



Happy New Year and welcome to the spring term. This issue continues the series on how we are moving ahead on the priorities I set as dean, and highlights several initiatives aimed at **Creating a More Diverse and Inclusive Environment.** Here are a few of these efforts.

Diversity & Inclusion Review:

To move ahead on creating a more diverse and inclusive environment

across the School, we are initiating a review of what we are doing – and what we could be doing better – in the areas of diversity and inclusion in the Dietrich School. To my knowledge, we have never been “normed” against any other university in this area, and I am convinced that we can benefit from the thoughtful scrutiny and suggestions of colleagues who have successful track records of institutional transformation either at peer institutions or within the University of Pittsburgh.

To ensure that the review is comprehensive and transparent, and that it is integrated into our school’s governance structure, I will ask the Dietrich School Council to appoint a task force to consider the makeup of the review panel and prepare recommendations for the issues and questions that we want our reviewers to address. Their work will include seeking input from the DS faculty, staff, and student diversity committees and other interested members of the DS community, so please send your ideas and suggestions to dsdean@pitt.edu. We will then develop a set of questions and expectations for the reviewers, prepare a self-study with the data and materials that reviewers will need, and contact reviewers with the intention of hosting a review early in the fall term of 2018.

Implicit Bias Training:

We know how implicit bias can significantly reduce our ability to conduct fair and effective job searches, which is why we’ve started offering implicit bias training to all faculty and staff who hire and supervise others. We’re now looking to expand that training to staff in student service roles to help them be aware of biases that may influence their work with students.

Support for Underrepresented Undergraduates:

Within our Undergraduate Studies unit, two programs specifically target underrepresented minority and/or economically disadvantaged students:

Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded TRIO program that provides academic, social, and cultural support to first generation (defined as parents or guardian not graduating from a four-year institution) and/or low-income college students. Eligible students from across the University may participate in SSS and take advantage of the individual advising, personal coaching, peer mentoring, study skills sessions, and tutoring that the program offers.

BRIDGES—part of our Office of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity (OUR)—is a program exclusively for underrepresented scholarship recipients. Each BRIDGES participant is invited to pursue unique leadership opportunities, partner with a peer mentor who serves as a personal guide to the University and its many resources, and participate in a pre-orientation retreat weekend that helps to ensure that incoming first year members have a strong peer community in place even before they take their first course. Because BRIDGES is part of OUR, BRIDGES students are particularly encouraged to participate in at least one undergraduate research experience.

Graduate Student Diversity Efforts:

Only 7.4% of our graduate students self-identify as members of underrepresented minority groups. We’re committed to not only increasing the number of underrepresented minority applicants, admits, and matriculated students, but also to increasing the retention and reducing attrition of our current underrepresented minority students. Two areas most in need of our attention are increasing recruiting resources and further diversifying our faculty to model our belief that diversity makes us stronger.

We have reconfigured the existing Dietrich School postdoctoral fellowships into Dietrich School Diversity Postdoctoral Fellowships—five, two-year positions expressly focused on the purpose of enhancing diversity among the School’s research and instructional ranks, and among faculty in the nation’s educational landscape. Learn more about the new fellowships here: <https://as.pitt.edu/dietrich-school-diversity-postdoctoral-fellowships>

Last spring the Dietrich School Graduate Student Organization (ASGSO) conducted a diversity climate survey that revealed both the concerns of our graduate students as well as the incredible level of energy and commitment they have for issues related to making the Dietrich School a more welcoming place.

Surveyed students indicated a strong interest in having access to professional development training on topics including Title IX, microaggressions, bias incidents, and harassment. To that end, ASGSO representatives are working with the University's Title IX and Diversity and Inclusion offices to develop enhanced training and programming. The ASGSO is also creating a Student Diversity Committee and alliance groups. Holger Hoock, our Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, meets regularly with students about how best to support this important work.

Faculty Diversity:

At the end of last term, Associate Professor Yolanda Covington-Ward accepted an invitation from Kay Brummond, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, to co-chair the Faculty Diversity Committee. The committee will begin meeting this term and will be scheduling a joint meeting with the members of the Staff Diversity Committee later in the spring.

Based in part on the recommendation of the Faculty Diversity Committee, the University is working to provide institutional access to mentoring resources offered through the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (www.facultydiversity.org).

At the dean's level, we are discussing whether to adopt a practice that is already in place at institutions such as Carnegie-Mellon University and the University of California system that requires candidates for faculty positions to submit a personal statement summarizing their contributions (or potential contributions) to diversity and inclusion. This has the potential to both illustrate to external applicants the emphasis that we place on the value of diversity, and provide hiring committees and department chairs with a significant new metric to consider in evaluating candidates. We'll provide additional information in the weeks ahead.

Staff Diversity:

Last spring, the Dean's Office conducted a staff diversity climate survey, followed by a series of workshops in which staff were invited to learn about the results of the survey and share their ideas for how to improve the Dietrich School's working environment. In response to some of those suggestions, we launched the Dietrich School Staff Development Series, a selection of workshops on topics including working with nontraditional students, allies training, identifying microaggressions, and bridging the gap between generations in the workplace. Among the workshops is a series on "Hiring New Staff" that addresses—among other topics—identifying bias throughout the hiring process as part of our overall effort to increase staff diversity at all levels.

The Open Door Project:

The Open Door Project continues to offer timely and thought-provoking programming to faculty, staff, and students, including recent sessions on making our campus a more welcoming place for student veterans and increasing awareness and understanding of hidden disabilities. On January 24, the Open Door Project—in cooperation with the University Library System and the Student Support Services program—will present an interactive session about creating a stronger safety net for our economically disadvantaged students. Learn more here: <http://opendoor.pitt.edu/>