

TASK FORCE ON INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE

Report and Recommendations

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OVERVIEW

Understanding the importance of establishing campus cultures that lead to healthy, effective learning and working environments the University of Louisiana System has set forth many initiatives designed to initiate brave discussions and engagement, drive actions, and facilitate cultural changes around equity, diversity, and inclusion. The UL System considers its role imperative in facilitating inclusive excellence practices that result in every individual being valued, respected, and treated with dignity. The intent is to inform continuous efforts to create inclusive campus climates, better understand and address challenges, build, cultivate, and support a diverse student body and workforce, enhance town-gown relations, and prepare community members for active participation in a global world. The UL System is committed to translating that intent into actions that will identify systemic inequities, eliminate barriers, and sustain environments and practices that allow all individuals full access to success.

In March 2018 the UL System hosted an event for campus representatives entitled *Ensuring a Healthy & Productive Workplace* which was facilitated by Postlethwaite & Netterville. At the conclusion of the event Dr. Jim Henderson, President and CEO, UL System, announced the formation of the Task Force on Inclusion in the Workplace. Specifically, the charge of the Task Force was to: *Evaluate how the University of Louisiana System and its respective campuses implement policies designed to encourage inclusion and respect for diversity among our students, employees, and constituents.* In addressing this challenge, the Task Force conducted an environmental scan of existing policies; sought input from several campus personnel, including human resource directors, athletics directors, provosts, facility services directors, and senior women administrators; and examined a recent actual reported incident related to claims of discrimination. Over the course of nine months the Task Force evaluated and integrated all of the information; deliberated on its implications to our System; and engaged in a courageous conversation about how to best deliver on the UL System's commitment to providing inclusive academic communities. That conversation and the resulting

recommendations illustrate the inherent nature of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the UL System Strategic Framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, organized into four focus areas, contribute to combining greater awareness, increased knowledge, and enhanced technical skills into a practice of incorporating attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, values, and mission-driven policies across the UL System and institutions that are consistent with ethical ideals of respect and inclusion juxtaposed in our strategic framework. Furthermore, such practice provide opportunities for increased creativity in problem-solving and innovation, increased civility, and more effective and impactful System and institutional outcomes.

Cultural Competence

There are serious consequences to bias, discrimination, and hateful incidences in the workplace both on individuals and on the organization. Bias (implicit and explicit) itself may be imperceptible such as in the form of micro aggressions or practices built into long standing policies with harmful unintended consequences. Similarly, the impact might not be immediately visible but has a cumulative effect on individuals' performance, productivity, and health and well-being. Cultural competence is typically and broadly defined as possessing awareness, knowledge, and understanding of skills; and the ability to interact effectively with people from different "groups" or "cultures" (i.e. ethnicity, race, sex, gender identity/expression, geography, religion, language, etc.). A review of collected information yielded concerns about subtle forms of bias embedded in existing policies, practices, and communication on all levels. Building cultural competence in the UL System workplace is not a box to check or statistic to be reached, but an ongoing process and characteristic of daily existence. Simply put, practices must be invested in and skill sets must be developed that move through awareness, embracing, and fully interacting with all individuals in meaningful and productive ways. The following recommendations are imperative in addressing some of the most pressing concerns.

1. Include women, ethnic minorities, and other historically underrepresented populations in the complete talent management cycle:
 - a. Provide formal and informal mentoring;

- b. Support employee engagement and culturally relevant resource/affinity/network groups;
 - c. Utilize best practices of representation at all levels of decision-making; and
 - d. Providing meaningful professional and leadership development.
2. Expect leaders to model language that is representative and promotes respect, equity, and equal access to all institutional programs, services and activities in all official oral and written communications:
 - a. Eliminate gendered and culturally exclusive language;
 - b. Prohibit disrespectful names, identifiers, and stereotypes;
 - c. Provide leadership development on how to use inclusive and valuing language; and
 - d. Create an inclusive communication consultation team such that a cadre of subject matter experts might be utilized for broad reaching documentation/speech review, proofing, and copy-editing.
3. Conduct systematic and thorough salary analyses that considers:
 - a. All variables including gender, ethnicity, age, work load, educational level, historical inequities, role expectations, etc.
 - b. Possible implicit biased practices in departments/fields that are typically majority women.
4. Develop and implement progressive “family-friendly” policies that benefit everyone and with a keen eye, reduce negative impact on women, single individuals, and other underrepresented populations:
 - a. Re-envisioned parental leave policies;
 - b. Evaluation processes/protocols that respect boundaries and eliminate overt or covert criteria correlating working longer hours to higher ratings/advancement; and
 - c. Assess adequate facilities offerings such as lactation rooms, appropriate restroom facilities, quiet spaces/prayer rooms, child care/elder care facilities.
5. Hiring/Engaging executive leadership that is culturally competent and models the expected way of being:
 - a. Utilize diverse and inclusive shared governance;
 - b. Embrace and expect inclusion in letter and spirit;

- c. Capable of addressing complex and controversial diversity issues on each campus; and
 - d. Reinforce productivity and recognizes the benefits of diverse and inclusive groups.
6. Create and implement specific protocols and procedures that inform, instruct, and support those who have been impacted by bias, discrimination, and hateful acts:
- a. Create a bias response protocol that may include (but not limited to) a hateful incident report form, anonymous electronic reporting portal (i.e., EthicsPoint) and/or whistleblower hotline.
 - b. Create and empower a bias response action team to review, consult, and offer recommendations on how to respond to bias incidences.

Recruiting, Hiring & Retaining

The numerous and validated benefits and outcomes of a diverse workplace are clearly documented: increased creativity, innovation and opportunity, improved employee engagement and performance, growth and the development in the talent pool, etc. Overall, diversity improves the reputation of an institution and creates a more robust and dynamic environment. As the Task Force collected information regarding HR processes, it was noted that most institutions in the UL System face challenges with position searches and hires. The challenges are problematic across the board but appear to be enhanced when trying to achieve diversity in the workplace. Institutions must be willing to make an investment in both current and future employees; their workforce is an investment in the health and success of the institution. The action items noted should be explored to widen the applicant pool and achieve staying power for current employees.

1. Analyze the possibility of a shared applicant pool among the nine member institutions; consent for sharing would be required of the applicant.
2. Provide training for search committees to raise awareness of search policies, existing resources for identifying potential candidates, and potential unconscious bias in the search process.

3. Examine the capability of the UL System Office to provide financial assistance to enhance innovative sourcing methods that would produce more diverse candidates in the pipeline (i.e., job postings in major publications; this would allow for postings to reach a wider audience).
4. Increased learning, understanding, and expectations of cultural competence of all hires.
5. Enhanced flexibility in workplace policies and practices (i.e., remote work arrangements and telecommuting, staggered start times for employees, flexible schedules, etc.).
6. Invest in employee health and wellness benefits:
 - a. Redouble efforts on focused attention to increasing education and awareness of health and wellness programs offered (i.e., employee assistance programs, campus resources, etc.);
 - b. Consider having periods of time where employees can use institution's health and recreation facilities at no cost;
 - c. Invest in ergonomically designed work equipment (i.e., standing desk at employee work stations); and
 - d. Work with community partners for other incentives.
7. Accommodate all cultural and religious holidays.
8. Establish a formal and robust on-boarding process and mentoring program for new employees.
9. Revise all policies, procedures, and other HR forms and documents to include gender-inclusive language.
10. Consider the possibility of onsite child care and elder care facilities to provide support for students, faculty, and staff.

Professional Development & Leadership Training

Education, skill, and leadership development are critical to achieving the UL System's highest priority and commitment to enhancing equity, diversity, and inclusion. Supporting ongoing efforts to provide

continuous education, leadership and development training, and programmatic activities will allow for a university community to foster an environment that respects the individual, promotes innovation, and offers opportunities for all employees to develop to their full potential. The following are recommendations specific to continuous professional development and leadership training at the campus level.

1. Provide a mandatory leadership training program for those in supervisory roles to include:
 - a. Overview of campus policies, procedures, and resources;
 - b. Education regarding bias, harassment, discrimination and cultural competence;
 - c. Information on federal and State Civil Rights and Civil Service laws; and
 - d. Effective communication and crucial conversations strategies.
2. Establish a system wide repository of content and subject-matter experts in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion from which the nine member institutions can draw for consultation, regional and national media assistance, and campus programming.
3. Make diversity a clear priority by not only weaving it into training programs but also into departmental accountability and the supervisory evaluation process.

Athletics

Athletics is a particularly special component of each of our nine member institutions; it contributes to enhancing branding, more robust recruiting opportunities, school spirit and tradition, and financial support in a manner that is unequalled. Deeply steeped in traditions and culture, athletic events engender nostalgic feelings that keep alumni and supporters filled with pride about their alma mater. However, some past practices are viewed as barriers to improving participation among women, ethnic minorities, and other historically underrepresented populations especially in the area of athletics administration and coaching. Some challenges are simpler to address such as recognizing that search firms without a proven track record of delivering on a diverse slate of candidates may not be the best method of obtaining a diverse applicant pool. Other challenges are much more difficult and complex in which to deal and solve such as reinforcing to supporters and donors the notion that women's sports are truly equal to their male counterparts.

The list below includes recommendations that athletic departments should consider addressing through structural change in order to improve overall engagement and morale of the department regardless of race, gender, or other demographic identity.

1. Address and change the culture of unspoken and unwritten norms and expectations that make it more difficult for women, ethnic minorities, and other historically underrepresented populations to be seriously considered (i.e., that experience playing football is required to be an effective Athletic Director of a Division I university).
2. Consider utilizing search firms with a proven track record of offering diverse candidate pools and placing diverse candidates in key athletics positions.
3. Address and change cultures of toughness or “bootcamp” cultures of coaching which dissuade female candidates from applying and this “culture” is not necessarily related to the job (i.e., ensure coaches maintain life at the center of work).
4. Reinforce that female athletic administrators are equals, especially in interactions with donors and supporters, and are being given high levels of responsibility of revenue-generating sports and oversight and management of the construction or renovation of athletics facilities.
5. Utilize and monitor trend data and metrics that highlight diversity within athletic teams are often significantly greater than athletics administration, campus administration and the student body thus expecting intentional diversity in hiring practices such that student-athletes see diversity in those that coach, teach, and lead them.
6. Expect holistic college student development of student-athletes where they are incorporated more fully into the student body and they reap the full college student experience (i.e., global experiences, student-life experiences and leadership, civic and community engagement).
7. Address Title IX issues and the inequality *and* the perception of inequality in support of female sports (i.e., facilities, training resources, game day experience, technology, promotions, pep bands, etc.).

SUMMARY

The vision of the University of Louisiana System is to advance educational attainment statewide; empower our citizenry; meet the needs of business and industry; grow our economy; and enrich our communities. Embedded in this vision is the imperative and ambitious goal of inclusive excellence. This guides the UL System to be the torch that leads the state through the challenges and rewards of becoming a truly inclusive, diverse, and equitable culture. One of the first initiatives to reflect this was the establishment of the Task Force on Inclusion in the Workplace.

The charge of the Task Force yielded recommendations related to cultural competence; recruiting, hiring, and retaining diverse workforces; professional development and leadership training that supports inclusivity and diversity; and practical and attitudinal changes in athletics. As we accept/recognize that the commitment to inclusion in the workforce is not a destination but a journey, we submit these enclosed recommendations with confidence that our shared values in the UL System will provide the sustenance required for that journey. We call upon the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System to not only be leaders, but more importantly allies in this journey. As such, we request that the enclosed recommendations be accepted in full and implemented across the nine member institutions; within the UL System office itself; and within all affiliated groups/agencies.

Furthermore, this journey requires ongoing commitment and oversight. The Task Force requests continued support and room for an evolving charge. Important factors in this ongoing work would be supporting the communication of the initiatives/recommendations; defining and monitoring accountability; developing metrics to measure success; and reviewing and adjusting the initial evaluation and recommendations.

Our System's values are reflected in the brand that we portray. The Task Force posits that the integration of these initiatives/recommendations will brand the UL System as one that values a) every employee and potential employee's unique contributions, b) equity on every level, and c) the attainment of the UL System's full potential to carry out its mission and thrive to the fullest extent of its strategic framework. Since the Task Force completed its initial objectives, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System adopted a diversity statement. Additionally, the collaboration with Ms. Deb Elam and the assignment of a diversity project to the UL System's Management and Leadership Institute lends further evidence that the UL System is fully committed to the journey. These prongs, along with ongoing work of the Task Force, will only strengthen the educational, creative, financial, and innovative impact on the students of the Universities of Louisiana and the State of Louisiana.