

From: Provost <provost@scranton.edu>

Subject: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Campus Update

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Dear Scranton Community:

Welcome to the 2021-2022 academic year. There is definitely a sense of excitement in the air as we move into the semester and we are excited to be back in person again!

Our approach to a successful, safe and healthy start to the fall semester starts with the University's "Royals Back Together" Plan, and also includes our continued commitment to creating an inclusive campus for all. Over the summer, staff, faculty and administrators continued to make progress on action to combat racism and ensure equality at the University. We wanted to provide an update. While we are encouraged with the significant progress all of us have made, we know this is a long journey and we still have much to do this year.

Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan:

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Team, under the leadership of Kathryn Yerkes, Assistant Provost for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness, and Elizabeth M. Garcia, Esq., Special Assistant to the President, Executive Director for the Office of Equity and Diversity, and Title IX Coordinator, is completing a draft of the Plan to share with campus. By mid-September 2021, the draft Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan will be shared with Cabinet, Senate groups, and other key constituencies. Later in the Fall, the plan will be presented in open forums for additional feedback from the campus community.

Faculty Hires

As announced last year, the University approved four faculty searches that the History, English, Psychology and Theology departments proposed to increase racial diversity at the University. Two of the four searches (English and Theology) were successfully

completed last year. We will work with the remaining two departments to relaunch their searches this fall and are confident that they will result in exceptional faculty hires.

Diversity Hire Workgroup

Late last Spring, the diversity hiring workgroup – George Aulisio, Lori Bruch, Elizabeth Garcia, Jeff Gingerich, Christie Karpiak, Michelle Maldonado, Nabil Tamimi and Patricia Tetreault – completed a guide for diversity hiring. The workgroup obtained feedback from the Departments involved in the cluster hire in finalizing the guidebook to be used by faculty search committees.

The Council for Diversity and Inclusion

- The Council for Diversity and Inclusion oversaw the implementation of the HEDS Diversity and Inclusion Needs Assessment. A faculty subcommittee (Peter Andersen, Jessica Nolan, and Paul Datti) is currently working on analyzing the results of the survey. The results will help inform the Council and the University in their work.
- Over the summer, another Council Subcommittee (Christine Black, Jeffrey Colucci '21, Tara Fay, Elizabeth Garcia, and Maria Marinucci) completed curriculum for a Race and Ethnicity Awareness Workshop. Anyone interested in receiving the training may contact Liz Garcia or Maria Mariucci for more information. This is recommended for departments to do together.
- The Faculty Development Council Subcommittee (Faculty: Peter Andersen, Paul Datti, Tara Fay, Jean Harris and Jessica Nolan. Administrators: Elizabeth Garcia, Jeff Gingerich, Michelle Maldonado, and Amy Simolo) will start meeting again this Fall to continue to discuss plans for strategic and effective faculty development for diversity, inclusion and anti-racism. Our goal is to develop a plan for faculty development that will be the most effective and impactful to educate our faculty and to serve all of our students.

- The Subcommittee (Peter Andersen, Julie Schumacher Cohen, David Dzurec, Adam Pratt, Aiala Levy, Ian O’Hara, Colleen Farry, Michelle Maldonado and Elizabeth Garcia) examining the University’s historical relationships with Indigenous, Black, Brown, LGBTQ+, and other underrepresented groups is working with the Digital History, History 190 class to research the University archives as the first step in its work.

Student Orientation and Early Arrival Program

- The Office of Student Life facilitated a session for all incoming students that focused on community, University expectations, and diversity and inclusion and educates students about micro-aggressions as part of every Summer Orientation session.
- Student Life implemented ROCK—Royals of Color Kickoff—as an early arrival program for new students of color, providing an opportunity for students to come to campus the Thursday prior to first-year move in to connect with peers, upper-division mentors, and campus and local resources to support social network development, community-building, and campus and local-area connection.

STEM Diversity Training

The Biology Department’s Diversity & Equity in Hiring committee invited Dr. Emma Coddington to present a workshop for diversity and cultural competence in October. Dr. Coddington will discuss the biological basis and consequences of racism and implicit bias in science, technology, and math (STEM). This presentation will range as participants learn to identify their own implicit bias(es) and understand how biases can also be institutional, structural, and systemic.

Lunch and Learn

The Office of Equity and Diversity will continue offering the DEI Lunch and Learn “*Formula for Success: D+I= A Better U!*” series. On September 29, 2021, Dr. Abhijit Roy will present on the importance of Diversity and Inclusion in the business via zoom.

NEH Grant

The University of Scranton and community partners received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the project, “Scranton’s Story, Our Nation’s Story.” The 2-year series of humanities-based lectures, discussions, dialogues, tours, workshops and oral histories explores the aspirational journey to fulfill our national ideals through the lens of Scranton, Pennsylvania, including industrial era growth and historic immigration as well as under-represented stories of Indigenous experience, Black history, and recent immigrants and refugees.

We look forward to a successful semester and we encourage continued communication, understanding and solidarity as we continue to advance the University’s efforts to remain accessible and welcoming to everyone.

Sincerely,

Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D.
Provost & Sr. Vice-President for Academic Affairs

Elizabeth M. Garcia, Esq.
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Executive Director for the Office of
Equity and Diversity, and Title IX Coordinator