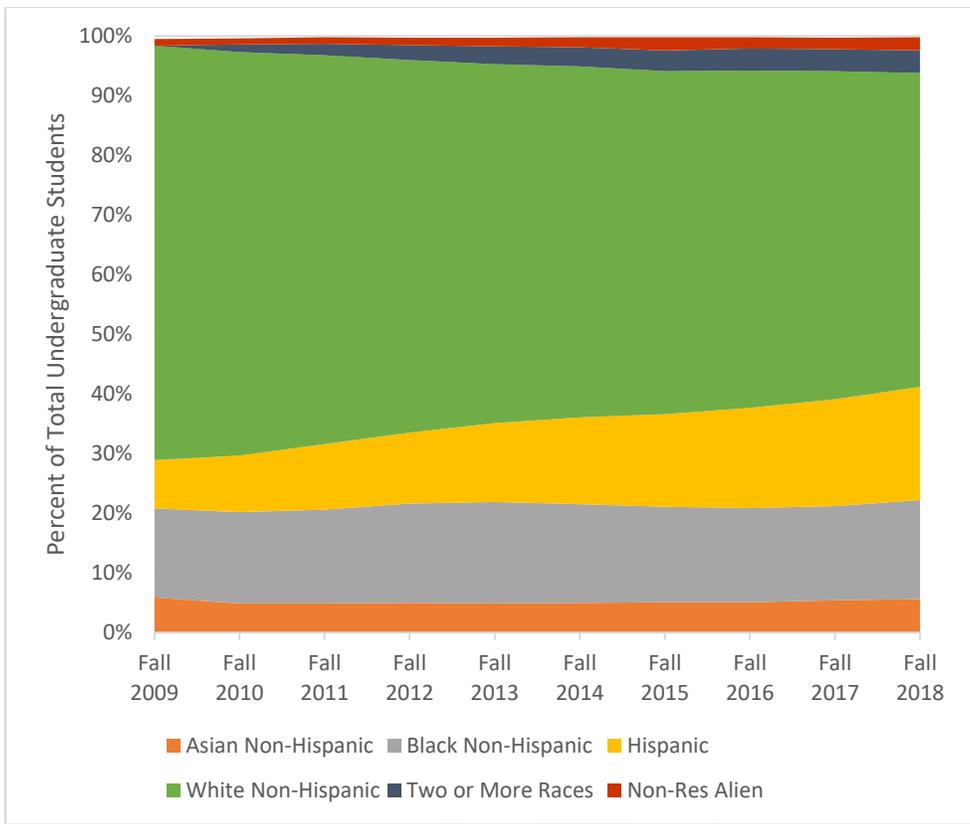
The university has removed “consideration of standardized test scores from the general admission and merit scholarship processes; working to close gaps in degree attainment for low income, first generation, African American and Latino/a students; requiring implicit bias training for hiring committees; and instituting cultural competency training for staff and faculty.”

According to NIU 2020 goals, the university has “plans that support the retention and success of BIPOC faculty and staff,” there is no clear plan in the goals to hire more BIPOC or a multi-year plan to achieve a specific percentage of increase in BIPOC each year. A five-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Planning Process is one way of achieving goals in the areas of hiring, retention of qualified minority faculty, increasing undergraduate minority student graduation rates, fostering an environment of inclusivity among students, faculty, staff and the communities NIU serves.

A plan should also detail NIU goals. For example, the university could look at the percentage of minority students and have a goal of achieving a comparable percentage of faculty at NIU. Studies show that students tend to excel when they have and see teachers that look like them. Leadership could then take this number and decided what is a realistic goal for each year and determine from there if the desired method is working. We understand the university is under financial constraints at this time, but we are recommending strategic planning as a viable option with attention to minority hiring practices at NIU.

Compared with other public four-year institutions in Illinois, NIU's numeric representation of racially minority undergraduate students has increased more rapidly over the years. At NIU, 15.3% undergraduate students were Black in 2011 and 16.5% in 2018, a (1.2% increase), and 10.7% were Hispanic/Latinx in 2011 and 19.0% in 2018 (8.3% increase). During 2011 and 2018, the state average increased at a slower pace from 20.0% to 20.4% for Black students (0.4% increase) and from 9.7% to 15.2% for Hispanic/Latinx (5.5% increase). However, the numeric representation of full-time instructional staff at NIU remains to be low: From 2015 -2019 we loss a percentage of 4.1% African Americans and loss 1.7% Asian faculty overall. However, during the same period we also increased Hispanic/Latinx by 5.75%. These numbers are solely based on the overall total number of BIPOC per year and then broken down per group.

The Strategic Enrollment Management Plan at NIU, 2019-2023 shows the percent of all students of color has increased significantly from approximately 29% to 45%. The percent of Hispanic/Latinx has increased from 8% to 19%. If the increase in Hispanic/Latinx students continue, NIU will soon qualify for minority-oriented federal funding. Projections see this opportunity coming about 2025



## **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee Action Plan**

There is a stigma that the “only way to have diversity in a program is to lower the standards.” However, diversity and high standards are directly correlated. “It is not about lowering standards...it is about making sure that your standards actually promote quality and ultimately promote really effective teachers in classrooms and that you are committed to pulling from the widest possible pool.” (Weisberg, 2018).

### **Best Practice Review – What are Other Institutions Doing?**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are priorities at many universities. We looked for selected institutions with resources and practical applications that are useful to NIU. The subcommittee focused on select institutions at the forefront of change for implementation of diversity, equity and inclusion. As a start, we selected University of Waterloo, Georgia State University, University of Michigan and Penn State as successful stories and frontrunners in the areas of equity, diversity and inclusion. We have a lot to learn from them and we hope that we will be able to apply some of their programs, policies and procedures and use them to customize new initiative at NIU.

#### ***University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada***

*“University of Waterloo’s Principles of Inclusivity are the ideals by which campus members can model respect for one another, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, gender, social class, sexual orientation, ability, and all the other characteristics that make us different from one another yet make us who we are.”* University of Waterloo adopts the following 6 Principles of Inclusivity:

- Acknowledge that individuals have unique and particular needs in the learning and work environment.

- Respect each individual's right to express and present themselves relative to their religion, culture, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical and mental ability.
- Promote inclusivity by reasonably adjusting procedures, activities and physical environments.
- Focus on the capability of the individual without assumptions or labels.
- Be inclusive in all forms of communication.
- Serve all with sensitivity, respect and fairness.

***Proposed Actions:*** We believe that the creation of principles for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion can be extremely beneficial for NIU. Moreover, we propose that such principles are introduced to staff, faculty and student orientations. These principles should be also embedded in other departmental activities and hiring practices. Offering a training on those principles should be required for students, staff and faculty.

The University of Waterloo identify the following steps toward success of this type initiative:

- Create a committee or working group to champion inclusivity — don't try to do it alone.
- Start small — identify one or two front-burner inclusivity issues for your organization and focus there. The data offered by Jeff Reynolds at NIU show how there is a great discrepancy in numbers between faculty and students. Our student body is becoming diversified at a pace that is not reflected in our personnel. We think the gap will not be easily closed and for this reason providing principles on these matters is critical.
- Consider what is ahead for inclusivity from a legislative and organizational point of view and let this guide programming and focus.

- Make it an expectation in the organizational culture that all employees participate in the program.
- Use your own in-house subject-matter experts to deliver programming. This points need to be addressed in combination of other subcommittees to make sure that all the resources found are leveraged to achieve the best results.
- Customize the program to meet the needs of your organization. Resources found are starting points but of course we need to tailor solutions based NIU needs and goals. We will get feedback from members of other sub-committees and FS to make sure we are all aligned on goals.
- Link the goals and objectives to the NIU's vision and mission. Build inclusivity into performance plans and goals.

***Recommendation #1 - Develop a Statement of Principles of Inclusivity.*** Principles of Inclusivity which encompasses NIU ideals reflecting a culture of belonging, a sense of value, respect, acceptance and encouragement by the entire community. Include Principles of Inclusivity in employee orientation and training programs. Inclusivity performance standard should also be included in yearly appraisals, internal hiring and generally incorporated into NIU policies and practices while reflecting NIU mission and goals.

***Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* The Academic Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Human Resources, Affirmative Action, Deans and Chairs, Faculty Senate.

*What needs to be done:* Develop actual wording contained in the Principles of Inclusivity. Utilize language and tools as benchmarks to be incorporated in hiring practices and

performance reviews. Then develop posters and flyers for posting in department, resident hall and just about every work station at NIU.

*Approximate length of process:* 6-9 months

*Target date for enactment:* Spring, 2022

***Recommendation #2 - Establish a Certificate of Inclusivity Certificate Training***

***Program.*** Aids NIU employees to developing their own action plan to reinforce and be an agent of change in the area of inclusivity, recognizing the importance of different cultural backgrounds.

***Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Division of Information Technology, Human Resources, Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

*What needs to be done:* Develop workshop content and materials designed to assist participants in completing the inclusion journey.

*Approximate length of process:* 6 months

*Target date for enactment:* Fall, 2022

***University of Michigan***

Started its strategic plan in 2016. The University of Michigan has a very detailed website with all the initiatives associated to DE&I. Moreover, yearly reports show progress made and with yearly summits to discuss the achievements and next steps. The process is very transparent among different entities which are part of the institution. Achievement of yearly goals showcase concrete change. The campus wide strategic plan initiative has 3 core strategies that focus on 3 distinct areas:

- **Strategy 1:** Create an Inclusive and Equitable Campus Climate
- **Strategy 2:** Recruit, Retain and Develop a Diverse Community
- **Strategy 3:** Support Innovative and Inclusive Scholarship and Teaching

*More info about the plan are available in this executive summary:*

<https://diversity.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/executive-summary.pdf>

The digital accessibility program is initiative worth noting. “Michigan State University embraces a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion and is committed to providing accessible experiences for persons with disabilities. As part of this commitment, Major Administrative Units (MAUs) and Central Administrative Units (CAUs) reporting through the Office of the President are encouraged to submit an annual self-review of their digital accessibility program. The self-reviews measure the unit’s progress and improvements in ensuring digital programs, services, and activities are accessible. The self-review process also serves as the primary auditing mechanism for assessing progress toward the unit's Five-Year Plan and ensures compliance with the University's *Web Accessibility Policy*.”

**Proposed Actions.** The University of Michigan has put effort and resources in their DE&I initiatives. UM is an exemplar institution for other schools when it comes to organization, reporting and discussing/updating on the topic. Their strategic plan is not only comprehensive with rich ideas but it is extremely well organized and monitored. They are really a notable example of how to plan, report and monitor the different initiatives. The website shows the commitment of University of Michigan towards DE&I. We believe that BIPOC students, faculty and staff at NIU would love to work for and be part of an institutions that has their best interest not just on paper but with actions.

***Recommendation # 3 Develop a 5-year Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan***

***Process.***

***Action.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Academic Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Deans and Chairs

*What needs to be done:* A comprehensive 5-year DE&I Strategic planning process encompassing which aligns with the NIU 5 Year Strategic Plan.

*Approximate length of the program:* 1-Year

*Target date for enactment:* Spring, 2023

Refer to Institutional Racism Subcommittee for additional information.

***Recommendation #4 - Develop a Yearly Summit to Discuss Progress on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives.*** Summits can be conducted at the department level and then one big summit with discussions on NIU accomplishments held. This provides an opportunity to updated information with success stories noted. The NIU DEI Summit is a campus wide initiative with a keynote speaker, a community update event that highlights segments of the annual DEI report, and college and unit events across campus.

***Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Coordinators: Academic Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Deans, Chairs and Department Heads. Participants; The entire NIU community,

*What needs to be done:* Compile accomplishments by department and unit within NIU and prepare for presentation at departmental and or University-wide summit.

*Approximate length of process:* 1 year or after sufficient programs have been enacted.

*Target date for enactment:* Spring, 2023

***Penn State University***

*“Diversity, inclusion, and equity are fundamental to the University’s values and mission to support all members of our Commonwealth and beyond. We strive to assertively incorporate these values into our research, teaching, learning, outreach, assessment, operations, and decision making at all levels of the University.”* As part of the University-wide strategic plan’s commitment to transformative education, Penn State establishes four planning goals related to inclusion, equity, and diversity:

1. Foster a culture of respect and inclusion that values the experiences and perspectives of faculty, staff, and students;
2. Develop and implement curricula and scholarship that interrogate social issues and inspire social responsibility;
3. Evaluate and rectify organizational structures, policies, and practices that cause differential impact and limit access and opportunities for faculty, staff, and students at Penn State; and,
4. Recruit, support, and advance a diverse student body, faculty, and staff.

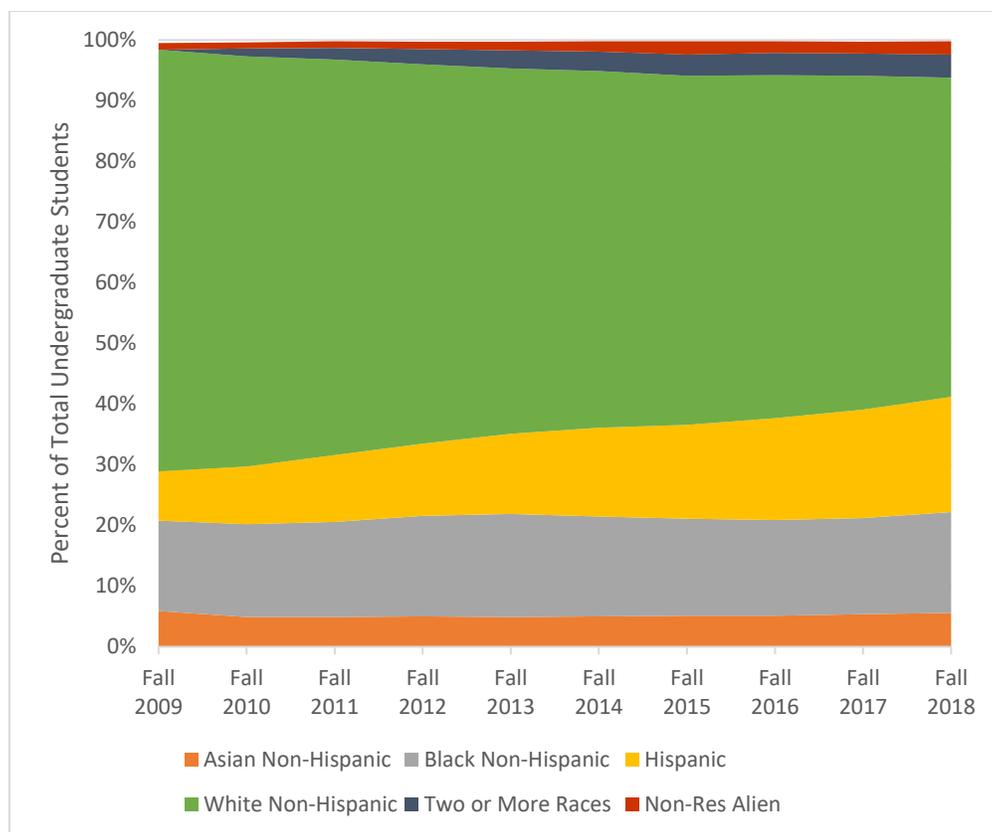
The following provides a description of University’s statement to commitment.

**Penn State Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** The Pennsylvania State University is committed to and accountable for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of its forms. We embrace individual uniqueness, foster a culture of inclusion that supports both broad and specific diversity initiatives, leverage the educational and institutional benefits of diversity, and engage all individuals to help them thrive. We value inclusion as a core strength and an essential element of our public service mission.

**At Penn State:**

- We will foster and maintain a safe environment of respect and inclusion for faculty, staff, students, and members of the communities we serve
- We will educate our faculty, staff, and students to be [social justice advocates](#), creatively providing curricula, programs, and environments that reflect the diversity of our communities, and elevate cultural awareness.
- We will ensure fair and inclusive access to our facilities, programs, resources, and services, and ensure that all of our policies and practices are inclusive and equitable.
- We will advance and build our workforce by assessing hiring practices and performance review procedures to attract, retain, and develop talented faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds.
- We will address intergroup disparities in areas such as representation, retention, learning outcomes, and graduation rates.

One challenge of particular importance and addressed by Penn State is the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce. At NIU, in the fall of 2013, minority faculty numbered 44 (Black, 4; Hispanic/ Latino, 10; American Indian/Alaska Natives, 2; Native Hawai-ian/Pacific Islanders, 0; Asians, 27; and 1 individual counted as two or more races). While total enrollment at NIU continues at a downward trend (24,424 in 2009 to 17,169 in 2018), minority enrollment gains are at an upswing. The percent of all students of color has increased significantly from approximately 29% to 45%. The percent of Hispanic/Latino/a has increased from 8% to 19%.



NIU should take proactive steps to increase the diversity of faculty and staff candidate pools by creating opportunities to bring minority doctoral candidates to the college and provide seminars and meet with faculty, students, and staff. NIU should also develop a network of contacts and organizations with ties to minority groups with which to share position announcements. Internally, we will strengthen our hiring policies and procedures.

### **Penn State Objectives and Strategies.**

#### 1. Plan for diversity.

- Develop a quantifiable diversity plan within each department.

#### 2. Increase recruitment activities.

- Include in all position announcements for faculty, staff, and extension educators a statement indicating the desirability of experience with diverse populations.

- Review all searches for academic faculty and extension educator positions to ensure a diverse applicant pool.
- Identify contacts at historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, and Native American colleges that are agreeable to sharing our job announcements within their institutions.
- Advertise positions for faculty, staff, and extension educators in venues targeted towards minorities.
- Create opportunities to bring underrepresented and female doctoral candidates to the college to deliver seminars and meet with faculty, students, and staff in the department re-lated to their research/area of expertise.
- Measures
  - Increase number of minority faculty and staff, particularly for those groups that are currently underrepresented.
  - Document affirmative hiring policies.

### 3. Increase retention activities.

- Through exit interviews and mentoring, identify barriers that may hinder retention of women and underrepresented mi-nority faculty and staff.
- Hold focus groups with current diverse students, faculty, and staff to identify issues.
- Include commitment to diversity in the evaluation of department heads.
- Include commitment to diversity in the evaluation of faculty and staff.
- Measures
  - Document reduction in faculty and extension educator turn-over rates by gender, race/ethnicity, and job classification.

- Document and increase success rates for recruitment and retention by cohort, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Penn State university has done a solid job in identifying the main challenges in their campus and shaping their objectives and strategies. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusions Subcommittee believes that a standing committee can use a similar approach to produce 5-year Strategic Plan with ways to measure the different strategies.

***Recommendation #5 - Develop a Statement of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for NIU.***

***Action.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Academic Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Affirmative Action, Human Resources.

*What needs to be done:* Draft a one-page document to be distributed and posted at workspace.

*Approximate length of process:* 6 months

*Target date for enactment:* Fall, 2021

**Georgia State University**

*“Georgia State has proven students from all backgrounds can succeed at high rates. Our efforts over the past few years show dramatic gains are indeed possible—not through changing the nature of the students served but through changing the nature of the institution that serves them”. The following three initiatives were critical for their success:*

- *Predictive Analytics (used to identify struggling students and putting them back on track)*
- *Academic Support (based on adaptive learning courses and peer tutoring activities)*

- *Financial Support (fostered by a data driven approach rather than just application; also senior financial help, because those are the students closer to the finish line and surprisingly at high risk of dropping out)*

**Actions.** GSU is clearly a leading institution when it comes to successful initiatives.

However, the initiatives were successful because the university was not trying to change its students or blame the students for their lack of success. GSU questioned what the university was doing wrong. The University reviewed every student touchpoint and develop ways to address needs. GSU found students were dropping out in the last semester. The reason being lack of funds to pay for their programs. Amount were as little as \$300. GST quickly reached out to students to find out why they were dropping out. If tuition was the problem, it was addressed immediately. The institution now has a program to help students pay for remaining balances in their final year.

Georgia State University reviewed the types of questions asked on the online platform and when they were asked. The university found it was not in sync with students' needs. The bulk of students were communicating with the university at night. GSU quickly revamped all such touchpoint to 24/7 (chat) and other lines of communication. Advisors were found as key resources aiding student retention. There are numerous programs enacted by GSU. The resultant impact is a tremendous increased in student retention and graduation rates. The entire presentation of Georgia State University road to success is enlightening and worth of our attention. The entire presentation can be viewed at

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=tim+renick&qpvt=tim++&FORM=VDRE>

***Recommendation #6 Invite Tom Renick as Guest Speaker***

GSU approach helped many institutions attain higher retention and graduation rates.

***Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Academic Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

*What needs to be done:* Coordinate Schedules with Dr. Tom Renick and NIU audience for an insightful presentation.

*Approximate length of process:* 3-6 months

*Target date for enactment:* Fall, 2021

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, makes it unlawful for an employer to fail to refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or nation origin. This statute applies to faculty members and other employees of colleges and universities, private and public. The Civil Rights Act also prohibits discrimination based on race and national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance. Most colleges and universities accept federal financial aid and other federal money, so this applies to them.

The following recommendations represent suggestions to follow when the Standing Social Justice Committee is approved and finalized by the Faculty Senate.

***Recommendation #7 - Development of a Quantifiable Diversity Plan by Department and Unit.*** Put in place procedures, processes, and procedures which insure the fair and equity recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified candidates.

***Action.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Affirmative Action, Human Resources and Academic Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Deans and Chairs.

*What needs to be done:* Advance relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Latino Colleges and Universities and other minority groups for the purpose of creating programs which help minority doctoral students and faculty engage in teaching and research programs and avenues for hiring.

*Approximate length of process:* ongoing

*Target date for enactment:* Starting Fall, 2021

***Recommendation #8 - Provide Incentives and Resources for Diversity Hires.***

***Action Plan***

*Responsible body, individuals:* Human Resource, Department Deans and Chairs

*What needs to be done:* Specific hiring programs developed should be carefully tied to any affirmative action plan, mission statement or particular educational need that are the basis for its existence. The program should be clearly written so that there is no room for ambiguity. Specific targets and numerical goals should be avoided. It is also important to final decisions on hiring are based primarily on qualifications for the positions, and not on race or national origin or gender. This will help to avoid any type of legal ramifications.

*Approximate length of process:* 6-9 months

*Target date for enactment:* Spring, 2022

***Recommendation #9- Publishing and Distributing Position as Widely as Possible.*** This allows for the position to reach all possible potential candidates. Courts have found race conscious recruiting acceptable under all of the different standards.

***Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individuals:* Human Resources, University Departments, Deans and Chairs, Presidential Commission on the Status of Minorities.

*What needs to be done:* Vacant position announcements can also be sent to faculty members or students at minority-serving institutions. The larger the applicant pool, the greater the possibility of attracting a diverse applicant to hire. A diverse faculty benefits the NIU community by providing support to students from diverse backgrounds, serving as symbols of interest, creating a sense of comfort for culturally diverse students, broadening the range of what is taught and how it is taught, lending new ideas and collaboration in pedagogies and serving as role models to the students.

*Approximate length of process:* 6-9 months

*Target date for enactment:* Spring, 2022

Due to these changing demographics, it is essential that students learn to live in a diverse world. Students must be prepared to live in a world that is racially and ethnically diverse. They must respect others, appreciate diversity, and value differences as positive keys to the academic, social, political, and economic stability of this country (Brown, 1998). As educators, it is important to create productive citizens. Students need to be exposed to different cultures. Students should be given the opportunity to relate to diverse individuals and connect with different walks of life. Students will learn to be more accepting of different races and cultures, thus making them more culturally aware. Diversifying the faculty has many benefits for students, limits discrimination claims, and limits reverse discrimination claims.

### **Learning About Ourselves**

Currently we do not have a diverse faculty body. We also do not have any data on how many BIPOC we have in each department or overall. This places NIU at a disadvantage when trying to implement the tenants of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

***Recommendation #10 – Develop Mandatory DE&I Training.***

***Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Academic Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, Division of Information Technology

*What needs to be done:* Develop training video and materials on diversity, equity and inclusion.

*Approximate length of process:* 6 months

*Target date for enactment:* Fall, 2021

***Recommendation #11 - Develop a Series of Short DE&I Videos for Faculty use.******Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* University Marketing and Creative Services  
Office of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Division of Information Technology

*What needs to be done:* Develop script and videos.

*Approximate length of process:* 4-6 months

*Target date for enactment:* Fall, 2022

***Recommendation #12 - Encourage faculty to Include BIPOC as Scholars, Artists, Professionals and Public Figures in Course Materials.******Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* Teaching individuals at NIU

*What needs to be done:* Review discipline specific achievements of BIPOC and incorporate success stories in teaching materials.

*Approximate length of process:* ongoing

*Target date for enactment:* Spring, 2022

***Recommendation #13 - Increase Diversity in Guest Speakers, Scholars, Artists, Professionals, Public Figures, Partners, and Alumni at NIU Events.***

***Action Plan.***

*Responsible body, individual(s):* College of Business, Education, Engineering and Engineering Technology, Health and Human Services, Liberal Arts and Sciences, Visual and Performing Arts (Deans, Chairs, Faculty, Staff, Administration).

*What needs to be done:* Recruit diversity in presenters in upcoming NIU events.

*Approximate length of process:* Ongoing

*Target date for enactment:* Fall, 2021

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**Academic Affairs Subcommittee**  
**Draft Report and Recommendations**

DRAFT

## Executive Summary

As discussed in the reports from the Institutional Racism and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion subcommittees, Northern Illinois University (NIU) has structures and systems in place which reinforce and replicate the systemic racism present in American culture and society. The specific charge of this subcommittee was to focus on Academic Affairs at NIU, with attention paid in particular to the Hiring, Tenure and Promotion (HTP) system at NIU. The HTP system cuts across multiple domains of institutional bureaucracy – Policies and Procedures, Personnel, and Curriculum, representing an essential system to focus on for improvements. The goal of the recommendations presented is to begin reforming NIU's HTP system into an antiracist system which contributes to University goals and social justice at the University. For sustained, long-term progress any changes to the HTP system must be part of a systematic, university wide commitment to transforming all aspects of the institution.

The subcommittee incorporated a review of research and best practices, institutional data and policies, previous NIU initiatives, and the lived experiences of faculty members. Through these efforts, the subcommittee identified systematic biases, inequitable policies, and heard of the real impacts of the current HTP system on individual faculty members as well as the composition of our faculty now and going forward. The HTP system requires reform in order to be an antiracist, equitable system. The recommendations in this report contribute directly to multiple Presidential Goals, to building an antiracist institution, and to better serve faculty, students, staff, and the broader NIU community by: 1) having a faculty which is reflective of the diversity of the communities and students we currently and aspire to serve; and 2) having a set of aligned HTP policies which contribute to being a social justice oriented, antiracist institution.

## **Recommendations for the Faculty Senate**

The Academic Affairs Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate's Ad Hoc Social Justice Committee offers the following recommendations:

1. Set measurable goals towards aligning faculty diversity with student body diversity.
2. Create a unified policy document covering faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, aligning each component with one another and with university goals, embedding principals of equity and social justice throughout.
3. Board of Trustees adopt the framing and language used in in the unified HTP Policy document in Board of Trustees' relevant policies.
4. Add additional exception to NIU's Policy on Hiring NIU Graduates if the applicant substantially contributes social justice goals of the department, college or university.

A full discussion of these recommendations, including action plans, can be found on page 98.

### **Charge to the Academic Affairs Subcommittee**

The charge of the Academic Affairs Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee was *to identify factors within the realm of Academic Affairs which contribute to institutional racism at NIU -- particularly policies, procedures, and practices in hiring, tenure and promotion, retention, and other professional opportunities -- and suggest actions to correct them.* Focusing on the hiring, tenure and promotion (HTP) policies, procedures, and practices (PPP) lays the groundwork for both short and long run improvements towards the longer path towards a social justice oriented, antiracist institution with a diverse faculty. Aligning the incentives, rewards, and supports within our HTP system with broader University goals and with social justice work represents best practice for sustaining a diverse faculty. The subcommittee's report should be considered a part of a more systematic effort to address institutional racism throughout NIU and be a part of a comprehensive effort to reform the university. The subcommittee reviewed academic literature, higher education best practice, institutional data and policies, the Presidential Goals, and conducted focus groups. The remainder of this report proceeds as follows: first, we summarize our learning from the research and best practices of other institutions; second, we present NIU specific information related to what's been done, current policy and patterns, and the themes which emerged from Black faculty focus groups; and, finally, we present our recommendations.

### **Learning from Others**

This section of the report reviews the current literature and identifies best practices at other higher education institutions with the following goals: 1) situate the hiring, tenure and promotion (HTP) system as one component of the broader organization which impacts issues of social justice and antiracism; 2) explore how the HTP system contributes to the social justice and

antiracist goals of an institution; and 3) identify HTP best practices which can be adopted by higher education institutions. This section acknowledges NIU faculty are not the first to recognize that the HTP system contributes to institutional racism nor is NIU the first institution which has attempted to reform the HTP system.

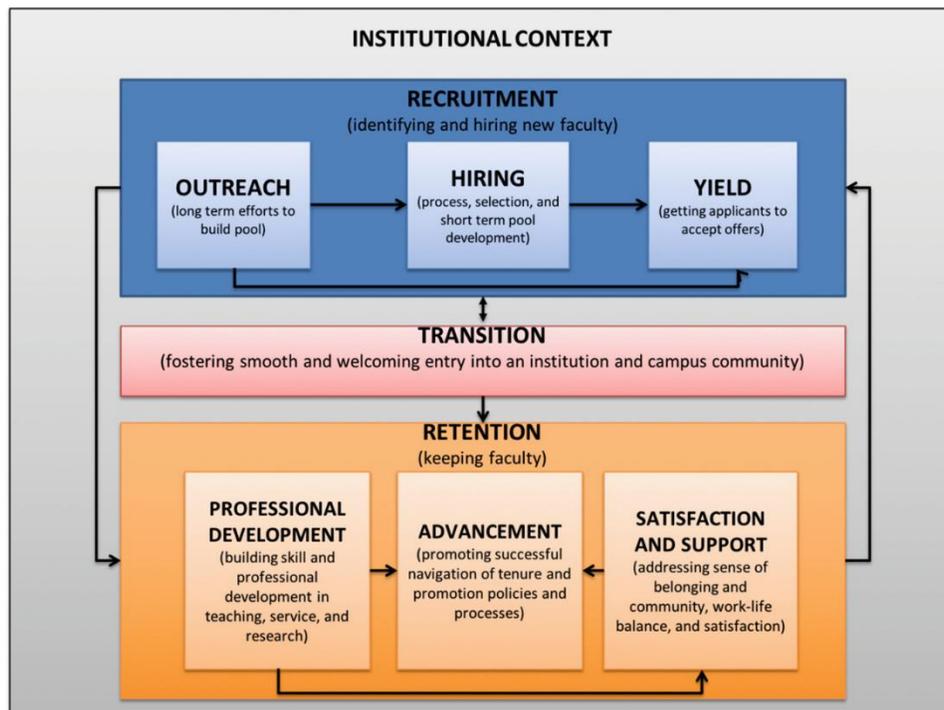
### **Updating and aligning the HTP system can contribute to social justice and antiracist goals of the university**

Given the charge of the subcommittee, what follows focuses on a key aspect of academic affairs at Northern Illinois University – the hiring, tenure and promotion system. However, the HTP system is only one component of the University as a whole. To make systematic and systemic improvements towards NIU being an antiracist institution, oriented towards social justice goals all components of the institution need improvements and alignment with these goals. So although the subcommittee focused on the HTP system at NIU, readers are referred to the reports of the Institutional Racism and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Subcommittees as well as other relevant bodies for further discussions on improving the institution as a whole.

For this report, we drew on a recent systematic literature review (Griffin, 2020) and a framework developed for the Aspire Alliance to understand how the HTP system shapes the faculty body at a university and how that system operates within a given institutional context to ground our understanding (see Figure 1; Griffin et al., 2020) The policies which make up the HTP system at institutions of higher education can either produce social justice oriented HTP systems and structures or systems and structures which create social inequalities. Understanding the (dis)incentives and (mis)alignments within the HTP system helps shine light on the scholarship, teaching and service activities of faculty which are systematically encouraged or discouraged, the impact these incentives and alignments have on tenure and retention, and

ultimately contributing to whether an institution's HTP system is oriented to contribute to social justice aims (Griffin et al., 2020). The HTP system operates within a given institutional context, including the institutions commitment to diversity, location, history, culture, and climate.

**Figure 1. Institutional Model for Increasing Faculty Diversity**



**Source:** Griffin et al., 2020

Several themes emerged from a review of the recent literature on the impact of the HTP system on faculty activities, retention, and diversification with a specific focus on how HTP can hinder or support a social justice oriented faculty.

- ***Aligning the HTP system with the goals or mission of a university can lead to productive changes (e.g., Denin et al., 2018; Louie, 2019);***
  - *Examples: Aligning HTP system to encourage teaching (Denin et al., 2018)*
- ***Expanded definitions of faculty excellence reward faculty currently engaged in social justice activities as well as encourage faculty to participate in or contribute to social***

*justice agendas by rewarding, incentivizing, and prioritizing this work (e.g., Denin et al., 2018; Griffin, 2020; Griffin et al., 2020);*

- *Examples:* Recognizing mentorship and committee service; including social justice activities as components of productive scholarship, teaching and service (Denin et al., 2018)
- ***Offering a process for faculty to create individualized evaluation, tenure, and promotion plans which focus on the growth and development of the faculty member which is aligned with position contribution to university goals as well as to goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion (Louie, 2019)***
  - *Examples:* Faculty hired to be Indigenous scholars may require extensive time in the field in order to retain expected connections to Indigenous communities and Indigenous Knowledges (Louie, 2019);
- ***Traditional recruitment and hiring strategies need updating to align with HTP system and university goals (e.g., Griffin et al., 2020);***
  - *Examples:* Re-envisioning the hiring process from an anti-racist lens and/or embedding ideals of equity and social justice in each component can fundamentally alter the process and who is ultimately selected, while the familiar rhythm and activities remain fairly consistent (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017)
- ***Equity, diversity, and inclusion need to be embedded throughout decision-making processes in the HTP system in order to produce systematic changes in faculty composition and social justice oriented activities (e.g., Griffin et al., 2020)***

- *Examples:* prioritized in recruitment and hiring, incentivized and rewarded in tenure and promotion decisions, consistently aligned across the system (Griffin et al., 2020)
- ***Enact strategies which support the hiring and retention of diverse faculty (e.g. Freeman, 2019; Johnson, 2016)***
  - *Examples:* cluster hiring can quickly impact faculty composition and help with retention (Freeman, 2019); high quality mentoring programs can help retain diverse faculty (Romero Jr., 2017)
- ***Create accountability systems, collect relevant data, and set measurable goals to change HTP systems (O’Meara et al., 2019; Raphael & Ritter, 2020; Smith, 2018)***

#### **Best practice review – what are other institutions doing?**

Institutions of higher education are at various stages of aligning HTP systems with institutional goals and social justice goals. What follows is a non-exhaustive list of some of the best practices other institutions are engaged in.

- **Approaches to embedding equity into HTP System** – *Institutions have worked to incorporate equity into each of the three standard evaluation components of teaching/librarianship, research and artistry, and service by infusing each with a focus on contributions to diversity, equity, and inclusion.*
  - Example: [Oregon State University’s Criteria for Promotion and Tenure](#)
- **Cluster hiring** – *this approach has been shown to make large scale changes in faculty composition and relevant expertise, and mark a commitment to diversifying faculty.*
  - Emory University has used cluster hiring to quickly diversify their faculty
    - [The case for cluster hiring to diversify your faculty](#)

- [New science faculty bring diverse perspectives to the classroom](#)
  - [Colleges and universities adopt cluster hiring to enhance diversity among faculty](#)
- IUPUI has committed funds to diversify faculty, including funds to encourage cluster hiring
  - *START: [Support for Talent Attraction, Retention, and Transition](#)*
- **Long term commitment to doing the work**
  - *Joining networks or engaging with external partners over multiple years*
    - IChange Network – [3 year commitment](#)
    - Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training – Crossroads [website](#)
  - *Developing and following Strategic Plans:*
    - University of Michigan’s Ford School of Public Policy – [5 year strategic planning with visible, annual goals](#)
    - University of Waterloo’s [Principles of Inclusivity and strategic plan](#)
    - Utah Valley University’s [5 year Inclusion plan](#)
- **Visible accountability mechanisms aligned with HTP goals**
  - *ACE Presentation and resources – [Building dashboards and other tools to highlight inequities](#)*
  - *Data dashboards focused on issues of equity – [O’Meara et al., 2019](#)*
- **Committing continued resources to supporting work**
  - *External funding opportunities - Colleges and universities also secure external funding to transform their institutions to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion. For example, the [ADVANCE grant](#) awarded by the National Science Foundation*

(NSF) is multi-year grant program directs up to \$3 million to single universities to increase faculty diversity in STEM departments. Over 350 colleges and universities have been awarded since 2001, and many of them focused on improving faculty hiring, tenure and promotion by (1) recognizing and combating gender and race bias; 2) designing and implementing interventions for hiring, tenure and promotion policies, process and practices; and (3) building support systems for minoritized faculty with mentoring and career development opportunities.

- *Internal funding commitments* – making sustained expenditures and investments

### **Learning about Ourselves**

In an effort to understand the challenges at NIU and make actionable recommendations, we reviewed information about ourselves from multiple key sources: the *Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Report* submitted in 2014, the bylaws and relevant sections of the policy library which make up NIU's current HTP system, and recent institutional data related to HTP at NIU. Focus groups were also conducted with Black faculty related to NIU's HTP system and retention.

After reviewing these sources, several patterns emerged. First, NIU's faculty body neither currently reflects the diversity of the students enrolled nor is there a trend towards narrowing the diversity gap. Second, concerns voiced in the 2014 report about the HTP system and faculty diversity remain relevant now as do issues related to the retention of faculty of color, as well as the need for university support and encouragement of social justice oriented work. Third, NIU's hiring policies are separate from tenure and promotion policies and are not in alignment with university goals or with one another. Finally, these patterns are not merely academic – Black faculty reported that NIU's HTP system had real impacts on their experiences here at NIU,

including impacting their thinking about remaining at NIU. The focus groups are discussed in more detail below after reviewing the policy documents and institutional data sources.

### **Review of the 2014 Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Report**

The subcommittee reviewed the subcommittee reports from the final *Diversity and Inclusion Task Force Report* which were related to the HTP system at NIU – Subcommittees 4, 5, and 8. Each subcommittee report is briefly summarized below as it relates to the charge of the Academic Affairs Subcommittee:

- **Subcommittee 4** – The subcommittee focused on ways NIU hiring processes impacted the recruitment of diverse faculty. The subcommittee found the processes at that time hindered the hiring of diverse faculty. Recommendations were made to create consistent policies, the need to highlight how diverse faculty were valued at NIU, provide relevant information about the campus and surrounding community, and to create mentorship and retention focused university initiatives.
- **Subcommittee 5** – The subcommittee focused on creating merit-based diversity initiatives for faculty. The recommendations included the creation of a campus-wide Diversity and Inclusion council to coordinate activities and inform the campus, the creation of awards and grants to incentivize and recognize faculty doing diversity work, the development of voluntary summer learning institutes to change curricula and pedagogy, and a central repository for the diversity and inclusion work done across the campus.
- **Subcommittee 8** - The subcommittee focused on the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty. The relevant recommendations were to leverage existing organizations, outlets and programs (such as IBHE’s Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois

Program) to ensure the applicant pool is diverse, ensure search committee diversity, creation of a mentoring program for all new faculty with a specific focus on cross department collaboration for diverse faculty, and to ensure that all research interests are valued.

### **Current HTP Data at NIU**

Compared with other public four-year institutions in Illinois, NIU's numeric representation of racially minority undergraduate students has increased more rapidly over the years<sup>1</sup>. At NIU, 15.3% undergraduate students were Black in 2011 and 16.5% in 2018 (1.2% increase), and 10.7% were Latino/a/x in 2011 and 19.0% in 2018 (8.3% increase). During 2011 and 2018, the state average increased at a slower pace from 20.0% to 20.4% for Black students (0.4% increase) and from 9.7% to 15.2% for Latino/a/x (5.5% increase).

However, the numeric representation of full-time instructional staff at NIU remains to be low: From 3.3% being Black and 2.6% being Latino/a/x in 2011 to 2.8% being Black and 2.3% being Latino/a/x in 2018. Both proportions are lower than the state average around 9% for Black full-time instructional staff and 4% Latino/a/x full-time instructional staff. Additionally, the proportion of Latino/a/x part-time instructional staff at NIU has considerably increased between 2011 and 2018 from 1.5% to 3.7%, while the same indicator remains flat for the state average at 2.6%. The proportion of Black part-time instructional staff at NIU increased from 1.1% in 2011 to 1.9% in 2018, while the same indicator remains flat for the state average at 10%.

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<sup>1</sup> Data is retrieved from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Systems (IPEDS). The 12 public four-year institutions in Illinois include Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University, Northeastern Illinois University, University of Illinois at Springfield, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville, and Western Illinois University.

In sum, quantitative institutional data shows that the lack of racial minority faculty is not a unique issue for NIU campuses. Although NIU has made substantial improvements in diversity and equity over the years, additional efforts are needed to maintain the momentum of enhancing diversity and inclusion in academic affairs. Further, a gap in data exists around the topics of recruitment and hiring as well as time to tenure and time to promotion which are relevant data points to understand how the HTP system is related to issues of equity by examining the symptoms produced by inequities in the system.

### **Review of the Policies Which Guide the Current HTP System at NIU**

The subcommittee reviewed four sources, including NIU's Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Manual ([APPM](#)), Policy Library, the Faculty Senate Bylaws, and Board of Trustee's Policies for the relevant sections related to the HTP system. In particular, the subcommittee critically reviewed Section II of the APPM – *Personnel Policies and Procedures* – and Article 9 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws – *The Academic Personnel Process*. Summary observations are presented first in bulleted form followed by specific details related to each document below.

- Hiring and appointment policies exist separately from tenure and promotion policies
- Lack of equity-based language throughout HTP policies
- No common framing of how the HTP system contributes to University mission and goals

**Section II of the APPM.** The subcommittee identified two of the 33 items within Section II of the APPM which directly contributed to NIU's HTP system: *Item 3 – Policy on Hiring NIU Graduates* and *Item 27 – Guidelines for Faculty Searches and Appointments*.

Observations on these two items follow.

Item 3 provides the guidelines for hiring recent NIU graduates for faculty positions. As written, Item 3 allows for exceptions to the policy based on whether the hire would “enhance the quality and/or diversity of the department, college, or university”. One possible update could include tying this policy more broadly to hires which would contribute to the overall mission of the department, college, or university.

Item 27 contains the policy for faculty searches and appointments of “full-time, regular, tenure-track faculty positions.” Upon review, two specific issues were identified with current language. First, the terms used in the updates in the document can reinforce the current power dynamics. For example, “minorities” is used to represent racially minoritized population while normalizing White as the majority. Second, specific examples or NIU available resources could be included related to the advertisement of positions which would provide guidance to achieve effective outreach and recruitment.

***Article 9 of Faculty Senate Bylaws.*** The subcommittee reviewed Article 9 of the Faculty Senate Bylaws as it represents the policies which govern tenure and promotion at NIU. Below is a list of specific observations related to both problematic content as well as missing content.

- No clearly articulated goal for the tenure and promotion system
- No explicit connection to how the tenure and promotion system contributes to the university mission
- The criteria used to inform personnel decisions outlined in 9.2.1.6 contain no mention of contribution to institutional mission or social justice impacts
- Effectiveness in Teaching or Librarianship and Service to the University Community and Profession have more specificity than Scholarly Performance and Achievement
- 9.3.1 suggests a different set of expectations from the FS than from the Board of Trustees

- 9.3.1.1 – 9.3.1.3 do not mention inclusivity, social justice, or related phrase to show this is a component of how the faculty define effective teaching/librarianship, scholarly/professional achievement, or service.
- Nothing in the recommendation for promotion or tenure reflects a commitment to social justice or institutional mission.

### **Current Perceptions of Black Faculty of NIU's HTP System**

In order to meaningfully examine its charge from the Faculty Senate, the FS Ad-Hoc Committee decided to hold focus group conversations with Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) faculty in order to incorporate their voices in this work. However, due to time and availability constraints only Black faculty focus groups were held. Members of the FS Ad-Hoc Committee will work with groups on campus to pursue focus groups with other faculty of color. While not indicative of all BIPOC faculty, the inclusion of Black faculty voices in this work responds to the origins of the FS Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee and provides insight into one of the largest groups of BIPOC faculty at NIU.

The FS Ad-Hoc Social Justice committee held two focus group sessions and invited Black faculty across NIU to participate in a qualitative study to collect their perceptions and lived experiences with a focus on the hiring, tenure and promotion as well as asking how their experiences shape their retention decisions. A total of 30 faculty Black faculty were identified from tenured, and tenure-track ranks to participate in the focus groups. An initial letter of intent was communicated to all 30 faculty members. Out of the 30 faculty contacted, 21 faculty responded and subsequently received formal invitations asking them to choose the focus group session they would like to attend. 12 faculty members participated in Day 1 and 8 participated in

Day 2. Each session was scheduled for two hours, had two Black senior faculty as moderators, and there were three notetakers in each session to facilitate data collection.

The notes were then analyzed by a team of FS Ad-Hoc Committee members. To ensure the team accurately captured and reflected the perspectives of those who participated in the focus groups, several steps were taken. First, the team spent two weeks engaged with the data both individually and collectively to create a common draft of emergent themes. Second, feedback was solicited from both discussion moderators on an initial draft of themes. Finally, feedback was solicited from all focus group participants on an updated draft of the themes. The final list of themes is included as an appendix to this report as is a list of questions asked of the participants.

The four overarching themes from the focus groups are presented first. In the section titled Mid-Level Themes, hiring, tenure and promotion, and retention are explored in detail.

### *Overarching themes*

***Theme 1 – Deficits exist in our hiring, tenure and promotion policies which need to not just be identified, but recognized and addressed in order to attract and retain Black faculty.***

Throughout the focus group conversations, it was apparent that each component of the hiring, tenure and promotion system has substantive room for improvement. Each component was discussed as being systematically biased, together creating a biased system of hiring, tenure and promotion. Against this backdrop, Black faculty expressed skepticism that anything will be done to change this reality.

- *“Over the years I have participated in similar activities to this one and in general have seen very little substantive change. Until the people in power positions are held to consistent, professional and fair procedures, very little will change. Most of the so-called*

*commitments to diversity/inclusion/etc. are symbolic only and not actually practiced. POC need to be actually listened to when pointing out issues.”*

- *“Overall, given my experiences at NIU and many of the shared experiences of my colleagues across the campus, I am very reticent to encourage persons from under-represented groups who may reach out to me to come to NIU.”*

Despite these sentiments and frustrations, there remained a sense of hope amongst participants.

A response shared after the focus groups occurred captured this:

- *“Despite these strong criticisms, a number of participants also showed optimism about the value of these conversations. For example, some of the participants noted an alignment of NIU’s efforts to what we are witnessing across the country and saw these conversations as a real opportunity to address or redress the effects of institutional racism on Black and BIPOC faculty in a meaningful way than ever before.”*

***Theme 2 – NIU has the potential to recruit, hire, and retain diverse faculty with intentional design, implementation, and monitoring.*** The two focus groups highlighted that with intentional action, NIU is well position to recruit, hire and retain diverse faculty. At various points in the two focus groups, Black faculty identified current strengths, emerging trends and opportunities to strengthen NIU as an attractive place for outside candidates as well as offered productive suggestions about how to improve NIU for faculty who are currently part of the faculty body. Faculty suggested that for this potential to be realized, a long-term plan with tangible outcomes and accountability mechanisms which is revisited regularly is necessary.

- *“An important step forwarded in this direction ... would be for NIU to commit to specific outcomes over a specific period of time.”*

- *“I think that there needs to be a detailed investigation of how personnel processes are administered across the campus. Many processes are non-existent, vague or misused.”*

***Theme 3 - Accumulation of frustration starting at hiring and continuing through tenure and promotion which negatively impacts retention.*** Black faculty suggested that the issues with the HTP system at NIU were not just academic – the system as it currently stands negatively impacts retention.

- *“There is much work that NIU needs to do to encourage retention....Most of us would leave given the right opportunity.”*

Responses related to each part of the HTP system are discussed in greater detail below in the following section on mid-level themes.

***Theme 4 - Inequitable and unwritten rules and practices in place in various academic units which communicate an ideology that Black and Latino/a/x faculty are beneath their White colleagues.*** Black faculty consistently discussed the inequitable application of the written rules and the existence of unwritten rules and practices within the HTP system across the campus. This is manifested in the ways Black and Latino/a/x faculty are treated, communication interactions (microaggressions and microinvalidations) and the little regard some of their White colleagues and administrators have for their pedagogy, scholarship, service, time, and overall humanity. These sentiments were expressed during the focus groups and in written communications sent to the FS Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee afterwards.

***Mid-level themes: Hiring themes***

We asked the focus group participants questions about why they initially joined NIU’s faculty, how they experienced the hiring process, and how the process might be improved. After analysis of the data, we present four themes which emerged related to hiring below.

***Hiring Theme 1: Faculty gave many reasons for joining NIU including those which are shaped by NIU, those which are promotable by NIU, and those personal to each applicant.***

The reasons for why faculty joined NIU given by focus group participants fell into two general categories – those which NIU a) can shape or promote and b) those which NIU does not have any direct influence over. Those that NIU can shape or promote fell into two sub-categories, those related to the university itself and those that have to do with the job itself.

For the university factors which NIU can influence, faculty identified the campus/community climate, culture and networks as positive contributors to accepting a job at NIU. Diversity in the student body and an institutional value were identified as factors influencing decisions. Examples of participant comments included:

- *“Diversity was a big factor. I came to NIU mostly because of the diverse student population.”*
- *“I believe what the department people told me at the time. They said that they value diversity and were looking for people to diversify the department.”*

The first impression and experiences were generally positive, contributing to their decision to come to NIU. Several respondents indicated the positive effect of being recruited by an African American, having an African American search chair, or engaging with diverse faculty while on their campus visit:

- *“I accepted a position at the [College] because I was recruited to interview by the chair who was an African American man”*

Other participants identified the research opportunities of joining NIU. The proximity to research labs shaped one participants decision:

- *“One of my primary reasons for coming to NIU was because there are two huge national labs nearby, so it allowed me to have access to produce high quality research.”*

Participants also mentioned working with graduate students and in a research university setting as selling points for NIU.

Factors related to the positions themselves represent another reason why respondents reported coming to NIU. The offered salary and overall benefit package were identified by some as being competitive. Respondents mentioned NIU offered the best fit, whether it was offering the *“the right balance of teaching and research”*, teaching courses aligned with disciplinary home, or providing job security. Others identified the role of dual-hiring opportunities in bringing them to NIU.

More idiosyncratic, personal reasons also emerged – including geographic location, family considerations, and the need for a job. Some examples of faculty choosing NIU in part due to the location include faculty choosing NIU because *“[they] didn’t want to move out of state”*, the proximity to Chicago was important *“... because my wife didn’t want to move to the middle of nowhere”*, and as one respondent put it *“I came to NIU for two reasons. I was looking for a tenure-track position and NIU was also close to my hometown.”*

***Hiring Theme 2 – While candidates perceived NIU as pleasant and equitable during the hiring process, the reality was not as pleasant or equitable once they were hired.*** The initial impression of NIU through the hiring process for participants was generally positive with some variation – there was consensus that issues existed related to HR processes. Faculty also described how NIU’s hiring process operated from the perspective of the search committee, highlighting a system which appears objective on paper but remains systematically biased in practice.

Focus group participants described the hiring process from the perspective of the candidate as generally “good”, “welcoming”, “respectful”. Some relevant quotes from participants include:

- *“I think it was the standard package, people were responsive welcoming and friendly, my questions were answered during my campus visit.”*
- *“The team that welcomed me was very nice. At the time when I came the department was very close knit so you could feel the welcome in the group.”*
- *“My experience with the hiring process was very pleasant and people seemed to be very genuine.”*
- *“It was a well-organized process. I met most of the faculty in [my college].... I got a lot of useful information about the university.”*

This was not the universal experience of participants as some reported issues such as:

- *“The onboarding was a bit cumbersome, with HR and trying to get an A ID so it took a while to get going with classes.”*
- *“There was flights mix-up. There was no clear communication on what should be done.... There was no communication that there was \$3,000 available for moving expenses.”*
- *“If I have to rate it, I will give it a C grade. It was deceptive in a way because of the position that I applied for is not the position that I am currently holding.”*
- *“I think HR orientation went well too. It was well organized and informative. I would have liked for them during that orientation to speak a little bit more about diversity, equity and more specifically about inclusion and mentorship opportunities for faculty of color, because the sense of belonging is challenged once you are hired.”*

As discussed in the remaining themes below, many of the positive perceptions participants had during their hiring process were not matched upon arrival or during their time at NIU.

***Hiring Theme 3 – While hiring processes appear objective but are still systematically biased.*** When given the opportunity to serve on search committees, faculty participants reported the system to be biased against BIPOC faculty. The sub-themes highlighted were that committee membership matters, the power dynamic within the committee matters and that the processes differ by department and college as well as from search to search. Below are representative quotes from faculty participants:

- *“Being on search committees over the years did lead me to conclude that the diversity statements that my department put on search position’s language is nothing more than cosmetic or bureaucratic practices. It doesn’t make any [difference] or mean anything.”*
- *“I too sat on search committees and have seen what transpires in that process. I am left with the impression I am always only one who keep asking the committee to talk about diversity. Sometimes they justify a hire on that ground that they want to hire a candidate who can write reports to the state and use that justification to exclude minorities, which is frustrating to watch.”*
- *“Even if they have a minority on the committee, that person is still a minority on the committee. If a white person says something it is heard and if you are not and if you are a person of color it is like people do not hear you.”*
- *“I can think of at least three search committees that I asked to be placed on... in all instances, I was denied a place on the committee. I felt as if there were unnamed reasons as to why I was denied participation on those [search] committees, and in all*

*instances, there was no one on the committee who had more lived experience, expertise in the field than myself. This is a huge WRONG in my estimation.”*

- *“It also gets frustrating for your department to wanting to check the diversity box by having you sit over and over again in searches even though they don’t value what you have say. Commitment to inclusion need to truthful with departments willing to act on them.”*

***Hiring Theme 4 – Need for university wide concrete and measurable commitment to achieving diversity and social justice goals through hiring.***

- ***Sub-theme 4a – Need for hiring processes to reflect concrete, measurable goals which the university can be held accountable to.***
- ***Sub-theme 4b – Need for hiring processes to encourage, select for faculty who will contribute to social justice oriented pedagogy, scholarship and service***

### ***Tenure and Promotion themes***

The next set of questions asked participants about their personal experiences with T&P at NIU, focusing on the challenges and areas for improvement. Participants were also asked about current T&P alignment with anti-racist and/or social justice scholarship, service and teaching as well as ways that the T&P system could support these activities. XXX themes emerged related to NIU’s T&P system and processes.

***Tenure and Promotion Theme 1 - Research and artistry of Black faculty not supported or recognized in the same way during T&P process and internally.*** An overarching theme within the tenure and promotion conversation was that research and artistry focused on Black studies, non-White American, or other non-traditional topics was not given the same value in tenure and promotion deliberations. For example, one participant shared:

- *“The subject matter of research is an issue, where European and white American ... topics are deemed more important. When Whites write about Black topics, they seem to take on greater importance than when blacks do so.”*

***Tenure and Promotion Theme 2 - Social justice research, engagement and service are not systematically rewarded or recognized under current policy.*** When asked specifically about whether the current system rewarded or recognized social justice research and artistry, teaching/librarianship, or service, the focus groups came to consensus that this work did not impact tenure and promotion.

- *“The current system does not encourage faculty involvement in anti-racist or social justice scholarship specifically.”*
- *“No, we don’t have any of those discussion. I don’t think they know what those words even mean. There is nothing like that.”*
- *“Our department has nothing in our tenure package on recognizing it.”*

In fact, one participant suggested it could negatively impact deliberations:

- *“In my department it is encouraged on the surface so they can brag about it. But in the personal committee it doesn’t amount to anything. In fact, it can be held against you and you can be accused of focusing too much on something that is not research related or leading to publications.”*

Finally, faculty were prompted to discuss ways tenure and promotions could be improved to encourage, support, and/or recognize social justice teaching/librarianship, research and artistry, and service. The near universal consensus of both focus groups was that the only way to encourage social justice work was to explicitly add it to policy and rubrics.

- *“In my department only if it is added to the rubric and people got points for it. Otherwise, it won’t count.”*
- *“I agree with my colleagues, to ensure that involvement in anti-racist and social justice count, we will need guidelines.”*
- *“Make it a tenure requirement”*
- *“I think it should be part of the rubric in measuring and counting the research and conference attendance and participation of faculty”*

***Tenure and Promotion Theme 3 – Clarity in T&P policies has improved but the application of T&P policies remains biased and inconsistent.*** Related to the above two themes, faculty participants discussed that even though tenure and promotion policies and procedures have improved over time that the application of those policies and procedures remains biased and inconsistent. Some examples of this sentiment are below:

- *“[I was] told that the white counterparts are more likely to get a promotion even if you are at the same level and have made the same accomplishments.”*
- *“There are rubrics used in my department for promotion at each level and they are used to penalize diverse faculty but not used the same way for white faculty members. There was a white faculty going for full professor and [they] didn’t have enough points by the rubrics, and [they were] given it anyway.”*
- *“When I went for tenure and promotion, things got sketchy. They had a different criterion for me than they had for the other person also going for tenure with me. I know this because several people independent of each other came and told me about the discussion that took place on the committee.”*

- “*Why [have] minorities been treated so bad and they have gotten rid of 5 minority people within 3 years. It makes it feel like the university is just saying we are committed to diversity.*”

Black faculty discussed how they were asked to do more in terms of committee work with minimal or no acknowledgement in order to ensure there was “*diversity on those committees*”. One faculty reported having to advocate for how their work in Black Studies contributed to their department, a task not asked of others.

- “*The only thing was that this professor encouraged me to write a narrative on my connection between black studies and what I was doing in my [field]. And I questioned why I had to do that when nobody else had to do it.*”

***Tenure and Promotion Theme 4 – Lack of diversity in departments impacts T&P decisions.*** A theme embedded throughout this conversation was that the lack of diversity in departments contributed to each of the above three themes as well as the ultimate tenure and promotion decision.

### ***Retention themes***

The final set of questions participants engaged with related to retention, broadly. They were asked what factors were important as they thought about remaining or leaving NIU. From their responses, three themes emerged and are discussed below.

***Retention Theme 1 – Alignment of T&P policies with equity, inclusivity, diversity and social justice goals impacts retention decisions.*** The (mis)alignment of T&P policies with goals of diversity, equity, inclusivity, and social justice were seen as contributing to decisions to remain at NIU. Alignment of T&P policies with the aforementioned goals positively impacted

feelings about remaining at NIU while misalignment was mentioned as a cause for wanting to leave NIU.

- *“For me factors that are important for staying will be support from my program, department and the university with regards to my professional goals, [and] workload especially as it relates to [diversity and inclusion]. Diversity and inclusion work should be distributed equitably across the board and not just me simply because I am Black or minority.”*
- *“The tasks [placed] on diverse faculty is a major factor for me and I think about that regularly.”*
- *“And don’t overburden me by putting me in too many committees. And eliminating any barriers that stand in the way of being my best self.”*

***Retention Theme 2 - Connection to campus, colleagues, students and community is important for retention.*** Faculty highlighted connections – to campus, colleagues, students and community – as a key factor in their decisions to remain at NIU. When students were brought up in this context, it was always as a key rationale for staying at NIU.

- *“There are things I like about NIU such as the student body. They are hardworking, first generation college kids and that is something I find rewarding and makes me enjoy my job.... It’s a balancing act of balancing the rewarding part with the unrewarding part.”*

Colleagues and the overall campus community were discussed in a more mixed manner.

- *“It has been my students and some colleagues keeping me here at NIU. To leave here now would have to be [due to] my uncomfortability with my colleagues in my department.”*

- *“For me it appears that at different levels there is a lot of change, at the college level, department and leadership. It’s difficult to find your footing in a place where its constantly changing.”*

***Retention Theme 3 – Tipping point of resilience and tolerance in retention decisions.***

Throughout the conversations, but particularly during responses related to retention, the Black faculty participants either explicitly or implicitly commented on the importance of resilience and tolerance to their decisions to remain at NIU. Some spoke of how their resilience was flagging and that they were at a perceived tipping point.

- *“Years ago, there use to be merit pay....There was a lot more recognition back then and have things that motivated you to stay.”*
- *“At this point I wasn’t to make it to retirement. So, if people leave me alone to do my job, I will be cool.”*
- *“As long as everything is fine, and I have my money I am fine. If something scratches me the wrong way I am gone.”*
- *“It’s a balancing act of balancing the rewarding part with the unrewarding part.”*

A common theme throughout their responses was how the unconscious biases and microaggressions of others influence their perceptions of NIU, the systems in place, and their desire to remain their decisions to remain at NIU.

- *“It’s too late for me the damage is done. I hope the university treats my colleagues better than they did me. If I can see the change in treatment then that can help, but if nothing changes then I won’t.”*

## Recommendations

The following recommendations from this subcommittee are informed by the following components: the charge of the Academic Affairs subcommittee; the timeline given to the FS Ad-Hoc Social Justice Committee and subcommittees; current research and best practice related to HTP; relevant local data and policies; insights from Black faculty focus groups. Additionally, the Presidential Goals informed the key recommendations outlined before – linkages between the recommendations and the Presidential Goals are discussed in each recommendation as well as in table form in Appendix B.

The recommendations represent a starting set of actionable efforts which if enacted would begin reforming NIU's HTP system into an antiracist system which contributes to University goals and social justice at NIU. The HTP system impacts three key domains (as defined in the Institutional Racism Subcommittee) - Policies and Procedures, Personnel Composition, and Personnel Development. However, for sustainable and long-term progress they must be part of a systematic, university wide commitment to transforming all aspects of the institution.

Other themes and challenges which emerged as important will be referred to either a newly formed standing FS Social Justice Committee or to relevant bodies on campus, these included the identified need for systematic mentoring, the opportunity to create awards and incentives for faculty to participate in social justice oriented work, and the need to collect and make available data relevant to efforts to transform the HTP system at NIU.

### **Recommendation 1 – Set measurable goals towards the alignment of faculty diversity with student body diversity**

*Key rationale for this recommendation.*

- *Contribute to success of our students:* As discussed in the DEI subcommittee report, having diversity in the faculty can positively impact student outcomes
- *Help alleviate the overburdening of BIPOC faculty:* Having a more diverse faculty will ensure search committees, Department Personnel Committees, and other committees have diverse representation without overtaxing BIPOC faculty members.

***Recommendation is aligned with Presidential Goals 2B, 2C, 3B, 4A, 4B 6A, 6C.***

***Action Plan.***

- *Responsible body, individual(s):* President, Presidential Commission, The Office of Academic Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI), Faculty Senate, HR
- *What needs to be done:* Recruit, hiring, cluster hiring, retain diverse faculty
- *Target date for enactment:* Ongoing

**Recommendation 2 - Create a unified policy document which addresses faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, aligns each component with the others and with university goals, and embeds equity and social justice principles throughout**

***Key rationale for this recommendation.***

- *Alignment within HTP system* – Creating an aligned system ensures that incentives, rewards and supports across the HTP system are coherent and explicit. Currently, hiring policy exists separately from tenure and promotion policy.
- *Alignment with university goals and mission:* Adding a comprehensive, consistent section at the beginning of the shared policy which lays out the purpose of the HTP system as contributing to NIU's mission will ensure the HTP system is in alignment with university goals and mission. It also ensures that incentives, rewards, and supports are in alignment across the university.

- *Equity and social justice principles embedded throughout:* Adding a section which ties the HTP system to equity and social justice principles ensures the HTP system is designed and enacted in accordance with those principles. Embedding relevant language and examples throughout will further move the HTP system towards rewarding, recognizing and promoting social justice and equity work.
- *Include social justice and equity oriented examples of teaching/librarianship, research and artistry, and service:* Providing examples which are relevant and specific to social justice and equity can help broaden what is counted within each category which are rewarded, incentivized and supported. Examples could include decolonizing curriculum, mentoring of minoritized students, addressing barriers for students, and so on. This will allow relevant work which is currently being done by faculty to be recognized formally while also encouraging new work.

***Recommendation is aligned with Presidential Goals 1A, 1B, 3A, 4A, 4B, 6A, 6C.***

***Action Plan.***

- *Responsible body, individual(s):* Faculty Senate, APPM Updates
- *What needs to be done:* Update FS Bylaws, Communicating with Board of Trustees (BoT)
- *Target date for enactment:* Spring 2022

**Recommendation 3 - Board of Trustees adopt the framing and language used in in the unified HTP Policy document in Board of Trustees' relevant policies**

***Key rationale for this recommendation.***

- *Alignment across the University:* Since the Board of Trustees policy is part of the HTP system, it is imperative that the Board of Trustees adopt consistent language and framing to ensure alignment throughout the HTP system

***Recommendation is aligned with Presidential Goals 1A, 1B, 3A, 4A, 4B, 6A, 6C.***

***Action Plan.***

- *Responsible body, individual(s):* Board of Trustees
- *What needs to be done:* Update BoT Policy
- *Target date for enactment:* Spring/Fall 2022

**Recommendation 4 – Add additional exception to *Policy on Hiring NIU Graduates* if the applicant substantially contributes social justice goals of the department, college or university**

***Key rationale for this recommendation.***

- *Removal of unnecessary barrier:* Currently, policy only allows exemptions based on contributions to quality and/or diversity. By expanding this policy to include exceptions for specific contributions of social justice oriented goals this removes an unnecessary barrier while still keeping the core principles behind the policy –diversity in scholarly perspectives, intellectual vigor, and expertise.

***Recommendation is aligned with Presidential Goals 1A, 1B, 4A, 4B, 6A, 6C.***

***Action Plan.***

- *Responsible body, individual(s):* HR, University Council
- *What needs to be done:* Update APPM
- *Target date for enactment:* Spring 2022

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Focus Group Prompts

#### Hiring related conversation

1. What are the primary reasons you chose to join NIU faculty?
2. How would you describe your experience with hiring here at NIU?
3. What do you think NIU has gotten right or wrong in hiring and what are areas for improvement?

#### Tenure and promotion conversation

4. How would you describe your experience with tenure and promotion here at NIU?
5. What challenges have you faced, heard of related to T&P here at NIU?
6. What do you think are areas for improvement for tenure and promotion at NIU?
7. How do you think current NIU's tenure and promotion system encourages faculty involvement in antiracist and or social justice scholarship, service and/or teaching?
8. What ways do you think tenure and promotion could be improved to reward, support, and encourage faculty to engage with antiracism and social justice activities?

#### Retention conversation

9. What factors are important when you think of remaining or leaving NIU?

## Appendix B. Alignment of Recommendations with Presidential Goals

### 1. EMPOWERMENT AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Goal	Description of goal	Contributions of recommendations to Presidential Goals
1A.	Use expertise available through internal and external partnerships to address our organizational need to align decision-making at all levels with the university's strategic priorities, and to keep both immediate and long-term goals in mind as we respond to complex, rapidly changing circumstances.	<b>Recommendation 2, 3, and 4</b>  Aligning our hiring, tenure and promotion system with the University's strategic priorities
1B.	Continue to identify and revise practices, policies, and procedures that need to be transformed, simplified, or eliminated.	<b>Recommendation 2, 3, and 4</b>  Creating a new HTP policy document would ensure our policies, procedures, and practices related to hiring, tenure and promotion are transformed and simplified with redundant and outdated policies removed.

### 2. STUDENT RECRUITMENT, STUDENT SUCCESS AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Goal	Description of Goal	Contributions of recommendations to Presidential Goals
2A.	Create an NIU specific set of social mobility outcomes data to complement our current narrative-driven approach and include outcomes-related content in promotional materials shared with prospective students and parents, as well as current and prospective employees, partners and donors.	N/A
2B.	Maintain focus on closing gaps in degree attainment for low-income, Black and Latinx students using the institutional strategies, objectives and tactics presented in our <a href="#">SEM plan</a> , <a href="#">SEM Accountability Plan</a> , and <a href="#">ILEA Equity plan</a> , and look for additional ways to support NIU equity goals through participation in a new state-wide collaboration of public and private sector leaders, "The Equity Working Group for Black Student Access and Success in Illinois Higher Education", and implementation of our Higher Learning Commission Quality Improvement Project	<b>Recommendation 1</b>  Diversifying our faculty will contribute to the success of our students by providing more opportunities for mentorship and ensure diverse representation on committees. Evidence suggests having faculty student match can improve student outcomes for all students but particularly underserved students.

	(HLC QIP) which focuses on student success in gateway courses with a special emphasis on underserved students.	
2C.	Initiate a review of the policies and practices that NIU uses to maintain an environment conducive to learning and student engagement, focusing this year on: those used to recognize and allocate resources (including but not limited to funding and space) to student groups and activities; and those used to address academic, residential, student conduct and disciplinary conflicts.	<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>Diversifying our faculty will contribute to the success of our students by providing more opportunities for mentorship and ensure diverse representation on committees. Evidence suggests having faculty student match can improve student outcomes for all students but particularly underserved students.</p>

### 3. ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND CURRICULUM INNOVATION

Goal	Description of goal	Contributions of recommendations to Presidential Goals
3A.	Identify and begin to remove structural barriers that inhibit transdisciplinary scholarship, and discourage curricular innovation and experimentation, appreciating that doing so may also help dismantle systems that contribute to inequitable outcomes for faculty who are Black, indigenous or people of color (BIPOC).	<p><b>Recommendation 2, 3, and 4</b></p> <p>Our work to create anti-racist hiring policy, procedures, and practices will remove barriers in hiring which often serve to reproduce the existing structures and outcomes. Our work will contribute explicitly to the removal of systems in hiring which contribute to inequitable outcomes for faculty who are BIPOC.</p> <p>Our work to create anti-racist tenure and promotion policy, procedures, and practices will encourage innovation and experimentation in novel ways. Our work will contribute explicitly to the removal of systems in tenure and promotion which contribute to inequitable outcomes for faculty who are BIPOC.</p>
3B.	Identify opportunities for strengthening graduate programs and enhancing the graduate student experience.	<p><b>Recommendation 1, 2, 3, and 4</b></p> <p>Contribute to a more diverse faculty, in terms of racial/ethnic diversity as well as disciplinary diversity.</p>
3C.	Leverage lessons learned about course modalities during COVID-19 to position NIU to provide expanded degree opportunities for adult learners and place-bound students and respond to workforce needs of region and state;	N/A

### 4. DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Goal	Description of goal	Contributions of recommendations to Presidential Goals
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4A.	Expand social justice education and training to include anti-racist training, and continue promoting social justice topics and programs that convey NIU's values and support and environment where Huskies can grow, achieve, serve and transform themselves and their communities.	<b>Recommendation 1, 2, 3, and 4</b>  Widen and deepen our bench; incentivize our current faculty to engage in this training AND in focusing on it in their work; include meaningful assessment and reward a social justice disposition, by prioritizing work and experiential activities in the job application and reviews
4B.	Continue our efforts to increase the recruitment, hiring, retention and professional advancement of diverse faculty, staff and administrators.  Specifically, in addition to sustaining and strengthening the recruitment, retention and onboarding practices that we have found to be effective, we will take action to recognize and remove additional barriers that impede the success of NIU employees who are Black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC).	<b>Recommendation 1, 2, 3, and 4</b>  All of the recommendations contribute directly to this presidential goal by setting up an HTP System aligned with these goals, removing unnecessary barriers, and by creating measurable goals and timelines to accomplish these goals.
4C.	Create a new website that not only highlights NIU's diversity, equity and inclusion goals, but also shares our plans and progress. The intent is to enhance transparency and accountability, as well as to provide a place for members of Huskie community to become more engaged in this work.	<b>Recommendation 1, 2, 3, and 4</b>  Add the content on this website in a robust way: a focus on creating anti-racist policy around who is hired, tenured and promoted shows a commitment to making the necessary changes at the core of the institution – faculty.

## 5. RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, ARTISTRY AND ENGAGEMENT

Goal	Description of Goal	Contributions of recommendations to Presidential Goals
5A.	Launch a strategic development team comprised of members from the Divisions of Research and Innovation Partnerships, Outreach, Engagement and Regional Development, and University Advancement to link university expertise, networks and philanthropy and mobilize collective assets to advance institutional research, artistry and engagement priorities.	N/A

## 6. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Goal	Description of Goal	Contributions of recommendations to Presidential Goals
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6A.	NIU will continue to refine and implement a multi-year budget and financial planning process. In recognition of the complex, rapidly changing circumstances associated with the global pandemic, we commit to engaging the Board of Trustees quarterly to communicate the status and progress towards targets, and to communicating transparently with the university community about the financial health of NIU.	<p><b>Recommendation 1, 2, 3, and 4</b></p> <p>Recommendations will require a consistent, ongoing plan to hire diverse faculty and those committed to an anti-racist agenda. This needs to be reflected in our multi-year budgeting and financial planning processes for the changes on paper to pay off. If there are no resources to hire, tenure and promote faculty then no change can be reasonably expected.</p>
6B.	NIU will assess and modify our physical footprint in light of our changing needs and in support of other strategic goals.	N/A
6C.	In partnership with the NIU Foundation, NIU will finalize campaign readiness through activities to ensure the university begins a multi-year fundraising initiative by July 1, 2022.	<p><b>Recommendation 1, 2, 3, and 4</b></p> <p>The recommendations would demonstrate a commitment by our faculty to our institutional goals which can be used in fundraising activities.</p>

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