

July 30, 2020

Dear President Simon, Provost Urban, Vice President Outing, Faculty Senate Chair Iovine:

The ADVANCE Center for Women STEM Faculty, one of the equity-minded change leaders on campus for the last 9.5 years, recognizes that equity for women in STEM is bound with and strengthened by a truly intersectional approach which aligns with numerous [recommendations](#) to take [meaningful steps](#) to uphold the truth that Black Lives Matter.

Lehigh's own [faculty, students, staff](#) and [alumni](#) have provided a roadmap of sorts, defining real, tangible actions and strategies to make Lehigh anti-racist in its culture, climate, and operations. We also wish to highlight that the pandemic has exacerbated inequities, and evidence [suggests women](#), especially women of color and caregivers, are already [falling behind](#) colleagues with majority identities. The goals announced to the campus community ([here](#) and by the Senate email¹) necessarily call on the work of ADVANCE (alongside others) to activate the roadmap and keep equity at the core of the university community. Therefore, we recommend below a list of low-hanging fruit, congruent with the [latest advice](#), to operationalize mechanisms for change to make the post-pandemic phase more equitable for all. Norms follow power, and we hope that senior leadership models the cultural norms and procedural expectations to create institutional progress. ADVANCE looks forward to being partners in many of the upcoming changes to help transform Lehigh towards an inclusive, equitable community in the spirit of our [highest principles](#).

ADVANCE recommends the following capacity-ready, high impact, immediate actions:

- **RESCIND** Donald Trump's Honorary Degree: women in STEM do not support keeping honors for people who disrespect Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); white women; or people with disabilities; doing so is antithetical to Lehigh University's stated [Principles](#).
- **DIVERSIFY TRUSTEES** and college advisory boards: our decision makers should have access to advice and ideas from thought leaders of a wider range of identities and experiences (including those with racial equity/culture change expertise) who support the commitments to an anti-racist University.
- **MAKE EQUITY-MINDED DECISIONS**: All decisions addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic (and beyond) should have an *equity impact analysis and statement*^{2,3} (similar to fiscal or environmental impact statements), shared to the campus community for transparency, accountability, and trust.
- **MANDATE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT**: A professional development curriculum should prioritize items below and suitably leverage existing ADVANCE/ODI&E/CITL/HR offerings to build competency on being anti-racist, reducing the negative impacts of bias, valuing difference, hiring and promoting more Black faculty, etc.
 - **HIRING**: Best practices for recruiting an excellent and diverse faculty workshop(s) are already offered multiple times each Fall, and RCEAS began requiring attendance in 2019; one should not be permitted serve on a hiring committee if they have not attended one of these workshops within the past three years
 - **EVALUATION**: Best practices for evaluating faculty for promotion and tenure committees workshop (content readily available to implement); members of tenure and promotion committees should be required to attend this workshop a minimum of once every three years.
 - **TEACHING**: Teaching for Inclusive Excellence workshop (for faculty and teaching assistants). This workshop is offered each January and is scalable to serve a larger audience.
 - **LEADERSHIP**: Inclusive, anti-racist leadership workshops (managing meetings, addressing conflict, mentoring across difference, cultivating future leaders, etc.) should be required for department chairs, center directors, deans, and others in formal administrative roles; select leaders with this competency
- **CREATE ACCOUNTABILITY for EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (ED&I) COMPETENCY**: promotion, tenure and other reviews of faculty and leadership should consider demonstrable competency and growth in establishing and advancing equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racist goals.
 - Faculty and leadership searches which lack racial and ethnic diversity should not be permitted to proceed.
 - Faculty hiring evaluation should include criteria to contribute to anti-racist, inclusive excellence at Lehigh.
 - R&P should be changed to value and document competency and contributions to ED&I
 - Performance and annual reviews should account for effort allocation, job accountabilities, and suitably recognize inclusive teaching mentorship and invisible service, as well as scholarship and teaching.

- The (developing) Faculty Code of Ethics¹, alongside the Principles of our Equitable Community, should be utilized as tools for norm-setting and defining contextually meaningful actions to take if individuals or units are not demonstrating these competencies.

Other strategies to consider in support of BIPOC and white women faculty include:

- Post-pandemic bridge funding and re-entry pathways for scholars who are unable to sustain their graduate students and research and need support to keep a level playing field (e.g., generate preliminary data) when they are able to resume research and compete within the already biased grant-making processes (some funding has been cut outright).
- Update work-life policies and benefits (travel, caregiving, family building, and lactation) to enable all scholars to advance their careers through all their life stages; this supports retention of diverse faculty.
- Implement the recommendations to prevent sexual harassment in all its forms, including a priority focus on diffusing hierarchical and dependent relationships between trainees and faculty (move towards centralized or independent grad student funding, and away from faculty-centered funding to address power imbalances and risks, including bullying and harassment; (NASEM, 2018))
- Establish sustainable support for BIPOC and white women to attend and experience premier external leadership and professional development/academic coaching programs such as ELATE at Drexel, HERS, ACE, NCFDD, independent coaches, etc. (supports retention and advancement).
- Multi-year department level strategic plans with ED&I and hiring, faculty workload, and climate benchmarks and assessments.
- Invest in strategic hiring initiatives that don't tokenize BIPOC and white women candidates or hires; establish a postdoc-to-faculty training experience to cultivate our own diverse faculty pool; strengthen dual career infrastructure.
- Strengthen academic programs and departments which focus on systemic social inequalities by making permanent, sustainable, visible financial support for their scholars and work
- Develop an ED&I-focused comprehensive communications strategy that includes: attending to behaviors by alumni which run against the principles of our equitable community; using consistent language to describe historically excluded groups of people (ex: not using "diversity hire" or "vulnerable group" or "underrepresented minority"); and including highest honorific on mailings and salutations to employees and donors alike, and sending mailings to the individual, not their spouse.

We appreciate your consideration of these suggestions and would be happy to meet to discuss questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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ADVANCE Director

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ADVANCE Faculty Director
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¹ From the Faculty Senate Email:

- Creating a Faculty Code of Conduct to ensure that all faculty adhere and support the values that we espouse and aspire to achieve.
- To include Diversity and Inclusiveness criteria as components of our Tenure and Promotion process.
- To work with, and hold accountable, the Administration and Sr. Leadership to provide tangible support for all vulnerable groups on campus, to educate members of the campus on historical and existing racial and ethnic inequities, and to diversify hiring at all levels.
- To work with the broader faculty, students, and staff on programs, curricula, and opportunities to turn our words into action for real and measurable change.

² <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/racial-equity-impact-assessment-toolkit>

³ <https://neaedjustice.org/social-justice-issues/racial-justice/racial-equity-impact-assessments/>