PAGE 1 – TITLE PAGE

Special Presidential Task Force on Racial Justice
Progress Report for the Board of Trustees
December 9, 2020

Mr. Davede Alexander, Co-Chair
Dr. Mary Grant, Co-Chair
Dr. Caroyln Petrosino, Co-Chair

Dr. Jakari Griffith, Vice Chair
Ms. Samantha Joseph, Vice Chair
Ms. Sydné Marrow, Vice Chair
Ms. Anna Rice, Vice Chair

Ms. Jill Beckwith, Project Manager

PAGE 2 – CONTEXT

A MOMENT OF RECKONING FOR OUR NATION & UNIVERSITY

enduring the rising tide of racial injustice

precipitating events

an affront to BSU values

We are a welcoming, compassionate, and intellectually rigorous learning, working, and living environment.

We reject all forms of bias, discrimination, xenophobia, and violence.

We re-commit ourselves to actions that put into practice our individual and institutional values of diversity, inclusion, and equality for all.

affirmed by the BSU community and approved by the Board of Trustees on December 14, 2015

PAGE 3 – CONTEXT

THE CANDID VOICES OF OUR COMMUNITY

The only words that come out are “I’m tired” – you know what I mean? Tired of explaining, saying why it’s important, why it’s not a black vs. white issue… it feels like we are not allowed to breathe outside of our home. There are no words because it’s inhumane. It’s disbelief. It’s too much.

I want you to believe in me and believe in the words that are coming out of my mouth.
I am talking to you because I want something to change. I love BSU but sometimes I feel like BSU does not love me back.

The stories were told out of love for BSU – and, out of our love for BSU, we need to correct things that are wrong.

We need to be clear to our students that their safety and success matter to us. We need to be very clear that they matter to us.

PAGE 4 – CONTEXT

THE PRESIDENT'S EXPECTATIONS FOR THE BSU COMMUNITY

If any one of us fails to live up to our values, we have all failed.

If any one of us fails to apply urgent action to solving the issues of race that have caused so much pain and suffering, we have all failed.

If any one of us demonstrates hate and ignorance, we have all failed.

PAGE 5 – CONTEXT

THE PRESIDENT'S CALL TO ACTION

Words alone are not enough.

We need to be introspective, to listen, to honestly evaluate how we can do better, and to thoughtfully develop recommendations for an action agenda to make change.

We must do better, and we will do better.

PAGE 6 – CONTEXT

BUILDING A CREDIBLE PROCESS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

inclusive and representative participation

transparent structure

regular update to the broader BSU community

rigorous and objective approach to inquiry

data-driven analysis

honest scrutiny and self-examination

CORE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK

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

What remedies and recommendations for corrective action can we advance?

Questions formulated by Dr. Carolyn Petrosino, Co-Chair

PAGE 8 – TASK FORCE

INTERCONNECTED VALUES TO INSPIRE OUR THINKING

Honesty

Truth

Empathy

Dignity

Unity

Equity

PAGE 9 – TASK FORCE

SIX INDEPENDENT SUBCOMMITTEES WITH A COMMON CHARGE

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

Common Charge:

- Follow a rigorous approach
- Allow core values to guide deliberations
- Work with respect, integrity, and candor
- Identify barriers and strengths
- Remain open to exploring new areas
- Contribute to a more racially equitable BSU community

PAGE 10 – TASK FORCE

TASK FORCE STRUCTURE & SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

President & Provost

RJTF Co-Chairs (3)

RJTF Vice Chairs (4)

Committee 1:

- Subcommittee Co-Chairs (2)
- Subcommittee Members

Committee 2:

- Subcommittee Co-Chairs (2)
- Subcommittee Members

Committee 3:

- Subcommittee Co-Chairs (2)
- Subcommittee Members

Committee 4:

- Subcommittee Co-Chairs (2)
- Subcommittee Members

Committee 5:

- Subcommittee Co-Chairs (2)
- Subcommittee Members

Committee 6

- Subcommittee Co-Chairs (2)
- Subcommittee Members

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REPLACE WITH LIST OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS

PROJECT TIME FRAMES & PHASES

Racial Justice Task Force to Organizational Implementation

RJTF Formed

- Forming the RJTF
  - Listening and learning
  - Gathering existing data

Fall/Winter 2020

- Framing the Inquiry
  - Designating subcommittees
  - Formulating the research question(s)
  - Collecting new data
  - Synthesizing inputs and reaching consensus

Winter/Spring 2021

- Action Planning: Recommendations & Remedies
  - Articulating recommendations and remedies
  - Submitting final report
  - Stakeholder review

Spring/Summer 2021

- Reviewing, Testing & Sustaining
  - Adoption and alignment
  - Assessment and sustainability review

PAGE 13 – TASK FORCE

CATALYZING POSITIVE CHANGE AT BSU

Racial Justice at BSU website: www.bridgew.edu/racial-justice

Renaming of Lewis and Gaines Center for Inclusion and Equity (LGCIE)

Ambitious fundraising in support of equity, inclusion, and Gaines Scholarships

Dedication of 2020-21 academic year to issues of racial justice

Conversations about race with Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum and Dr. Estela Bensimon

Participation of Dr. Tia McNair in the summer MRISJ faculty institute

Re-evaluating all student affairs and enrollment management through the racial justice lens

New viewbook to include BSU equity and justice values

Leading for Change recognized and supported by the Lumina Foundation

PAGE 14 – INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

SOME (VERY PRELIMINARY) INSIGHTS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Curricula & Co-Curricula
Subcommittee 1

Some of what we have learned so far…

There is a lack of antiracist and decolonial content and skills in BSU's Core Curriculum. There is also a lack of of BIPOC perspectives, histories, figures, etc. in the Core, as well as across many departmental/program curricula.

Microaggressions and macroaggressions (by peers, faculty, librarians, staff, administrators, and students) have been expressed in classroom and co-curricular settings.

Some of what has pleasantly surprised us, encouraged us, or we have found rewarding…

There is rich expertise from several members of the faculty, from across the disciplines, as critical race theorists and pedagogical researchers. Their proficiency and willingness to facilitate professional development for colleagues will significantly advance the curricular and co-curricular learning needed for campus-wide change.

Some of what already jumps out at us as needing more work…

We know of some colleagues' experiences anecdotally, but not in a systematic, research-based way. We need organized and reliable information from a broad cross-section of faculty, librarians, and staff about: their personal experiences with racism; curricular and co-curricular designs for racial and social justice; antiracist and decolonial pedagogies and practices; and even resistance to the university's commitment to racial and social justice.

PAGE 15 – INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

SOME (VERY PRELIMINARY) INSIGHTS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

BSU Workforce
Subcommittee 2

Some of what we have learned so far…

23.9% of our faculty and staff are of color; 76.1% are white.

There is a lack of existing university policies that define and set accountability standards for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and mentoring employees of color.

Some of what has pleasantly surprised us, encouraged us, or we have found rewarding…

As evidenced by data collected from several student focus groups, campus forums, and student letters, there is a growing collective consciousness about racial equity issues at BSU.

Some of what already jumps out at us as needing more work…

We need to be more intentional in creating specific accountability policies for divisions, colleges, and departments.

These policies should have measurable outcomes and address the entire employee lifecycle.

PAGE 16 – INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

SOME (VERY PRELIMINARY) INSIGHTS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

Some of what we have learned so far…

There has been no shortage of topical events offered on campus over the past five years.

The focus of these events, however, has been too diffuse and centered on general themes such as diversity, white privilege, race, harassment, abuse of power, discrimination, sexual orientation, immigration, and racial justice.

Some of what has pleasantly surprised us, encouraged us, or we have found rewarding…

BSU's calendar is crowded with campus-wide training events offered through various departments and organizations.

Our faculty and staff are wanting these trainings, though students sometimes need incentives to participate (e.g. extra credit).

Some of what already jumps out at us as needing more work…

We need to be more intentional in creating specific accountability policies for divisions, colleges, and departments.

We need to find new ways to better engage those who are not regularly attending and encourage/incentivize their participation.

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SOME (VERY PRELIMINARY) INSIGHTS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Investing in and Supporting Students
Subcommittee 4

Some of what we have learned so far…

The data appear to indicate a widespread lack of attention paid to the unique strengths, cultural capital, perspectives, needs, and stresses of students of color.

University departments may be engaged in universalism, in which a one-size-fits-all service and support system privileges white students to the disadvantage (or even harm) of students of color.

Some of what has pleasantly surprised us, encouraged us, or we have found rewarding…

Overall commitment to the subcommittee's work has been extraordinary. Students, in particular, are sharing their experiences and engaged in critical analysis of the data with deep thoughtfulness, integrity, honesty, and love for BSU.

Faculty and staff participants have been candid and non-defensive in identifying areas in need of additional study or improvement.

Some of what already jumps out at us as needing more work…

More focus is needed at the level of individual departments to better understand the unique challenges and opportunities they face in offering racially just student services.

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SOME (VERY PRELIMINARY) INSIGHTS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Police and Public Safety
Subcommittee 5

Some of what we have learned so far…

With the exception of one road for traffic stops, BSU Police share on-campus patrol jurisdiction with their Town of Bridgewater counterparts. Unlike BSUPD, the Town of Bridgewater does not keep traffic-stop data based on demographics. This complicates our ability to assess the fuller picture.

We need more granular student conduct data to assess whether there are underlying racial disparities with respect to reporting and discipline outcomes.

Some of what has pleasantly surprised us, encouraged us, or we have found rewarding…

The BSU Police Department is generally regarded as a model police force and has an existing working relationship with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

BSU Police and the ACLU have partnered to address issues of equity and inclusion.

Some of what already jumps out at us as needing more work…

We need a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between positive/negative student experiences and retention/recruitment as it pertains to students of color.

PAGE 19 – INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

SOME (VERY PRELIMINARY) INSIGHTS AND FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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

Some of what we have learned so far…

There is no single go-to place for students, faculty, or staff to address racial justice issues. Though students and employees have multiple pathways for support, the absence of a strong, integrated structure may present inherent challenges.

Some of what has pleasantly surprised us, encouraged us, or we have found rewarding…

BSU already offers an abundance of support services for specific types of problems and disputes.

Some of what already jumps out at us as needing more work…

In addition to the data we are currently collecting about our campus, we need to research what other institutions (both peer and aspirant) have done to build a more integrated structure and offer a single place/space to address issues of racial justice.

PAGE 20 – NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

Remaining fully engaged through the break

Ramping up progress in the spring semester

Delivering a final report at the end of March

Ensuring the work is ongoing/sustainable and becomes parts of BSU's culture

"Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."
(James Baldwin