

President's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion, Barnard College February 15, 2017

Recommendations

After one year of discussion, consultation and analysis of historical and more recent data and reports, the President's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion has identified three action areas that we believe have the potential to transform the College into a more representative, inclusive, and equitable campus. To be a truly excellent and leading liberal arts college we must:

- Develop and implement organizational structures and practices that promote diversity, inclusion and equity across the College (structural changes);
- Build an inclusive campus-wide culture and community that is based on shared principles of representation, inclusion, and social justice (community-building and climate); and
- Institutionalize structures of accountability at every level in order to ensure constant, sustained, and effective systemic change (assessment and accountability).

Within these three broad objectives, the Task Force has identified ten specific proposals that, when implemented together, will have the highest impact on changing the institution.

Structural Changes

Create a position for a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) with a campus-wide and community-focused mandate. An experienced CDO will prioritize and focus on diversity and inclusion initiatives and institutional continuity over time; re-conceptualize diversity and inclusion as a strength/priority; institute a leadership and accountability structure for Barnard's diversity mission; and provide necessary expertise in managing change relative to diversity and inclusion. The CDO will lead a collaborative team comprised of staff and faculty who are already working on diversity and inclusion across the campus, along with others whose work is relevant to this aspect of the College's mission. A newly established Diversity Council that represents all campus constituencies will serve in an advisory capacity. Creating this role signals importance of diversity and inclusion to the entire Barnard community, including students, alumnae, faculty, administrators, and staff.

Create a fund for a "Center for Academic Success and Excellence" to extend Academic Success and Enrichment Programs (ASEP) services to all students who qualify. Barnard's enrichment programs provide opportunities for enhancing the intellectual life of our students, with a particular focus on students of color, first generation and low-income students. Our success in recruiting an increasingly diverse student body means that ASEP services are in high demand but reach only a fraction of the students who would benefit from them due to restrictive state eligibility requirements. By centralizing existing and creating new programs and services, the Center for Academic Success and Excellence will enable the College to focus more effectively on support and retention for this student population in particular, but in ways that have the potential to benefit all students. Examples of initiatives that can have a wide impact

include: extending the summer bridge program; enhancing training for, and the availability of, tutoring and other academic supports; establishing school-wide or department-specific lending libraries; creating a clearing house for academic supplies; and creating best practices for departments or individual professors in textbook management. This Center will also benefit the campus as a whole, as faculty and staff work together to build their competencies and skills to better serve students whose success at Barnard may require targeted support.

Hire 10 new faculty members from underrepresented groups in five years. In the past decade, Barnard has taken steps to increase the number of faculty of color, including a transformative cluster hire in Africana Gender Studies in 2010. Current data from Barnard's Office of Institutional Assessment, however, show that only 21% (of 145) tenure-line faculty are Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian American, compared with 37% of our students. We also have very few faculty with disabilities or faculty who are first generation college students. Given the demonstrated benefits of diverse student bodies and diverse faculties (e.g., better learning outcomes and campus climate, enhanced support for underrepresented students and faculty) we propose using a combination of new and existing tenure track lines to recruit junior and senior scholars who will contribute to the excellence of our faculty. Departments will be given the opportunity to propose targeted searches and small multidisciplinary cluster hires that take into account historical patterns of underrepresentation in their departments and in their disciplines.

Climate and Community Building

Provide resources and opportunities for campus-wide inclusion and equity workshops for faculty, students, administrators, and staff. Promoting educational workshops around inclusion and equity create a shared understanding of the distinctive challenges facing core constituencies, especially those from historically underrepresented groups; and focus on developing cultural competence with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, class, disability, sexuality, religion, and intersectionality. Students, faculty, administrators and staff will be expected to participate in order to create a community focus on diversity topics relevant to all at Barnard.

Establish a space in the new Teaching and Learning Center focused on the "Inclusive Classroom." Create a clearinghouse and support for faculty to comprehensively practice diversity and inclusion in both the content and form of their teaching, through workshops, individual consultations, and resources for the development of syllabi and new courses, especially those that contribute to the new curriculum and represent innovative cross-campus learning initiatives. The premier liberal arts college for women in NYC should be a leader in this, especially given research on differential experiences of women and people of color in classrooms.

Promote active engagement with the history of Barnard College. Create a one-semester course, phased in over five years, on Barnard history. Functioning as a Barnard "core" and creating inclusion through a common intellectual experience, this course allows Barnard students and faculty to investigate the founding of the college and experiences of women, people of color, low-income students, international students, LGTBQA people, and those with disabilities in and around Barnard's campus. Simultaneously offering an institutional history of the politics of

women-only education, a history of the college in the city and in the world, the course will investigate how Barnard's history has both driven and responded to signal moments in American history and the history of feminism. The course could be phased in by creating a series of programs (a lecture series, a proseminar, First-Year seminar) that analyze milestones in Barnard's history and alumnae who have created change (Annie Nathan Meyer, Zora Neale Hurston, Grace Lee Boggs, Erica Jong, Edwidge Danticat, etc.).

Establish regular campus-wide events dedicated to diversity activities each academic year. A core concern identified by the Task Force is the relative lack of community and collective commitment to diversity and inclusion at Barnard within and across groups of students, faculty and staff. While acknowledging the barriers to bringing us together, we recommend that two thematically connected events be organized each year, including an annual "Grace Lee Boggs Lecture" and a cultural event, that are accessible to all members of the community. Such initiatives create a true community-wide conversation about the value of diversity and will promote a sense of community and cohesion among all members of Barnard community.

Accountability and Assessment

Require every administrative office, academic department, and campus service, to create, communicate and implement plans for increasing diversity and inclusion. Any significant change in the structure and culture of the College requires broad based participation. The introduction of diversity and inclusion plans that take the specific needs of each unit into account is necessary for the changes we advocate to be successful. All staff and faculty across the College will be held responsible for ensuring implementation and participation.

Commission a baseline institutional climate study with semi-annual follow-up assessments. Over the past decade, there have been a number of efforts to assess the College's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and to better understand the experiences of underrepresented students, faculty, and staff. As valuable as they have been, such assessments have tended to be *ad hoc* and limited to specific groups (e.g., faculty, first generation students, support staff). A baseline evaluation of the institutional structure and climate of the College is necessary—both to insure that we understand where and how we need to improve and to measure that improvement over time in meaningful ways.

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Diversity, inclusion and equity need to be centered in every aspect of our institutional mission and practice. Our recommendations represent a starting point for that timely and ambitious project. The only way to move forward is with strong presidential leadership, involvement of all members of the President's senior team, and endorsement by the Board of Trustees. Importantly, the success of this mission requires the re-allocation of existing, and cultivation of new, financial and human resources. To this end, the final recommendation of the Task Force is:

Prioritize the College's diversity, inclusion and equity mission in the remainder of the capital campaign and launch a next stage targeted fundraising effort.

Submitted by the Members of the President's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion

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