

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Fighting Anti-Blackness Caucus 2020-2021

Report to the Dornsife Faculty Council May 21, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview	1
2020-21 Caucus Foci	3
Cross-Cultural Learning Community (CCLC) for Faculty Development	
Dornsife Anti-Bias Library	
Ongoing Caucus Foci	4
Supporting Transfer Students: Resource Webinar Series & Collaboration with TSC	
Pay Equity & Issues with Increasing University Dependence on Free Faculty Labor	
Diversity Statements	
On-Campus Surveillance and Policing Practices, and Associated Grievance Reporting and Procedures	
Conclusions	6
Addendum I (Cross-Cultural Learning Community for Faculty Development Proposal)	7

DEI Caucus Members:

Co-Chair: Stephanie Payne, Writing Program
Co-Chair: Tracie Mayfield, Anthropology and Archaeology
Tamara Black, Writing Program
Victoria Campbell-Arvai, Environmental Studies
Monalisa Chatterjee, Environmental Studies
David Crombecque, Mathematics
Meredith Kruse, Writing Program
Ali Rachel Pearl, Thematic Option
Alisa Sánchez, Writing Program
Jennifer Swift, Spatial Sciences Institute

OVERVIEW

The following report outlines work completed by the AY 2020-21 Caucus cohort, which includes key outcomes and recommendations for the 2021-22 Caucus. We recommend also reviewing the 2018-19 and 2019-20 DEI Caucus reports in order to better understand the historical background of this Caucus' ongoing foci, concerns, and continuing initiatives.

Much of the work undertaken this AY centered on promoting anti-racist education in response to concerns raised by our faculty, students, and staff in the context of Black@USC and other public forums, during a time of institutional and national reckoning following the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. This reckoning with systematic and longstanding discrimination and violence towards BIPOC individuals and communities, and with anti-Blackness in particular, prompted the Caucus to incorporate Fighting anti-Blackness into its name and to keep at the forefront of its work.

As with the prior year's Caucus, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to play a major role in our activities. Although the current AY continued to be interrupted by social distancing measures, the Caucus was able to make progress towards our ongoing goals such as supporting transfer students, pay equity (compensatory, merit, and issues of increasing University dependence on free faculty labor), and dependent care.

Our cohort made exceptional progress in three key areas discussed in the 2019-2020 DEI Caucus report: developing a learning community proposal for Dornsife faculty; creating more centralized DEI resources for Dornsife faculty; and supporting transfer students. As detailed below, the work of supporting transfer students grew this year to become a sustained set of resources produced in collaboration with students. This work has been foundational to incorporating transfer student leadership and needs more formally into USC institutional structures next year. Similarly, the Cross-Cultural Learning Community proposal (developed with the Dornsife Faculty Council) and Dornsife Anti-Bias Library serve as critical steps this year to prepare for implementation in the 2021-2022 AY. Through generating concrete, detailed plans to support faculty as equity-minded educators, these two projects advance faculty development in diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Given the continued disrupted/atypical 2020-21 AY, the Caucus considers its primary audiences to be the incoming (2021-22) Caucus and the Dornsife Faculty Committee (DFC). Much of the work undertaken this year represents new initiatives that have not yet been implemented -for example the Cross-Cultural Learning Committee, outlined further below- and these initiatives will need to be continued by the 2021-22 Caucus cohort in order to be successful.

To this end, and in continuation of the work done by prior DEI Caucus cohorts, we utilize the following definitions of diversity, inclusion, equity, and equity mindedness from the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AACU).

- *Diversity*: Individual differences (e.g., personality, learning styles, and life experiences) and group/social differences (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, country of origin, and ability as well as cultural, political, religious, or other affiliations).
- *Inclusion*: The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity — in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect — in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.
- *Equity*: The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion.
- *Equity-Mindedness*: A demonstrated awareness of and willingness to address equity issues among institutional leaders and staff (Center for Urban Education, University of Southern California).

2020-21 FOCI

- **Cross-Cultural Learning Community (CCLC) for Faculty Development**

- Mission & Objectives:
 - To cultivate a learning environment that is--in practice and in fact--compassionate, inclusive, anti-racist, and collaborative.
 - To equip faculty with pedagogical skills and vocabulary to create classroom spaces that are inclusive, empowering, and attentive to inequities faced by oppressed populations (e.g., through learning communities, departmental liaisons, anti-bias library, responding to specific needs and concerns as articulated by BIPOC students and through Black@USC).
 - To enable faculty to mentor and support each other through this process, which must be one of life-long learning and commitment, even and especially when it feels uncomfortable.
- Dornsife Qualtrics CCLC survey
 - A survey was developed to gauge faculty interest in the CCLC based on requests by Dornife and Central Administration during initial due diligence meetings. However, the Caucus decided to table the current version of the survey after subsequent communications with Christopher Manning (the newly appointed USC Chief Inclusion and Diversity Officer) at the end of AY 2020-21. We will adjust the survey for distribution in the Fall of AY 2021-22 after additional meetings with Dr. Manning and others in order to better align the survey with current Central Administration plans and upcoming CET initiatives.
- Training (voluntary and incentivized through certificate program)
 - Faculty recognition and certification for CCLC training (Faculty can include the certificate in merit review and promotion materials.)
- Mentoring and support
 - Recognition, support, and compensation for liaisons
 - Clarifying departmental liaison roles and responsibilities

- **Dornsife Anti-Bias Library**

- Research is in progress to assemble well-curated, discipline-specific, accessible, highly-visible, and student-facing pedagogical resources for programs, majors and departments within Dornsife. To this end,
 - We worked with Elizabeth Galoozis to assess existing resources on [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) and [Anti-Bias/Anti-Racist Pedagogy](#) within USC Libraries for faculty to use.
 - We communicated with the Diversity Committee within USC Writing Program to also assess their extensive, existing compilation of [DEI library resources](#), which can also be shared with faculty more broadly.
 - We worked to augment an awareness of USC's own ties to white supremacy and anti-Black racism and to develop library resources on these important topics (i.e. USC's second president, Joseph P. Widney's texts "Race Life of the Aryan Peoples," as well as VonKleinsmid's "Eugenics and the State"). This led us into collaboration with faculty in the Gould School of Law who are also developing library and teaching resources on USC's institutional ties to white supremacy alongside

members of the USC Faculty Senate's 'History Committee' which will release their report on USC's ties to white supremacy in May 2021.

- We are working to compile and consolidate DEI-related resources, e.g., decolonizing curriculum, for specific programs and departments. Once compiled, this material will be coordinated with existing resources housed within the USC Library system.
- Further, in recognition of the role that USC CET has the potential to play in anti-racism/anti-bias training and pedagogy, we recommend coordinating the above resources and compilations with this office as well.

ONGOING CAUCUS FOCI

- ***Supporting Transfer Students: Resource Webinar Series & Collaboration with TSC***

- In AY 2019-2020, we identified a goal to engage in more meaningful outreach to transfer students, in efforts to facilitate their access to campus resources and to create a supportive community. With the advent of remote learning due to COVID-19, the need to foster inclusion for incoming and continuing transfer students became particularly acute. To place students' authority and agency at the center of this work, in AY2020-2021, we formed a partnership with the Transfer Student Community (TSC), a Recognized Student Organization, to discuss how to meet these objectives even though students were unable to gather on USC's physical campus.
- In cooperation with TSC's student leadership team and Dr. Amanda Bloom of the Writing Program—who brings expertise in working with transfer students and the Fisher Fellows program—we identified transfer students' needs and developed a series of resource webinars. In both Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, the webinar series included interactive sessions to equip Transfer Students with information about how to access the following campus resources:
 - Writing Center
 - Career Center
 - USC Libraries
 - Kortschak Center
 - Academic Honors & Fellowships
 - Dornsife Toolkit Courses
- Additionally, we hosted two panel discussions for Transfer Students: "Choosing the 'WRIT'340," a conversation with Writing Program faculty to answer students' questions about WRIT340; and "A Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Conversation," with guest speakers Drs. Jessi Johnson and Christopher Muñiz from the Writing Program's Diversity Committee.
- The Resource Webinar Series complemented TSC's other programming, such as one-on-one mentorship and social events to create a welcoming and inclusive community for all transfer students.
 - At the end of this academic year, TSC made the transition from a Recognized Student Organization to a Student Assembly. The newly renamed Transfer Student Assembly currently includes an advisory board headed by Dr. David Glasgow and three alumni advisors. Beginning in AY 2021-2022, Drs. Tamara Black and Amanda Bloom will join the board as faculty advisors. Next year, we

plan to create and offer an online, on-demand resource course for Transfer Students, which will accompany in-person activities, social events, and guest speaker events.

- ***Pay Equity & Issues with Increasing University Dependence on Free Faculty Labor***
 - The Caucus continues to work towards pay equity (in concert with the Dornsife Faculty Council and University Senate), including issues with the continuing adjunctification of the faculty body and increasing dependence on free faculty labor (e.g. no pay or merit credit for mentoring independent student studies/490s and added faculty labor to facilitate mental health and disability initiatives offered to students without a dedicated staff).

- ***Dependent Care***
 - The Caucus advocated with the Dornsife Faculty Council and other Faculty Councils for the University to expand resources for faculty providing dependent care during the pandemic. These efforts led to an Academic Senate resolution 20/21-01, "Support for caregivers under COVID conditions" and outcomes such as making leave policy information more transparent and accessible; facilitating learning pods and tutoring; changing dependent care flexible spending accounts; continuing care services through Bright Horizons and other organizations; and conducting a robust survey on faculty needs and experiences during the pandemic, the Faculty Environment and Employment Committee (FEEC) Survey on Workload, Productivity, and Caregiving Concerns during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In the faculty survey, input from DEI Caucus members led to the inclusion of a response option acknowledging that work of addressing anti-Blackness increased during a period already strained due to the pandemic. For the question, "What have been the primary sources of work-related stress during the pandemic, if any?" the response, "Time and effort spent addressing anti-Blackness at work" was included. Survey results showed that 17% of faculty marked this response, with women and BIPOC faculty more likely to report. The survey report also highlights qualitative comments expanding on this response.

- ***Diversity Statements***
 - The Caucus continues to support initiatives to require diversity statements in syllabi and at the Department and School level, although there is resistance for a variety of reasons, ranging from lack of time during the COVID-19 crisis to issues of pertinence and applicability in disciplines outside of the Humanities.

- ***On-Campus Surveillance and Policing Practices, and Associated Grievance Reporting and Procedures***
 - The Caucus continues to advocate that students, faculty, staff, and workers are safe from surveillance and policing practices at USC that primarily target Black students and other students of color in ways that make their learning environments unsafe/counterproductive to learning (i.e. the over-policing of Black students and the implementation of racist test-proctoring software like Respondus, which has documented instances of mis-recognizing Black faces and is discriminatory against trans, nonbinary, and gender non-conforming students).

CONCLUSIONS

The foundation of the 2021 Dornsife Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Caucus is rooted in the opinion that diversity, equity, and inclusion are vital to the economic, physical, and mental health of the University as a whole and to our faculty and students as individuals, as outlined in the 2018-22 Dornsife Faculty Council Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic plan:

“Diversity is central to USC Dornsife’s academic and strategic planning efforts, because diversity in the truest sense of the word lies at the core of a liberal arts education. As USC’s oldest, most diverse school and with 36 departments that span the humanities, natural sciences, and mathematics, and social sciences, our size and scope uniquely situate us as at the intersection of cultivating new knowledge in all forms and preserving the heritage and traditions of a liberal arts college.”

Given the ongoing violence faced by BIPOC individuals and communities in the United States, we feel that it is imperative to create a safe, empowering, and inclusive space for BIPOC students, faculty, and staff at USC. The initiatives outlined in this report and supplementary documents are important steps in this process. More broadly, we believe that the university must listen and respond to the needs and concerns of BIPOC students, faculty, and we must continue to push for meaningful initiatives and programs that codify inclusiveness and anti-racism in all aspects of university academics, research, outreach, and operations. The Caucus is excited for the appointment of Christopher Manning as USC’s first Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion and looks forward to working with this office in the coming year, advocating for what will assist faculty in their role of making USC more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just.

ADDENDUM I: Cross-Cultural Learning Community for Faculty Development Proposal