# A REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

August 14, 2015

Submitted To:

CHANCELLOR MARK S. WRIGHTON
PROVOST HOLDEN THORP

Washington University in St. Louis

Washington University in St.Louis

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PROVOST HOLDEN THORP

Washington University
St. Louis, MO

Friday, August 14, 2015

# THE MISSION OF
# THE STEERING COMMITTEE
# ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Washington University in St. Louis is dedicated to becoming a more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming institution for all members of our campus community and the larger St. Louis area. In March 2015, Provost Holden Thorp appointed the Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee and charged the committee with creating a university-wide, two-year action plan.

To undertake this work, the Steering Committee discussed the university's current diversity and inclusion strategies and considered avenues for enriching our programs and policies. This report draws on the work of the Steering Committee, the ideas that emerged in the discussions at the February 2015 event "Race and Ethnicity: A Day of Discovery and Dialogue," and suggestions collected and submitted by the university delegates. The chair of the Steering Committee drafted the report and vetted it first with the Executive Committee, and then with the Steering Committee as a whole. Once the Executive Committee and Steering Committee signed off on the draft report, the chair of the committee distributed it to the 208 delegates who gathered feedback and suggestions from their colleagues across the university, and submitted this feedback to the Steering Committee for purposes of the final draft of the report.

The Steering Committee presented the final report to the provost and chancellor of Washington University on August 14, 2015. The Steering Committee conducted its work from May 2015 through August 2015, with the goal of having an action plan adopted by the university administration before the start of the 2015-2016 school year.

*"Diversity promotes learning outcomes and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce [and] for society . . . . Major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints."*

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, 2003

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diversity and inclusion are about fairness, dignity, and respect, but they are also inexorably linked to academic excellence. Universities across the nation have committed to diversity and inclusion not only to promote the highest level of ethical practices, but also because they are essential for achieving success in teaching, research, patient care, and service.

Fulfilling our core academic mission as an institution of higher learning means that the university must attract, retain, and support a diverse body of students and faculty. All students who matriculate at Washington University must have the same hallmark learning, advising, and personal development experiences that have made our university a global leader in education. Our faculty must all have an equal opportunity to research, publish, teach, and academically flourish. Our staff is key to our academic mission, and they too must share equitably in professional opportunities. Ultimately, we aspire to be a community in which every individual — regardless of background, experience, or perspective — succeeds.

Washington University can and should be a global leader when it comes to diversity and inclusion. The university's Board of Trustees has prioritized these issues in our *Plan for Excellence*, and the university's mission statement supports our continued efforts. Washington University can and should excel on campus, in our home community of St. Louis, in the nation, and in the world. To foster these goals, we have established a rich collection of programs, initiatives, councils, and centers promoting diversity and inclusion; countless students, faculty, and staff have devoted enormous time and energy to advancing our aims and goals. Our community, however, is hungry for a deeper commitment. While we have been proactive and innovative, the message from our stakeholders is loud and clear: We must continuously work to be better and do better.

This report has twin goals, both educative and forward-looking. It highlights some of the university's current initiatives, defines diversity and inclusion, outlines the rationales for promoting these goals, and recommends a two-year action plan to our university leaders. The Steering Committee devised this action plan with the input and assistance of many student-leaders, delegates, staff, faculty, and administrators, and it includes the following recommendations:

1. The university will commit increased financial resources to ensure that we recruit, admit, and support a diverse population of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students;

2. The university will commit increased resources to ensure that we recruit, hire, and support diverse faculty through a variety of initiatives, including pipeline work;

3. Deans, leaders, and managers will review and assess hiring, promotion, and retention practices for the purpose of promoting greater staff diversity and inclusion;

4. The university will consider and evaluate a possible race/identity/social justice institute with the help of a faculty-led task force;

5. The university will create a repository with the goal of having a single location that supports the integration and analysis of diversity-related data and resources;

6. The university will institutionalize diversity and inclusion training across the campuses for students, staff, and faculty;

7. The university will host university-wide diversity and inclusion events (perhaps similar to the February 2015 event "Race and Ethnicity: A Day of Discovery and Dialogue") with students playing a key planning role;

8. Each school and unit will devise a strategic plan for promoting diversity and inclusion;

9. All deans, leaders, and managers will identify and eliminate technology-based barriers to diversity and inclusion in both the employment and academic contexts;

10. The university will recognize and honor individuals and/or groups who have advanced diversity and inclusion;

11. The university will issue and post annual diversity and inclusion scorecards; and

12. The chancellor will create a Commission on Diversity & Inclusion, which will help to implement the action items outlined above.

The Steering Committee anticipates that this action plan will serve primarily as a *framework* for advancing Washington University's diversity and inclusion goals; successful implementation will require significantly more thought and detail. For this reason, the committee recommends the creation of the new "Commission on Diversity & Inclusion" (action item #12) to assist the chancellor and provost in creating a more comprehensive and detailed approach for implementing the proposed initiatives and programs. The committee offers a few more specifics about the action items in the last section of this report, but we emphasize here that the university delegates and our stakeholders, more generally, have indicated that they look forward to learning about the details and plans as they unfold over the next two years.

Before we turn to the substance of the report, the Steering Committee would like to make a brief comment on the events that unfolded in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. These events reminded our university leaders that we must constantly dedicate ourselves to becoming a more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming institution for all members of our campus community and the larger St. Louis area. This particular report focuses on an action plan to make our campus community more diverse and inclusive. With this report and concomitant action plan, the committee hopes to foster these university-wide aims and goals.

# THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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# INTRODUCTION

This report has twin goals, both educative and forward-looking. It highlights the extant diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives; defines the concepts of diversity and inclusion; outlines the value and importance of diversity and inclusion for Washington University's teaching, research, patient care, and service missions; and sets forth a two-year action plan. The Steering Committee members are mindful that the recommended actions will require the university to devote resources, both human and monetary, to diversity and inclusion initiatives. We believe such an investment would be very wise given the importance of diversity and inclusion to the university's underlying academic mission.

Provost Holden Thorp convened the Steering Committee in spring 2015 and charged it with the task of developing a report and action plan that identified specific projects and initiatives for Washington University to implement over the next two years. The provost asked the committee to conduct its work on a relatively short timetable, between the months of May and August 2015. For this reason, our 22-person Steering Committee set a fast pace. This pace ensured that our group remained focused and determined, but it also meant that significant additional thought and energy must be devoted to the topics of diversity and inclusion. Accordingly, the Steering Committee recommends that the chancellor establish a new Commission on Diversity & Inclusion to continue the work of this committee, to keep the conversation going, and to assist the chancellor in holding deans, leaders, and managers accountable for the university's continued success.

To facilitate the Steering Committee's work and this report, the committee pursued a variety of strategies. We began with the goal of establishing a shared understanding of our ground rules for debate, discussion, and dialogue within our committee. To this end, committee member and director of campus-wide diversity and inclusion training initiatives, Ms. Denise DeCou, presented a short lecture on the importance of interacting in a fashion that promotes respect, openness, participation, education, and sensitivity (R.O.P.E.S). To organize our thoughts and ideas for purposes of moving forward with our discussions, Steering Committee members then spent substantial time investigating the extant initiatives and policies on our campus; interviewing key stakeholders including deans, faculty, staff, and students; identifying diversity and inclusion policies at universities in the United States and around the world; and researching the scholarly literature on diversity and inclusion in a range of disciplines. The Steering Committee met on a bi-monthly basis. We also created four subcommittees to address issues specific to students, staff, faculty, and community engagement, each of which also met on a bi-monthly basis. Over the course of the spring and summer, our group will have met as a committee of the whole, in small subcommittees, and with the 208 university delegates (from the spring 2015 university-wide event "Race and Ethnicity: A Day of Discovery and Dialogue") on nearly 40 different occasions.

Throughout our work, we found that Washington University has successfully implemented a rich collection of initiatives and programs promoting diversity and inclusion across the campuses. We have unambiguously made great strides over the past decade. More recently and, in partnership with student leaders, the university has taken meaningful steps and implemented important changes. A *partial* list of these changes and initiatives are the following:

- The university increased the number of Pell-eligible freshman students from 8 percent to 11 percent in 2015. The university achieved this success through a substantial commitment of financial aid, and our university leaders are committed to continuing this positive trend.

- The university created a new course on "identity literacy" for freshmen students. Faculty members will pilot this one credit, year-long course for the next three years, beginning in fall 2015.

- The university has taken steps to ensure that the classroom experience is more inclusive and welcoming through the following steps: 1) the creation of a Standing Committee on Facilitating Inclusive Classrooms, 2) adding resources to the Teaching Center, 3) revising the faculty orientation to emphasize skills necessary to create inclusive classrooms, and 4) updating course evaluations that solicit feedback on faculty competence in facilitating an inclusive classroom.

These are just a few examples of the very recent initiatives that university leaders have pursued with the assistance of student leaders and faculty.

As we discuss in more detail below, there are many reasons to continue this work and to deepen the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion. First, we are an institution that promotes the highest level of principles and ethics, and thus we must welcome difference into our community and work hard to ensure that every individual is equally valued, respected, and supported. Second, a consensus among scholars and researchers has emerged in a wide range of disciplines: Diversity and inclusion on a university campus are believed to improve academic skills, leadership potential, innovative thinking, student health outcomes, patient care, and legitimacy in the local and national communities. Promoting diversity and inclusion, in short, will better position Washington University to succeed in its teaching, research, patient care, and service missions. Finally, the demographics of our community and nation are rapidly changing. In the next several decades, our population will be far more diverse than ever before in history. This means that we must work towards greater diversity and inclusion in order to partner effectively with our growing multi-cultural community and to ensure that our students are prepared to succeed in this new and changing environment. Businesses, government agencies, the U.S. military, religious organizations, and countless other institutions across the nation have recognized and embraced diversity and inclusion for all these reasons.

To be sure, the Steering Committee has not found a magical solution that will guarantee Washington University's success in the effort to be more diverse and inclusive, nor do we believe a clear and simple answer exists. Rather we have concluded that the university

can and should pursue a variety of policies and initiatives over the short and long terms. Many of our proposed policies and programs emerged from feedback that we received from the delegates who participated in the university-wide event on race and ethnicity this past spring. Other ideas emerged from the Steering Committee's research and discussion over the past months with our stakeholders. Importantly, we believe that all new programs and initiatives must build on the efforts of those who have already spent considerable time and energy promoting diversity and inclusion on campus, thereby solidifying our gains and setting the stage for greater advancement down the road.

Our report is organized as follows. We begin, in Section I, by highlighting Washington University's commitment to diversity and inclusion as set forth in the Board of Trustees' *Plan for Excellence* and as outlined in the university's mission statement. We then discuss the Steering Committee's understanding of the concepts of diversity and inclusion. While we recognize that many different definitions exist, the committee believes that a shared understanding of the terms is important for purposes of pursuing our aims and goals both immediately and over the next several years. Section II then briefly outlines several rationales for deepening the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Section IIA discusses historical reasons associated with fairness and equity; Section IIB explores the interplay between diversity and inclusion and the road to continued academic excellence; and Section IIC notes that population shifts taking place across the state and the nation make diversity and inclusion increasingly relevant and urgent.

Section III provides a partial list of university personnel, programs, centers, and institutes that focus on diversity and inclusion, and that have emerged on campus over the last decade or so. This list highlights our progress to date, and the Steering Committee applauds the countless individuals who have devoted substantial time, energy, and resources to these initiatives. Success is a moving target, however, and the committee believes that we have much more work to do before we achieve a truly diverse and inclusive community — a community that empowers difference, nurtures dialogue, promotes human flourishing, and establishes measurable and achievable goals along the way. Accordingly, Section IV presents an action plan to unfold over the next two years, with the goal of enhancing our environment over the long term.

Before we turn to the substance of the report, the Steering Committee would like to make a brief comment on the events that unfolded in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. These events reminded our university leaders that we must constantly dedicate ourselves to becoming a more inclusive, diverse, and welcoming institution for all members of our campus community and the larger St. Louis area. This particular report focuses on an action plan to make our campus community more diverse and inclusive. With this report and concomitant action plan, the committee hopes to foster these university-wide aims and goals.

# I. A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Washington University, like virtually every other great institution in the nation, has expressed a deep commitment to diversity and inclusion. In the university's *Plan for Excellence*, our Board of Trustees established priorities, including our goal to "strengthen diversity and improve gender balance and inclusiveness in all segments of the university community."[1]  Additionally, our mission statement provides that we will:

- Welcome students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds to create an inclusive community that is welcoming, nurturing, and intellectually rigorous;

- Foster excellence in our teaching, research, scholarship, and service;

- Prepare students with attitudes, skills, and habits of lifelong learning and leadership thereby enabling them to be productive members of a global society; and

- Be an institution that excels by its accomplishments in our home community, St. Louis, as well as in the nation and the world.[2]

We at Washington University do not believe that the twin goals of diversity and inclusion are at odds with our mission to achieve excellence in teaching, research, patient care, and service. This reality raises a key question: What do we mean by diversity and inclusion and how should we define these concepts in an effort to advance our university's aims and goals?

To begin, we note that the concepts of diversity and inclusion are interdependent and should always be linked both in theory and practice. A structurally diverse community that fails to promote an inclusive, respectful, and non-discriminatory atmosphere, for example, is a disappointment and a failure in the view of the Steering Committee. In short, diversity is a necessary but not sufficient component for achieving our goals; we must leverage diversity on campus to create an environment that is welcoming, collaborative, productive, and inclusive.

The Steering Committee does not believe a single definition of "diversity" or "inclusion" exists. Indeed, our research and discussion over the past months has highlighted the fact that a very rich collection of definitions and understandings exist across individuals and groups, and also in the scholarly literature. Developing an action plan that promotes diversity and inclusion at Washington University, however, requires a shared understanding of the concepts. We provide a description of the Steering Committee's thoughts and views for purposes of this report, but we do not believe that the discussion below is or should be the last word on this important issue. Instead we believe that our current understanding of diversity and inclusion should be updated and refined over the course of time.

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[1] Mark Wrighton, "Chancellor Statement on Diversity," *Washington University in St Louis: Diversity at WUSTL*, n.d., https://diversity.wustl.edu/mission/chancellor-statement/.

[2] See Washington University in St Louis, "Mission Statement," *Washington University in St Louis: About WUSTL*, n.d., http://wustl.edu/about/.

**DIVERSITY.** With respect to the concept of diversity, the Steering Committee supports the definition that Provost Thorp has offered:

> Washington University welcomes difference on our campus in the form of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, geography, socioeconomic status, age, politics, religion, philosophy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and veteran status. We seek to bring these different backgrounds and perspectives to the great problems facing the world.[3]

The committee respectfully adds to this understanding by noting that the university's priority with respect to diversity should be to welcome students, staff, faculty, and administrators with varied backgrounds, but especially those who have been underrepresented in positions of power and influence both at Washington University and in society at-large. The concept of diversity also expands beyond small numbers, and is related to the notion that we must have a critical mass of diverse individuals to be truly diverse.

The Steering Committee believes that diverse groups are very important, but so are diverse experiences and viewpoints within each group in light of those backgrounds. Our view is that underrepresented identities are not interchangeable — indeed we believe that equity and respect is grounded in the view that each individual is unique even if individuals share background characteristics across the group. True diversity reflects a wide range of cultural differences and encompasses many different individual attributes, both visible and invisible.

**INCLUSION.** We welcome difference on campus in all forms, but our mission statement also indicates that we seek to be inclusive at Washington University. This means that we must strive to be respectful, welcoming, and collaborative across our differences wherever they exist. We must also recognize the reality that groups and individuals confront different unique challenges, and thus we must pursue unique approaches to ensure we achieve our goals. Accordingly, we conceptualize an inclusive community in the following way:

> An inclusive community is one that ensures each individual is equally valued, respected, and supported. An inclusive community seeks to ensure the existence of a nurturing, collaborative, and challenging environment, whereby all members of the community are able to achieve his or her full potential. An inclusive community commits to establishing the best possible conditions to support and promote the diverse mix of people that make up that community.

To advance the university's aims and goals with respect to diversity and inclusion, we must work to advance both goals simultaneously. We must commit to matriculating and graduating diverse students, and to hiring, retaining, and promoting diverse individuals to every level of our university. At the same time, we must empower our community to engage in meaningful interaction across groups. We must include and value diverse viewpoints in discussions, in debates, and in the decision-making processes across the

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[3] Holden Thorp, "Provost Statement on Diversity," *Washington University in St Louis: Diversity at WUSTL*, n.d., https://diversity.wustl.edu/mission/provost-statement/.

university. Finally, Washington University must seek to leverage the goals of diversity and inclusion into actions, programs, and initiatives. As Chancellor Mark Wrighton has noted:

> The responsibility for developing and maintaining a diverse faculty and staff falls on everyone and every work group at Washington University. . . . By working collaboratively, I am confident Washington University will be an improved institution that is a leader in educating students to live and work in an increasingly diverse world.[4]

In the next section, we briefly explore how and why diversity and inclusion are essential to Washington University's teaching, research, patient care, and service missions. As noted in the next section, the Steering Committee believes that diversity and inclusion are worthwhile from a variety of perspectives and together these perspectives make it obvious that diversity and inclusion are essential to our university's continued success.

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[4] Wrighton, "Chancellor Statement on Diversity."

# II. THE PROMISE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The promise and commitment to diversity and inclusion, as many commentators have noted, is not simply a trendy idea for the 21st Century championed by a small group of individuals on campus. Faculty, staff, students, and administrators throughout Washington University — along with countless individuals in higher education, government, the military, business, and nearly every other sector of the nation's economy — believe that diversity is essential to success now, and perhaps even more so into the future. In this section, we briefly outline the reasons why so many individuals and institutions have committed to diversity and inclusion.

## A. The Equity Perspective

The case for diversity and inclusion in higher education has historically rested on moral and philosophical grounds. A principled and fair institution treats all individuals equally and respectfully with the goal of assuring that every individual has the opportunity to live free from prejudice and with the ability to achieve his or her full potential. Many have noted that programs promoting diversity and inclusion foster the collaborative, nurturing, and non-discriminatory environment that is key if individuals are to realize their full potential. Because universities are committed not only to educating future generations and leaders, but also to assuring that faculty and staff work in a positive, collaborative, and nurturing environment — promoting dignity, respect, and personal growth is especially important to our mission.

While equity is linked to the right to be different and free of discrimination, some argue that the concept must also encompass a historical perspective. Many commentators have urged that because American society and its institutions participated in wrongful discrimination in the past, and because this discrimination has harmful effects that continue to linger, historical justice mandates that we remedy these harms through programs that foster diversity and inclusion. As noted above, the Steering Committee believes that the university's priority with respect to diversity should be to welcome students, staff, faculty, and administrators with varied backgrounds, but especially those who have been underrepresented in positions of power and influence in society-at-large due to past discriminatory practices.

Washington's University's pledge to diversity and inclusion, as outlined in our mission statement and the Board of Trustees' *Plan for Excellence*, is an important step in creating the fair, nondiscriminatory, and pluralistic atmosphere necessary to achieve our goals. The Steering Committee unquestionably agrees with the idea that institutions of higher education, and Washington University in particular, should be "a model for society promoting equity, excellence, and diversity"[5] because it is the right thing to do from both historical and equity perspectives.

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[5] Walter R. Allen, "A Forward Glance in a Mirror: Diversity Challenged—Access, Equity, and Success in Higher Education," *Educational Researcher* 34, no. 7 (October 2005): 18–23, doi:10.3102/0013189X034007018.

## B. The Academic Excellence Perspective

Both theory and evidence support the idea that educational and institutional success depends on meaningful diversity and inclusion. In wide-ranging fields including psychology, law, medicine, business, economics, political science, and philosophy, scholars have converged on the view that individuals who study, work, and engage with cross-cultural populations achieve outcomes that exceed those that emerge in homogeneous groups. Cross-cultural interaction, scholars have found, helps to upend stereotypes, increase cognitive and social growth, and promote respectful communication across the entire community.

Provost Holden Thorp recently noted that "Universities create knowledge . . . better ideas and decisions come from groups of people with different backgrounds and experiences."[6] Fulfilling our core academic mission as an institution of higher learning and recognizing the valuable educational benefits associated with diversity means that our university must attract a diverse body of students through our admissions process and faculty through our hiring practices. Diversity fosters the highly interactive, participatory, and thoughtful educational and academic experience that our university seeks to provide to every person on campus.

Countless scientists and researchers across the globe echo these sentiments. The physicist Dr. S. James Gates has noted that while scientists may agree on a single answer to a difficult problem in physics, chemistry, or mathematics, it is also the case that different individuals or teams are apt to pursue different paths to arrive at a common end. "In a broadly diverse classroom," Dr. Gates argues, "all students thus benefit from hearing the different questions posed in the educational arena."[7] With diverse viewpoints, seemingly intractable questions are solved by approaching age-old issues with new perspectives or unusual angles. Indeed, in a brief to the United States Supreme Court, Washington University has argued: exposure to different viewpoints influences not only how we approach a problem but also what problems we choose to tackle: such as the choice to study diseases disproportionately affecting a particular group.[8]

The American Medical Association, along with various researchers, has recently noted that diversity and inclusion in medical education are essential if health care professionals are to develop the "empathy, emotional intelligence, and cultural competence" necessary to succeed as the population itself continues to diversify. Medical schools across the country have adopted forward-looking policies and initiatives that seek to ensure that students and research cohorts are well-positioned to improve and enhance the delivery of medical care to underserved populations. Our own Washington University School of Medicine has been at the forefront of this important work. As noted by the

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[6] Thorp, "Provost Statement on Diversity."

[7] S. James Gates Jr., "Thoughts on Creativity, Diversity and Innovation in Science & Education," n.d., 3-4, http://php.aaas.org/programs/centers/capacity/documents/Gates_Essay.pdf, Archived at: http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.183.3836&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

[8] Brief for California Institute of Technology, Washington University, et al. as Amici Curiae Supporting Respondents, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin et al., 133 S. Ct. 2411 (2013) (No. 11-345), 2012 WL 3527857.

Executive Vice Chancellor of Medical Affairs and Dean of the School of Medicine, Larry Shapiro:

> The growing cultural diversity of America is another change that will reshape the practice of medicine in the 21st century and beyond. Despite the challenges U.S. medical schools face in the their efforts to boost minority medical student matriculation, we have maintained a steady enrollment of students of color and other groups underrepresented in medicine.[9]

Similarly, our School of Medicine's Office of Diversity Programs has the mission "to enhance the educational environment through recruitment of a culturally diverse academic workforce while preparing a diverse student body to become leaders in a vibrant, global society."[10]

Studies published in a wide range of fields over the last several decades confirm the idea that diversity and inclusion lead to statistically significant improved academic skills, leadership potential, and job performance. These so-called "diversity dividends" have been identified in a variety of contexts, including classrooms, boardrooms, scientific laboratories, and juries. While it is true that homogeneous groups tend to operate smoothly and often exhibit increased confidence about both performance and intra-group dynamics, researchers continually find that homogeneous groups often lack innovation and fresh insight. Heterogeneous groups, by contrast, are known to exhibit fragmentation, disagreement, and interpersonal conflict. Yet, researchers believe that the dissension generated by diversity is precisely the feature of the decision-making process that produces the benefits associated with innovation and accuracy.

Importantly, institutional diversity is linked not only to structural diversity associated with numerical representation, but also to interactional diversity that is maintained through a commitment to meaningful inclusion. Individuals who feel disrespected or excluded in the decision-making process or the community-at-large tend to disengage and often exhibit high turnover rates. This danger emerges in the student body, and among the faculty, staff, and administrative cohorts. Meaningful inclusion, on the other hand, fosters valuable friendship networks and long-term institutional commitment. Moreover, scholars and courts have noted that universities offering visible routes for diverse individuals to gain academic and employment opportunities are more likely to produce respected and legitimate civic leaders in the eyes of the local community.

## C.  The Demographic Perspective

Major population shifts are unfolding across the country, and many commentators argue this reality is yet another reason for institutions to commit to diversity, inclusion, and overall cultural competency. Indeed, the entire group of Fortune 100 firms recently advocated diversity-promoting policies in higher education on the following grounds: as the population becomes more diverse and firms become increasingly global, the

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[9] Washington University School of Medicine, Message from Dean Shapiro, available at http://medschooldiversity.wustl.edu/about/dean-message/.

[10] Washington University Medical School, Office of Diversity Programs Mission Statement available at http://medschooldiversity.wustl.edu.

skills and training necessary for employees' success are tied to exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints. Employees at every level of an organization, these firms argue, must work effectively with people different from themselves. Moreover, business owners believe that when economic times are tight, it is nearly impossible for homogenous groups "to challenge and offer the differing perspectives, unique experiences, and the broad-based wisdom"[11] that enables a company to become more effective and successful at every level.

To understand the extent to which the U.S. population is undergoing notable and dramatic shifts, consider the following facts. In 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated that for the first time ever, underrepresented minorities comprised the majority (50.2 percent) of the U.S. population under the age of 5 years. In three decades — by the year 2044 — the U.S. Census Bureau projects that non-Hispanic Whites will no longer be a majority of our nation's population.

Because Washington University has a global profile with world-class students, faculty, staff, and administrators: our success in recruiting from and placing into regions across the nation necessitates attention to these important population shifts. The Steering Committee believes that Washington University must acknowledge the notable social transformations taking place across the country and plan to be a part this change, or risk isolation in the academic, patient care, and research communities across the nation and world. In short, because we are a top-notch university with a commitment to diversity and inclusion, we must ensure a "steady flow of talented lawyers, doctors, business leaders, and so on who are not only diverse but also comfortable working in diverse settings."[12]

More locally, the U.S. Census Bureau forecasts an increase in the size of Missouri's underrepresented groups across the state, although non-Hispanic White individuals will continue to be the majority group for decades. In St. Louis County, non-Hispanic White individuals currently represent 68 percent, Black individuals represent 24 percent, and additional underrepresented groups account for the remaining 8 percent of the population. In the City of St. Louis, notable population shifts have taken place: Black individuals currently represent 48 percent of the population, non-Hispanic White individuals represent 44 percent, and American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Hispanic, and other underrepresented groups account for the remaining portion of our city's population. These statistics highlight the importance of readily visible academic and employment opportunities at Washington University for diverse individuals in order to achieve credibility and legitimacy in our local community. Recent local pressures associated with racial and social justice, and the events that unfolded in Ferguson in August 2014, highlight the importance and urgency of our work on diversity and inclusion.

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[11] Brief for Fortune-100 and Other Leading American Businesses as Amici Curiae Supporting Respondents, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin et al., 133 S. Ct. 2411 (2013) (No. 11-345), 2012 WL 3418831.

[12] Brief of Amicus Curiae the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Supporting Respondents, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin et al., 133 S. Ct. 2411 (2013) (No. 11-345), 2012 WL 3276512.

In the business context, various empirical studies have identified a link between a cross-cultural labor force and improved customer experience, employee productivity and leadership, market capacity, and profitability. For these reasons, it is unsurprising that business leaders support diversity in universities and in their own firms. Business leaders — like scholars, doctors, lawyers, and engineers — have recognized that individuals educated in diverse settings have an "increased ability to facilitate unique and creative approaches to problem-solving by integrating different perspectives and moving beyond linear, conventional thinking."[13] Not all organizations have the institutional capacity to achieve these goals, but business leaders do not question the importance of the underlying goal of cross-cultural competency. Studies confirm that individuals with an understanding of cross-cultural issues are better able to work productively with diverse business partners, employees, and clients both in the United States and around the world, thereby promoting a positive work environment that reduces incidents associated with discrimination, bias, and stereotyping.

A commitment to diversity is also found in the public sector in recognition of demographic changes. Many have argued that successful national policy is more readily achieved if the nation's pathways to professional advancement are visibly open to all segments of American society. The nation's military leaders have long committed to diversity and inclusion on these grounds (along with the others outlined above). Other examples abound. In 2010, the House of Representatives launched a bipartisan initiative to increase racial diversity among congressional staff members after an internal assessment revealed that 13 percent of House chiefs of staff were underrepresented minorities versus 35 percent of the U.S. population more generally. Federal and state governments also have sought diversity in the judicial appointment process and on juries on the theory that decision-makers in the courtroom should mirror the make-up of our society.

It is worthwhile to emphasize that diversity and inclusion are important at the institutional level, but also to specific individuals. Various empirical studies have found that the overwhelming majority of students rate "understanding other cultures" and "learning to relate to people of other races and nationalities" as "essential" or "very important" skills to learn while in college.[14] Given that diversity promotes fairness and equity; improves educational outcomes; reduces bias, stigma, stress, and anxiety; increases leadership and decision-making skills; improves patient care; and expands job opportunities — it is hardly a surprise that students have reached the conclusion that diversity is essential to excellence.

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[13] Brief for Fortune-100 and Other Leading American Businesses as Amici Curiae Supporting Respondents, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin et al., 133 S. Ct. 2411 (2013) (No. 11-345), 2012 WL 3418831.

[14] Brief of Amherst et al. as Amici Curiae Supporting Respondents, Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin et al., 133 S. Ct. 2411 (2013) (No. 11-345), 2012 WL 3418600.

## D. Conclusion

Promoting and deepening our university's commitment to diversity and inclusion are important for many different reasons. Our community need not coalesce around one rationale or a specific motive for moving forward with our goals, but we all must recognize and understand that failing to achieve meaningful diversity and inclusion creates serious hurdles to institutional fairness, equity, and overall success. To paraphrase the U.S. Supreme Court: diversity and inclusion are not only socially responsible, they are essential to our nation's long-term success.[15]

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[15] Grutter v. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 306 (2003); University of California v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 265, at 312-13 (1978).

# III.  DIVERSE & INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE: BUILDING ON CURRENT INITIATIVES

The importance of diversity and inclusion to Washington University is not new to our leadership. Chancellor Mark Wrighton has long noted that we must commit to the concept of diverse and "inclusive excellence" on our campus.[16] In 2009, the university's Board of Trustees reaffirmed this view and set out as a priority in the university's *Plan for Excellence* the goal to "strengthen diversity and improve gender balance and inclusiveness in all segments of the university community."

Since that time, many members of our university community have invested substantial time, energy, and resources in an effort to ensure that we have a diverse and inclusive community. These initiatives are wide-ranging and have emerged at both the school and university levels, and are led by a talented group of students, staff, faculty, and administrators. The following is a partial and incomplete list of our appointments, programs, and initiatives that have evolved over the past decade:

- Annual diversity and inclusion events, including: the Academic Women's Network and Association of Women Faculty dinners and receptions, the African Film Festival, the African Arts Festival, the Buder Center Pow Wow, Diwali celebrations, Eid al Adha, the Financial Freedom Seminar, German Day, and so on;

- Appointment of diversity and inclusion leaders who have developed a series of diversity training sessions for students, faculty, and staff on the Medical School and Danforth campuses;

- Campus Diversity Collaborative, which encourages campus conversation around issues of diversity and inclusion and fosters a support network for campus professionals who work on these issues;

- Center for Diversity & Inclusion, which supports and advocates for students from traditionally underrepresented or marginalized populations and creates collaborative partnership with campus and community members to promote dialogue and social change;

- Diversity & Inclusion Forum for faculty and staff, which seeks to build a strong and influential community of underrepresented faculty and staff, and support educational, social, and cultural competency opportunities;

- Financial aid increase by 25 percent (to $125 million) devoted to financial aid for students from low-income families;

- Financial incentives for schools to diversify faculty;

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[16] Washington University in St Louis Wrighton, Mark, "Chancellor Statement on Diversity," *Diversity at WUSTL*, n.d., https://diversity.wustl.edu/mission/chancellor-statement/.

- Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, which promotes civic engagement and sustained community impact through service initiatives;

- Grant opportunities, including the Diversity and Inclusion Grant Program and the Ferguson academic seed grant;

- Increased enrollment of underrepresented minority students and students from low-income families into our freshman class with the goal of realizing the educational benefits that are derived from a diverse student body;

- Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies, which is committed to the education of American Indian students and serves as a support system for the local Native American/Alaska Native community in St. Louis;

- Latino LINK;

- LGBT Advisory Board;

- LGBT Student Involvement and Leadership Group;

- Mosaic Project, which seeks to support the university's ongoing commitment to strengthen diversity, foster inclusion, and promote social justice in all aspects of the student experience;

- Ombudsperson positions to serve as a confidential, impartial, informal, and independent resources for university staff, faculty, and students;

- Professional training for underrepresented minorities completing a PhD in business and in other areas;

- Saturday Neighborhood Free Health Clinic;

- Scholarship programs, including the Ervin Scholars and the Rodriquez Scholars, which devote scholarship monies to students who have exceptional leadership skills and are committed to advance diversity and inclusion;

- STEM Diversity Pipeline Consortium;

- Vice provost responsible for coordinating diversity and faculty leadership across the university;

- *WashU Voices*, an online gathering place to share perspectives, learn about the underlying issues, find information about events and activities, and engage each other in the post-Ferguson era;

- Information about many more initiatives, programs, and student-sponsored groups can be found on the university's diversity website and the websites of all seven Washington University schools.

This is a *partial* list of the ongoing activities and initiatives taking place across both the Medical School and Danforth campuses. The Steering Committee recognizes the many contributions that members of our university have made in the effort to promote diversity and inclusion in our community. The committee also notes that the

policy advances and the increase in programmatic activity have led to clear quantitative progress in our goal to becoming more diverse and inclusive. Eighteen percent of the Fall 2015 incoming freshman class is African American or Hispanic, a notable increase from prior years. The percentage of Pell Grant recipients in this new freshman class is 11 percent, a 3 percentage point increase from last year. Our medical school now has 16 percent underrepresented ethnic minority students, a 6 percentage point increase from prior years.

We have also achieved progress in the context of our faculty recruitment efforts. The percentage of women faculty on the Medical School Campus has increased from 28 percent in 2001 to 38 percent in 2014. The percentage of women tenure and tenure-track faculty on the Danforth Campus grew from 23 percent to 33 percent over the last 15 years. The percentage of underrepresented ethnic minority faculty has also grown over the same time periods from 2 percent to 5 percent in the School of Medicine and 5 percent to 8 percent on the Danforth Campus. These efforts have benefitted our community, but the fact remains that we have a long way to go to reach our own goals with respect to our faculty and students.

We continue to struggle to attract and retain a diverse staff. While 72 percent of benefits-eligible staff members are women, just 14 percent are African American (a 1 percentage point decrease from 2003) and 1 percent are Hispanic. In a 2015 survey, female employees reported feeling less positive than males regarding engagement with the university community, particularly within the non-management staff group, and African-American employees were less positive than Whites in all categories. Ensuring that our Washington University students, faculty, and staff feel a part of our community is imperative to create an inclusive environment for all. To foster inclusivity, we must start by recognizing our own diversity challenges, and then work to create strategies to change this.

The Steering Committee as a whole, the four subcommittees, and the delegates together identified literally hundreds of possible ideas and action items for the university to pursue over the next several years. These ideas and initiatives were thoughtful and wide ranging. The single most popular proposal advanced by the delegates at lunch this past spring revolves around the importance of diversity and inclusion training. Many members of our community have also noted that because our approach to diversity and inclusion is fragmented, we lack the infrastructure necessary to enable groups across the university to expand, collaborate, and achieve overall success. Others have noted that the goals of diversity and inclusion are not sufficiently embedded into the hiring, retention, promotion, and evaluation protocols, which means that our community can ignore university-wide goals and aims in their day-to-day activities. Additionally, many have highlighted the reality that the lack of easy access to data on diversity and inclusion produced by our university, various government entities, and other organizations, inhibits transparency and analytics. A brief list of proposed initiatives include: an affirmative action plan, diversity ambassadors, diversity training programs, multi-cultural action teams, underrepresented minority recruitment projects, a race institute, a social justice institute, certificate programs, dialogue training, capital campaign efforts to ensure needs-based financial aid, reforming our HR department

to address diversity and inclusion issues, expanding pipeline programs, establishing the importance of benchmarks, creating diversity scorecards, eliminating web-based and technology hurdles to diversity and inclusion, improving access to data and diversity-related resources, improving signage associated with diversity resources, creating a new chief diversity officer, and so on.

It soon became clear to the Steering Committee that we needed to present to the chancellor and provost a manageable list of prioritized top ideas for implementation. For this reason our group continually turned to the questions: "Who do we want to be in five, 10, or 25 years?," "What can we do differently?," and "What broad policy items can we propose to promote diversity and inclusion?" These questions guided our process of identifying the limited number of high priority ideas that make up our proposed two-year action plan.

As suggested by our Board of Trustees in the *Plan for Excellence*, our university's mission statement, and the rich collection of programs, appointments, and initiatives outlined immediately above, our organizational goals should be forward-looking and ambitious. We want to be the type of university that welcomes difference in all its forms and that fosters a community that ensures all individuals are equally valued, respected, and supported. And as our diversity increases to reflect a critical mass of diverse students, staff, and faculty, we must continue to improve our environment with the goal of ensuring that we are all able to grow and flourish to the fullest extent possible.

The next section presents a proposed two-year action plan.

# IV. A PROPOSED TWO-YEAR ACTION PLAN

Washington University can and should be a global leader when it comes to diversity and inclusion. The university's Board of Trustees has prioritized these issues in our *Plan for Excellence*, and our mission statement supports our continued efforts. In this section, we outline a list of action items for the university to pursue over the next two-year period, with the goal of enhancing our climate over the long run. The Steering Committee members understand that the proposed action plan will require the university to devote resources, both human and monetary; we believe this is a worthwhile investment in our future.

## Immediate Action Items

1. The university will commit increased financial resources to ensure that we recruit, admit, and support a diverse population of undergraduate, graduate, and professional students;

2. The university will commit increased resources to ensure that we recruit, hire, and support diverse faculty through a variety of initiatives, including pipeline work;

3. Deans, leaders, and managers will review and assess hiring, promotion, and retention practices for the purpose of promoting greater staff diversity and inclusion;

4. The university will consider and evaluate a possible race/identity/social justice institute with the help of a faculty-led Task Force;

5. The university will create a repository with the goal of having a single location that supports the integration and analysis of diversity-related data and resources;

6. The university will institutionalize diversity and inclusion training across the campuses for students, staff, and faculty;

7. The university will host university-wide diversity and inclusion events (perhaps similar to the February 2015 event "Race and Ethnicity: A Day of Discovery and Dialogue") with students playing a key planning role;

8. Each school and unit will devise a strategic plan for promoting diversity and inclusion;

9. All deans, leaders, and managers will identify and eliminate technology-based barriers to diversity and inclusion in both the employment and academic contexts;

10. The university will recognize and honor individuals and/or groups who have advanced diversity and inclusion;

11. The university will issue and post annual diversity and inclusion scorecards; and

12. The chancellor will create a Commission on Diversity & Inclusion, which will help to implement the action items outlined above.

## The Commission on Diversity & Inclusion

The new Commission on Diversity & Inclusion will be a visionary body that oversees, synthesizes, coordinates, and promotes diversity and inclusion on campus. The commission will assist the university in rolling out the initiatives over a two-year period, with the goal of enhancing the university's aims and goals over the long run. The commission will:

1. Report to the chancellor and provost;

2. Include high-level administrators, staff, students, and faculty;

3. Discuss with the chancellor and provost the possibility of having staff, faculty, and students apply to serve on the commission;

4. Study and assess the university's diversity and inclusion efforts, identify challenges in the current fragmented structure, and propose means to coordinate, concentrate, and enhance these efforts;

5. Consult with schools and units on their strategic planning initiatives, provide guidelines and templates, and share best practices;

6. Assist in creating transparent and substantive metrics and benchmarks for an annual university-wide diversity and inclusion scorecard such as:

   • Candidate pool demographics for faculty, staff, and administrative positions with information regarding finalists, offers, yield, promotion rates, and so forth;

   • Student demographics;

   • University climate-related metrics;

   • Community engagement demographics; and

   • Training demographics.

7. Consider and evaluate other initiatives, including:

   • Cluster and high-level faculty hiring;

   • Chief diversity officer;

- Diversity & Inclusion Academy for students, staff, and faculty that offers a "train-the-trainer" certificate program in diversity and inclusion;

- Diversity & Inclusion Newsletter;

- Revised and re-envisioned Diversity and Inclusion Grant Program to support student-led initiatives;

- Summer Fellows Program for non-tenured faculty at other institutions;

- University-wide performance evaluations that ensure individuals receive appropriate diversity and inclusion training; and

- Urban fellows program for graduating students.

8. Have an annual budget in the amount to be determined by the chancellor and provost.

## The Task Force

The new task force will consider and evaluate a race/identity/social justice institute. The task force will:

1. Explore the academic value and purpose of a possible new institute;

2. Be composed primarily of faculty;

3. Consider the views of interested parties across campus, including deans, faculty, students, and staff; and

4. Submit a report to the Commission on Diversity & Inclusion outlining its recommendations.

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# University's Day of Discovery & Dialogue Delegates

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