

RUTGERS



THE TASK FORCE ON INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY VALUES

**A Report Submitted on behalf of the Task Force to
Dr. Richard L. Edwards, Chancellor of Rutgers University-New Brunswick**

February 7, 2017

THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY VALUES

Table of Contents

Summary of Recommendations	3
Introduction	8
Where We Stand at Rutgers University-New Brunswick	11
Defining Core Values	13
Curricula & Faculty and New Initiatives on Inclusion and Diversity / Race and Social Justice	15
African Americans, Latinos, and Afro-Latinos	22
First Generation & Underrepresented Students	24
Asian-American Studies	25
Religion, Muslim Students and the Quest for an Inclusive Community	26
Native American Students	29
Transgender Rights	30
Undocumented Students	33
Conclusion and Future Steps	34
Acknowledgements	35

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has organized its recommendations around the following six thematic areas: (I) Defining Core Values; (II) Data Collection and Assessment; (III) Faculty and Curricular Initiatives; (IV) Recruitment and Retention; (V) Programmatic Initiatives; and (VI) Training, Cultural Sensitivity, and Infrastructure.

The Task Force has categorized its recommendations into short term (one year, indicated by an asterisk in the text) and long term (two to five years, indicated by a double asterisk in the text). The page numbers after each recommendation refer to pages in the narrative of the report where these recommendations are explained in greater detail.

(I) Core Values: The Task Force presents these core values in pairs and as verbal statements to illustrate how the Rutgers-New Brunswick community interacts, and may seek to interact, with its values as ideals and as action-oriented goals.

1. *Work towards **Inclusion** and respect **Difference***
2. *Provide **Opportunity** and ensure **Access***
3. *Value **Innovation** and promote **Leadership***
4. *Foster **Global Reach** and honor **Humanity***

With respect to the use and distribution of these core values, the Task Force recommends:

- Publish the Core Values on the Rutgers-New Brunswick website. (p.13 and p.14)
- Emphasize these values during New Student Orientation and New Faculty/Staff Orientation. (p.13 and p.14)
- Work with student organizations to discuss, embrace and adopt the Core Values. (p.13 and p.14)

(II) Data Collection and Assessment: It is important to collect, organize, and publish demographic data with respect to racial and gender diversity at Rutgers-New Brunswick. Readily available and transparent data will enable deans, academic unit heads, and others to identify areas where gender and racial diversity need to be addressed, and will help the New Brunswick campus monitor its progress in forging a more diverse community. The task force, therefore, recommends:

- The Office of Institutional Diversity should prepare a pamphlet/brochure highlighting the history of the university's struggles to confront issues of racism and discrimination on

campus, detailing how underrepresented groups have fought for inclusion at the university.** (p.12)

- Collect and publish data on race, gender, and ethnicity, especially faculty diversity at the department level. Request departments to disclose on their websites the diversity of their faculty and graduate students.* (p.12 and p.17).
- Initiate a comprehensive survey related to the climate of inclusion and diversity at Rutgers-New Brunswick for faculty, staff, and students.** (p.19)
- Bias statistics should be made publicly available and easily accessible.* (p.27)
- Include a question in student course evaluations regarding the course's and the professor's sensitivity towards cultural difference.* (p.19)

(III) Faculty and Curricular Initiatives: The faculty and the curriculum are at the heart of a university's mission. Recruiting and sustaining a diverse faculty from historically underrepresented groups is one of the most important means by which a culture of diversity and inclusion can be fostered at Rutgers-New Brunswick. In addition, the curriculum should afford students the opportunity to intellectually engage with the complex dynamics of diversity that characterize the contemporary United States. The dimensions of diversity can be understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors, including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. In this respect, the Task Force recommends:

- Implement a core diversity requirement in the undergraduate curriculum of all Rutgers-New Brunswick schools.* (p.15 and p.16)
- Reestablish the Martin Luther King, Jr. Chair. Recruit a scholar/activist who engages in scholarship on contemporary political movements for racial and social justice. Create distinguished chairs and lecture series to support diversity teaching and learning in the university.** (p.16)
- Establish Paul Robeson and Sojourner Truth Professorships. Just as the Henry Rutgers Professorships and Henry Rutgers Term Chairs were initiatives launched by the central administration to assist in faculty recruitment and retention, the Paul Robeson and Sojourner Truth Chairs can serve as bases to recruit and/or retain faculty who lead research on race and ethnicity. ** (p.17)
- Academic units should create a multi-year plan detailing how to diversify their faculty.** (p.17 and p.18)
 - Set a metric/standard or objective to lead the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA).
 - Diversify non-tenure track, adjunct, and part-time lecturer faculty.

- Establish an Asian American Studies Department or Program.** (p.25)
- Offer more courses that focus on the Muslim experience* and work toward the establishment of an Islamic Studies minor/major.** (p.27)
- Create retention programs for faculty.** (p.18)
- Invest in cluster hires designed to support faculty hiring and retention, programmatic initiatives and the overall strengthening of departments that have diversity as central to their intellectual, programmatic, and curricular missions.** (p.18)

(IV) Recruitment and Retention: Of the BTAA institutions, the student body of Rutgers-New Brunswick is among the most diverse. The University should continue its recruitment efforts to ensure a diverse student body, especially one that includes students from historically under-represented groups. Furthermore, mentoring and support programs for these students should be sustained and developed to ensure they remain and thrive at Rutgers. To this end, the Task Force recommends:

- Institutionalize funding for Undergraduate Academic Affairs RU-1st Initiatives.* (p.24)
- Create sources of funding (through scholarships and fellowships) for first generation, undocumented students and underrepresented groups.** (p.24 and p.33)
- Reinstate the diversity question in the admissions application.* (p.12)

(V) Programmatic Initiatives: Co-curricular programming is an effective means by which to engage the Rutgers-New Brunswick community in conversations about inclusion and diversity. Access Week, Martin Luther King, Jr. Dream Week, RU-Ally Week, Islamic Awareness Week (initiated by the Muslim Student Association), and the America Converges Here Series are just a few examples of the many programming initiatives that grapple with the challenges of diversity and inclusion at Rutgers-New Brunswick. These efforts should continue to be supported and complemented by other signature programs. To this end, the Task Force recommends:

- Use SCREAM Theatre productions as a model for a similar program highlighting issues of inclusion and diversity.** (p.19)
- Work with Admissions and New Student Orientation to ensure prospective/incoming students learn about the academic resources that deal with diversity and inclusion as well as the lives and legacies of famous Rutgers graduates who have pioneered struggles for diversity and inclusion, such as Paul Robeson.** (p.19)
- Organize a welcome event for students of color at the beginning of the academic year.* (p.24)
- Develop proactive initiatives to address the rising tide of bigotry, Islamophobia and anti-semitism.* (p.27)

- Given the deep political and ideological divisions of the contemporary period, more programs that encourage civil dialogue about difficult topics ought to be sponsored.* (p.19)
- Have the Bias Prevention Committee meet with Muslim and Jewish student leaders, as well as other groups impacted by bias, in order to strategize on bias reporting and bias prevention education.* (p.27)
- Celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day in place of Columbus Day.* (p.30)
- Advertise that the rights of transgender individuals are protected under the Rutgers anti-discrimination policy.* (p.31)
- Celebrate the legacies of undocumented students.** (p.33)
- Elevate annual programs to the Chancellor's level, such as Annual Access Week, Paul Robeson Week, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the James Dickson Carr Series as these are signature to the institution.* (p.24)
- Scale up the Paul Robeson Distinguished Lecture Series to mirror Harvard's W.E.B Du Bois Lectures.** (p.21)

(VI) Training, Cultural Sensitivity and Infrastructure: In his commencement address, President Obama aptly remarked that America converges at Rutgers. All members of the Rutgers-New Brunswick community, especially administrators and faculty, should receive training on the academic and interpersonal skills necessary to work amidst the cultural differences that characterize the campus. Furthermore, the University's infrastructure and facilities should be sensitive to, and accommodate the needs of the diverse communities that comprise Rutgers-New Brunswick. To this end, the Task Force recommends the following:

- Require new faculty to participate in cultural competency and sensitivity training; encourage current faculty to participate.* (p.18)
- Invite the directors of the Cultural Centers to at least one undergraduate director's meeting and one chair's meeting per year.* (p.20)
- Train student support professionals, campus health professionals, and CAPS (Counseling, Alcohol and Other Drug Assistance Program, and Psychiatric Services) professionals to address transgender students' needs and concerns.** (p.31)
- Have Student Support Services and the Dean of Students meet with undocumented students to become familiar with their needs.* (p.33)
- Invest in more signage relating to the Cultural Centers.* (p.20)
- Allow transgender students to change names on university identity cards.** (p.31)

- Promote spaces for vendors to serve halal food at the Student Centers.** (p.28)
- Improve halal and kosher dining options within dining halls.* (p.28)
- Offer prayer spaces for the Muslim community, specifically in Busch Student Center but also throughout the New Brunswick campus as a whole. Demarcate inter-faith spaces in residence halls.* (p. 28)
- Establish and advertise trans-safe bathrooms, especially in academic buildings.* (p.31)
- Support the recommendation of the Committee on Disenfranchised Populations to change the names of buildings on campus using African American, Latino, Native American and Asian American references.* (p.20)

THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY VALUES

Introduction

The opening lines of Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities* -- "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair..." -- capture the state of race and ethnic relations in American society today. Barack Obama, the first sitting President to address a Commencement ceremony at Rutgers, is an example of the progress made by the United States in overcoming the legacies of the "color line." Indeed, many had believed that the prospect of electing a person of African descent to the Presidency of the United States could not occur during their lifetimes. Yet, Barack Obama was elected to the nation's highest office in November 2008, and the event is now history.

President Obama's election is just one symbol of the gains achieved by African Americans since the Black Power Movement and Modern Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, both of which opened up a number of previously exclusive cultural, political and economic spaces for a variety of marginalized groups. Even so, our society's many visible successes in overcoming the legacies of the color line nevertheless remain tempered by the realities of racism, ethnocentrism and bigotry that continue to be part and parcel of everyday life in the United States.

Institutions of higher education are not isolated from the tensions and contradictions that exist in society at large; during the Fall of 2015, college campuses across the country were home to student protests inspired by the Black Lives Matter Movement as well as the protests in Ferguson, Baltimore, and other cities. It was within this larger sociopolitical context that Dr. Richard L. Edwards, the Chancellor of Rutgers University-New Brunswick, established the Task Force on Inclusion and Community Values in November 2015. He gave the Task Force the following three directives:

- To listen to students in order to understand their views on the climate of inclusion and racial discourse at Rutgers University-New Brunswick;
- To define core values that reflect the University's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive community; and
- To recommend tangible changes that will reflect these aspirational, but achievable, core values.

Ms. Brianna Battle (Vice-President of the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA) and School of Arts and Sciences Senior) and Edward Ramsamy (Associate Professor and Chair of the Africana Studies Department) were appointed Co-Chairs of the Task Force.

In December 2015, the Co-Chairs identified members to serve on the Task Force. They sought to form a committee of students, administrators and faculty who had vested interests in discussions on inclusion and community values, and who represented the Rutgers-New Brunswick community broadly. Simultaneously, they strived to create a capable Task Force dedicated to working effectively and efficiently. After consulting with student organizations, the directors of the Cultural Centers, the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, and the Office of the Vice-Chancellor for Undergraduate Academic Affairs, among others, the Co-Chairs recommended that Dr. Edwards appoint the following individuals to the Task Force:

Name	Position/Constituency
Brianna Battle	Co-Chair; Vice President, Rutgers University Student Assembly; and Student, School of Arts and Sciences
Edward Ramsamy	Co-Chair; and Associate Professor, Dept. of Africana Studies
Jason Baerg	Student, Mason Gross School of the Arts
Alisa Bondarenko	Student, School of Arts and Sciences
Monet Davis	Student, School of Arts and Sciences
Rowen Kanj	Student, School of Arts and Sciences
Gilana Levavi	Student, School of Arts and Sciences
Julissa Mercado	Student, School of Arts and Sciences; and Latino Student Council President
Yasmin Ramadan	Student, School of Arts and Sciences
Austin Yip	Student, Rutgers Business School
Stephen Bronner	Board of Governors Professor of Political Science
Antoinette Farmer	Associate Dean, School of Social Work
M. Wilma Harris	Trustee, Rutgers University Board of Trustees
Ji Lee	Director, Asian American Cultural Center
Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel	Professor, Latino and Caribbean Studies and Comparative Literature
Felicia McGinty	Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
Jorge Schement	Vice Chancellor, Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Ben Sifuentes-Jáuregui	Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Academic Affairs; and Professor, American Studies and Comparative Literature
James H. Whitney III	Assistant Vice Chancellor, Undergraduate Academic Affairs

The Task Force held its first meeting on February 5, 2016. Chancellor Edwards opened the meeting by issuing his formal charge to the Task Force, after which issues central to the deliberations and work of the Task Force were discussed. The Task Force was then divided into four subcommittees: 1) Curriculum Reform and Faculty Issues; 2) Defining Core Values; 3) Focus Groups/Planning a Town Hall Meeting; and 4) Training, New Initiatives and Programming. The entire Task Force met twice a month during the Spring 2016 semester, with the subcommittees also meeting on a regular basis.

In order to address the Chancellor's charge, the Task Force

- Reviewed and analyzed literature on contemporary debates about inclusion and diversity in higher education
- Examined reports on diversity and inclusion from peer institutions
- Solicited input from and engaged in discussions with students, administrators and faculty about Rutgers-New Brunswick's current stance with respect to diversity and inclusiveness
- Elicited suggestions as to what initiatives and programs would strengthen and enhance Rutgers-New Brunswick's commitment to diversity
- Drafted criteria for identifying core values that reflect the University's commitment to creating a safe and inclusive community
- Conducted a series of focus group meetings with various student groups in order to 1) listen to their concerns regarding the current culture and climate of inclusiveness and diversity at Rutgers-New Brunswick; and 2) seek their input on what can be done to advance diversity, equity and inclusion at Rutgers-New Brunswick
- Convened an open-microphone Town Hall Meeting on Diversity and Inclusion for the entire Rutgers-New Brunswick community, in which attendees were invited to share their perspectives on issues of bias and inclusion and offer input towards developing a set of core values for the University
- Discussed with the School of Arts and Sciences Dean's Office the possibility of implementing a diversity requirement for graduation (RUSA has already discussed and passed a resolution calling for its implementation)

- Held a joint meeting with the Committee on Enslaved and Disenfranchised Populations in Rutgers History to explore areas of mutual interest and concern, and to see how this committee and the Task Force on Inclusion and Community Values can complement each other's work.

Through the above activities, as well as through its internal deliberations and discussions, the Task Force has gathered a wealth of information on how diversity and inclusion can be advanced and promoted at Rutgers. Of particular note are the invaluable contributions of the student members of the Task Force who helped spearhead a number of initiatives, including planning the Town Hall Meeting and drafting criteria for identifying core values.

Where We Stand at Rutgers-New Brunswick

Through the courageous activism of students and visionary interventions on the part of faculty and administrators, Rutgers is a more inclusive and diverse place today than it was when it was first established in 1776. The Civil Rights and Black Power Movements of the 1950s and 1960s had a profound impact on changing the demographic profile and intellectual climate at Rutgers. Departments such as Africana Studies and Latino and Caribbean Studies were institutionalized as a consequence of these struggles. Rutgers also has research centers and institutes whose central mission is closely aligned with the diversity mission of the institution, such as the Center for Race and Ethnicity, Institute for Research on Women, and the Centers for African Studies, Middle Eastern Studies and Latin American Studies. Black faculty and other faculty of color were subsequently hired, and the Rutgers campuses witnessed the growth of numerous programs designed to support diversity at Rutgers. Later initiatives, such as the Committee to Advance our Common Purposes, established in 1987, also served as a catalyst for change, offering path-breaking programs and encouraging intercultural dialogue through a variety of forums. From the publication of *In Every Classroom: The Report of the President's Select Committee for Lesbian and Gay Concerns* in 1989 to the establishment of the Center for Social Justice Education and LGBTQ Communities, Rutgers has been a trailblazer in creating programs and spaces to support LGBTQ students and to further social justice training. Of course, as new generations of students come to the University, and bring their rich social, cultural, and religious experiences, Rutgers is attentive to create, grow and sustain intellectual spaces so that all students can learn from each other and contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and plural community.

Rutgers-New Brunswick has existing programs that serve students from low-income and historically disadvantaged backgrounds; many of these programs are coordinated through the Office of Student Access and Educational Equity (SAEE). SAEE houses nine programs, largely Federal TRiO and Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) programs, serving first-generation and low-income students for nearly 50 years at Rutgers. The programs are the following: School of Arts and Sciences EOF, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences EOF, Graduate EOF, Louis Stokes Alliance for

Minority Participation, Ronald E. McNair Post baccalaureate Achievement Program, Student Support Services, Educational Outreach, and RU-1st. SAAE offers several programs to increase diversity and support for underrepresented students and hosts annual Access Week Programming for the entire Rutgers community. Through Educational Outreach, the office plans programs such as the James Dickson Carr Lecture Series and provides funding for extracurricular activities to support faculty and students.

The Rutgers Future Scholars Program (RFS) is an initiative that introduces first-generation, low-income, academically promising middle school students from the New Brunswick, Piscataway, Newark, and Camden school districts to the possibility of a college education.¹ The University provides full tuition scholarships and federal grants for students who successfully complete the pre-college phase of the Rutgers Future Scholars Program, if they gain admission to Rutgers University. A cohort of RFS students entered their fourth year at Rutgers in Fall 2016.

With specific reference to the current status of diversity and inclusion initiatives at Rutgers-New Brunswick, the Task Force recommends:

- The Office of Institutional Diversity should prepare a pamphlet/brochure highlighting the history of the university's struggles to confront issues of racism and discrimination on campus, detailing how underrepresented groups have fought for inclusion at the university.
- The demographic shifts that the university has undergone with respect to diversity from the 1960s onwards should be mapped in detail. While the Almanac produced by the Office of Institutional Diversity provides a general overview of demographic changes that have taken place in the Rutgers-New Brunswick population, specific data on this issue is lacking. Detailed demographic data is essential to any discussion on how inclusivity at Rutgers-New Brunswick can be improved with respect to race, gender and ethnicity. Specifically, it would be worthwhile to chart demographic trends in race, gender, and ethnicity that can be discerned in the following cohorts of individuals, from the 1960s to the present moment: undergraduate students; doctoral students; postdoctoral fellows; assistant professors; associate professors; full professors; and senior administrative staff.
- Reinstate the diversity question in the admissions application. Rutgers' admissions application previously had a question inquiring why the applicant wanted to study in an

¹ See

<http://futurescholars.rutgers.edu/futurescholars/aboutus/therfsprogram.aspx>).<http://futurescholars.rutgers.edu/futurescholars/aboutus/therfsprogram.aspx>

institution with a socially, culturally and racially diverse student body. We believe that having a question of why someone would like to apply to Rutgers directly referencing our undergraduate student body diversity sends a message to all applicants on how central diversity is to the academic mission of the university.

Defining Core Values

The committee was charged with identifying a set of core values “that reflect the university’s commitment to creating a safe and inclusive community.” In this age of polarization and fragmentation, it is important for Rutgers-New Brunswick to define a shared mission and a set of values upon which we agree, and which unite us as a community. Students entering Rutgers-New Brunswick should have a clear sense of what Rutgers-New Brunswick values as an institution of higher education, and what undergirds the university’s mission and vision.

Through our deliberations and our conversations with students in focus groups and town hall meetings, the Task Force identified a set of four themes that could potentially serve as the basis for identifying the values that characterize Rutgers-New Brunswick. The Task Force has chosen to present these core values in pairs as well as verbal statements to further elucidate how the Rutgers-New Brunswick community interacts, and may seek to interact, with its values not only as ideals but also as action-oriented goals.

*1. Work towards **Inclusion** and respect **Difference***

It is well known that diversity is considered a source of pride for the Rutgers New Brunswick community. Often it is the deciding factor in the choice to attend, work at, or apply to Rutgers-New Brunswick for individuals across the nation and across the world. Engaging with our diversity, however, is not always at the forefront of our goals. We must take our valued diversity a step further and work towards the ***inclusion*** of the diverse identities represented at Rutgers-New Brunswick. While our goal is equity, we must also remember to respect and accept ***difference*** without seeking to erase it on our path towards inclusion.

*2. Provide **Opportunity** and ensure **Access***

Opportunity is bountiful at Rutgers-New Brunswick, whose members take pride in its diverse set of programs, areas of study, scholarships, fellowships, and more. Rutgers must continue to prioritize providing ***opportunity*** to its members and ensuring that these opportunities are created and distributed equally among its members. In short, as our opportunities expand and diversify, ***access*** to these opportunities must be guaranteed.

3. Value **Innovation** and promote **Leadership**

Research is at the forefront of Rutgers University's greatest achievements as an institution of higher education. Conducting cutting-edge research to benefit the well-being of local and state communities, as well as offering education of the highest quality, are both highlighted in the University's mission statement. Thus, there is no doubt that the Rutgers community values (and should continue to value) *innovation* in all areas of inquiry, research, and teaching. To preserve innovation, Rutgers must also promote and sustain a culture of *leadership*, to continue being at the forefront of the American academic experience.

4. Foster **Global Reach** and honor **Humanity**

One of the primary purposes of a liberal arts education is to enable students to draw connections between different human experiences and to use the knowledge they gain thereof to improve the human condition. With the slogan "Revolutionary for 250 Years," Rutgers recently celebrated its 250th anniversary with a focus on how knowledge and ideas nurtured at Rutgers have transformed society, from pre-revolutionary America to the present. Over the years, Rutgers students have also resonated with the phrase "Jersey Roots, Global Reach," which highlights the relationships between Rutgers, the state of New Jersey, and the global impact that Rutgers alumni have had upon the world. The Rutgers New Brunswick community should continue to foster *global reach* in the form of academic, athletic and professional collaboration with nations and institutions all over the world. In doing so, we come across cultures and causes different from and similar to our own that remind us to honor our *humanity* and seek to remain active in service to our fellow human beings.

The Task Force believes that these four themes capture the University's commitment to "creating a safe and inclusive community." We suggest that the University community be given an opportunity to reflect upon them through discussion. After incorporating any modifications and suggestions as necessary, these themes can be formally adopted as a statement that defines the core values that we embrace as part of the Rutgers-New Brunswick community. Ultimately, the Task Force would like to see these Core Values become as memorable and as integral to our institutional fabric as the Rutgers alma mater. The Task Force suggests the following recommendations with regards to use of the Core Values:

- Publish the Core Values on the Rutgers-New Brunswick website.
- Emphasize these values during New Student Orientation and New Faculty/Staff Orientation.
- Work with student organizations to discuss, embrace and adopt the Core Values.

Curricula & Faculty, and New Initiatives on Inclusion and Diversity/ Race and Social Justice

One of the purposes of education is to arm students with the relevant knowledge and analytical skills they need to grapple with the complex problems that plague society. Indeed, many students are deeply concerned about current issues relating to socio-economic inequality and racial justice. During its deliberations, the Task Force held conversations with students through focus group meetings and a town hall meeting. One of the concerns that students raised during these meetings is that Rutgers-New Brunswick does not have in its curricula a requirement for students to engage in topics relating to inclusion and diversity nationally and internationally.² During their conversations with the Task Force, students found the current omission of the diversity requirement troubling, especially when considering the tumultuous state of current race relations in the country and the recent student protests across college campuses around these issues.

W.E. B. Du Bois, the prominent African American intellectual and activist, identified “the problem of the color line” more than a century ago as the “cancer” at the heart of America; indeed, this “cancer” continues to eat away at our society well into this century. Given the current political context shaped by the uprisings in Ferguson and Baltimore, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the recent student protests on college campuses, Rutgers-New Brunswick needs to prepare students to engage intellectually with such developments, and a diversity requirement would do just this. It would not only expose students to some of the pressing sociopolitical and cultural issues of the day, but also introduce them to ideas and opinions different from their own. A diversity requirement would challenge students to leave their comfort zones and grapple, using their intellect and their creativity, with the rapidly changing society in which they live. Indeed, many of our peer institutions (The Ohio State University, University of California-Berkeley, and Northwestern University) have a diversity requirement as part of their general education requirements for graduation. The University of Illinois (as of 2015) requires students to take a course on “American minority culture” in order to facilitate a more inclusive atmosphere on campus. Even schools focusing on technical education, such as MIT, have extensive diversity requirements as part of their curricular structure. Therefore, it is striking that Rutgers-New Brunswick does not, situated as it is in one of the most densely populated and most diverse states in the country. Serious attention needs to be given to this issue. Educating the future leaders of our state, the nation, and the world will be a woefully incomplete endeavor if

² Each of the liberal arts colleges of the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus (Rutgers College, Douglass College, Cook College, Livingston College) had a diversity requirement prior to the 2007 implementation of the “Transformation of Undergraduate Education.” Additionally, before the implementation of the SAS Core Curriculum, SAS required students to take one course on “diversity” and one course on “global awareness.” In order to fulfill the diversity requirement, students were required to take a course that engaged in “theoretical issues and political debates pertaining to questions of ‘diversity,’ namely race, migration and diasporas, gender and sexualities.” With respect to the “global awareness requirement,” students were required to take a course that examined “the interconnectedness of the world’s peoples, cultures, [and] environments...deepen[s] area based knowledge, and encourage[s] analysis of global or transnational processes.”

we cannot provide them with the tools to address and engage critically with questions of hierarchy, oppression, and the steps to promote equality and justice in an increasingly diverse world.

To explore how a diversity requirement might be received at Rutgers-New Brunswick, representatives from the Task Force met with the SAS Core Evaluation Committee and Dean Peter March. During these conversations, the committee raised the concern that the Rutgers-New Brunswick student body as a whole would not be receptive to a diversity requirement in their education. To alleviate this concern, student representatives on the Task Force drafted a resolution to garner support behind the idea of implementing a diversity requirement, and successfully passed it through the Rutgers-New Brunswick student governing body, the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA), by majority vote.

The Rutgers-New Brunswick Chancellor's Office should play a key role in encouraging the different schools at Rutgers-New Brunswick to require students, as part of their graduation requirements, to engage in the topic of diversity in a substantive way. Given its plurality of schools, a one size fits all model is unlikely to work at Rutgers-New Brunswick. Therefore, the Task Force recommends the following:

- Chancellor's Office should ask each of the Deans to submit a report describing how their respective schools' curricula require students to engage the issues of diversity and inclusion in a substantive way. Rutgers-New Brunswick should aim to move towards implementing a diversity requirement as part of each school's graduation requirements.

The Task Force encourages the hiring of a scholar/activist who engages in scholarship on contemporary political movements for racial and social justice. In this respect, the Task Force specifically recommends the resuscitation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Title Chair (MLK Chair). The MLK Chair was instituted by President Mason Gross in 1969, and was first occupied by Dr. Samuel DeWitt Proctor, a prominent educator, theologian, and public servant. The illustrious Dr. Proctor was the president of two historically Black colleges, the first Associate Director of the Peace Corps during the Kennedy Administration, and the Northeast Regional Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity during the Johnson Administration. He also served as a mentor and advisor to prominent leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Upon Dr. Proctor's retirement, the MLK Chair was subsequently held by David Levering Lewis and Keith Wailoo. Since Dr. Wailoo's departure to Princeton University in 2010, the MLK Chair has stood vacant.

- It is the strong recommendation of the Task Force that the MLK Chair be reestablished, with its new occupant recruited in the tradition of Dr. Proctor: a scholar who is actively engaged in the struggle for civil rights through both scholarship and involvement in

movements for social justice. This should be a senior appointment affiliated with departments that hold diversity as central to their intellectual missions, such as the Departments of Africana Studies; American Studies; Latino and Caribbean Studies; African, Middle Eastern and South Asian Languages and Literatures; Comparative Literature; Spanish and Portuguese; and Women's and Gender Studies.

- Establish Paul Robeson and Sojourner Truth Professorships. Just as the Henry Rutgers Professorships and Henry Rutgers Term Chairs were initiatives launched by the central administration to assist in faculty recruitment and retention, the Paul Robeson and Sojourner Truth Chairs can serve as bases to recruit and/or retain faculty who lead research on race and ethnicity.

In many of the forums organized by the Task Force, students raised the lack of diversity among faculty as a major area of concern. Black and Latino students in particular have noted how they can complete several semesters at Rutgers-New Brunswick without encountering a single faculty member who looks like them. There is an urgent need for Rutgers-New Brunswick to continue its efforts to diversify the faculty. Since the 1970s, the number of Black and Latino faculty at Rutgers-New Brunswick has decreased proportionally and numerically. For example, in 1976, African Americans and Latinos constituted 6.8% and 2.1% of the faculty, respectively, but by 2004, these numbers decreased to 4% and 2%.³ From what the Task Force has been able to glean about the current state of affairs, from figures provided by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Rutgers-New Brunswick, no significant increase in the number of Black and Latino faculty has taken place at Rutgers-New Brunswick since 2004. African Americans make up 2% of the University's Full Professors, 4% of its Associate Professors, and 4.8% of its Assistant Professors; Latinos comprise 2% of Full Professors, 4% of Associate Professors, and 5.8% of Assistant Professors. Currently, Rutgers-New Brunswick ranks 8th among its peer institutions in the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA) with respect to the overall percentage of African Americans on its tenured or tenure-track faculty.⁴ These numbers are a cause for concern, especially considering the fact that Rutgers-New Brunswick is located in New Jersey, one of the most diverse states in the nation, and possesses a student body that is more diverse than that of many BTAA institutions. For these reasons, diversifying the faculty should be a top priority for the University.

³ See "Feminist Interventions: Creating New Institutional Spaces for Women at Rutgers" by Mary Hawkworth et al, *Doing Diversity in Higher Education: Faculty Leaders Share Challenges and Strategies*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press.

⁴ See concluding remarks, Black on the Banks Conference, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmHAEgDU_h4&index=5&list=PLqxsGMRIY6u7c5NCZYHRSPYSqSUXSxMUUp

- The Task Force recommends that Rutgers should strive to lead the Big Ten in faculty diversity in recruitment and retention, and dedicate the necessary resources to make that happen.

Attention should be paid to the structural imbalances between traditional departments, and departments such as Africana, Latino and Caribbean studies, African, Middle Eastern, and South Asian Languages and Literatures (AMESALL), and Jewish studies, to name a few, whose core intellectual mission deals with issues of diversity. Departments such as these should play a leading role in conversations about curriculum reform, faculty diversity, and cultural competency, among other topics.

The Chancellor's Office should request all academic units at Rutgers-New Brunswick to craft a multi-year plan detailing how they will diversify their respective faculties. The central administration, perhaps through the Office of Institutional Diversity, should develop mechanisms to assist and monitor the diversity efforts of each academic unit. Many of our peer institutions already have such mechanisms in place.

- As important as recruitment is for the diversification of new faculty, we are also aware of how central retention is to maintaining racial, ethnic, and gender diversity in the professoriate. The members of the Task Force therefore recommend the creation of a university-wide program for faculty retention. This program should include funding for mentoring of assistant and associate faculty members to continue expanding their research and teaching profiles, as well as funding to retain faculty who are research active.
- As a possible medium or long-term measure to increase faculty diversity, Rutgers-New Brunswick could collaborate with other Big Ten institutions to offer graduate fellowships to promising minority students working in fields in which racial, gender, and ethnic minorities are underrepresented. These graduate students would become part of a future pool of prospective faculty. Rutgers-New Brunswick should initiate the discussion on how this can be implemented across the Big Ten.

Student members of the Task Force, as well as students who participated in our focus group meetings, frequently commented that they repeatedly encounter culturally insensitive remarks in the classroom. Students of color and Muslim students in particular, remarked on their discomfort when professors utilize generalizations about their respective identities in the classroom, or allow other students in the class to draw generalizations unchecked. In addition, students complained that they are often called upon by professors to be representatives of their particular identity groups, even in courses unrelated to cultural relations or politics, and asked to comment on positions taken by their identity group at large.

- To address this problem, Rutgers-New Brunswick should encourage all current faculty and staff, and require all new faculty and staff, to participate in some form of cultural competency and sensitivity training. This will increase understanding, appreciation, and responsiveness to student cultural diversity. Currently, there are no fiscal resources or personnel dedicated to providing cultural competency and sensitivity training for professionals on campus. To meet this need, the Task Force recommends support for hiring staff solely dedicated to providing cultural competency and sensitivity training for faculty and staff.
- Unit officers should be encouraged to set at least one faculty/staff meeting per year specifically for cultural competency and sensitivity training.
- The Task Force recommends that Rutgers-New Brunswick initiate a comprehensive survey assessing the climate of inclusion and diversity at the institution. This survey should be offered to faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Such a survey has not been conducted in over ten years.
- Following a recommendation from our students, the Task Force recommends that Rutgers-New Brunswick include a question about diversity sensitivity and content on course evaluations, so students can assess faculty and curricular inclusion of diversity as a consistent element in the academic exchanges taking place at Rutgers-New Brunswick.
- During New Student Orientation, the SCREAM (Students Challenging Realities and Educating Against Myths) Theatre's productions use improvisational theatre and interactive educational skits to highlight issues of sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, sexual harassment and bystander intervention on campus. During the Task Force's focus groups, students mentioned the major impact that the SCREAM Theatre's productions have had at Rutgers-New Brunswick, and suggested that New Student Orientation planners use the SCREAM Theatre productions as a model to develop similar programs that highlight issues of inclusion and diversity. For the last two years, The Center for Social Justice Education & LGBT Communities have worked with senior student orientation leaders to help them conduct the Language Matters social justice and implicit bias training module for all incoming students at orientation. However, additional efforts similar to the SCREAM module should be explored.
- The committee recommends that the university provide an array of experiential, high impact co-curricular programming on diversity and inclusion, supported institutionally. The university should require students to attend a number of these offerings within their first two years on campus to ensure their exposure to these issues.
- Given the deep political and ideological divisions of the contemporary period, more programs that encourage civil dialogue about difficult topics ought to be sponsored.

New Student Orientation planners need to explore how incoming students can be better introduced to the intellectual missions of departments that have issues of diversity and inclusion as part of their intellectual core, such as the Departments of Africana Studies, African, Middle East and South Asian Languages and Literatures; American Studies; Latino and Caribbean Studies; Spanish and Portuguese; and Women's and Gender Studies. Students in the focus groups noted that they did not receive an adequate introduction to academic units during Orientation. One problem is the way in which Academic Planning and Advising (APA) programs are presented during the orientation. The APA programs are designed to introduce students to Rutgers-New Brunswick's liberal arts programs of study and assist them in selecting their first semester courses. Unfortunately, the sessions on different major options are held simultaneously, resulting in very high attendance in majors sessions for high demand disciplines such as biology and computer science, and very low attendance in major sessions for less familiar disciplines that deal consistently with diversity and inclusion.

- The organizers of APA days, New Student Orientation, and faculty from departments who have diversity at their intellectual core should meet to devise a new format to more effectively introduce incoming students to these disciplines.
- The committee recommends including a breakout session that allows the Cultural Center Collaborative to speak to incoming students about resources, programs, and services available through the Cultural Center Collaborative and the individual Cultural Centers.
- To make academic units of the University more aware of the important work done by the Cultural Centers in promoting cultural pluralism and intercultural understanding, the Task Force recommends that the directors of the Cultural Centers be invited to at least one undergraduate director's meeting and one Chairs' meeting per academic year. This will help familiarize the heads of academic units/departments at Rutgers-New Brunswick with the Cultural Centers' work.

The campus requires more signage relating to the various Cultural Centers. For example, signage indicating the Asian American Cultural Center is absent from the major notice boards of Livingston Campus.

Our Task Force supports recommendations from the Committee for Disenfranchised Populations regarding the identification of building and campus spaces that would showcase names of important alumni and historical figures of African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American descent, as well as women and other communities.

The University should continue to support measures to promote the legacy of Paul Robeson, Rutgers' most famous and accomplished graduate. The life and legacy of Robeson embodies two Rutgers slogans, "Jersey Roots, Global Reach," and "Revolutionary for 250 Years." A towering figure in the African American struggle for human dignity and democratic rights, Paul Robeson

connected with oppressed peoples around the world who were also fighting for political rights and economic justice. The Task Force recommends the following to promote Robeson's legacy at Rutgers-New Brunswick:

- Work with the Admissions Office and New Student Orientation to ensure that prospective and incoming students learn about the life and legacy of Paul Robeson and his affiliation with Rutgers-New Brunswick. While the Rutgers "Anthem Video" has a snippet on Paul Robeson, the Task Force feels that given his stature as a pioneering civil rights activist in the United States and abroad, this distinguished Rutgers Alumnus deserves to be featured more prominently during New Student Orientation.
- Promote more classes at Rutgers-New Brunswick on the life and legacy of Paul Robeson. The Task Force recommends that more courses be held at the Paul Robeson Cultural Center so that students can connect with the center and with Paul Robeson's legacy.
- Scale up the Paul Robeson Distinguished Lecture Series, established by the Rutgers Africana Studies Department, to mirror Harvard's W.E.B. Du Bois Lectures or Princeton's Toni Morrison Lectures, instituted in honor of those individuals.⁵ Both of these institutions publish the lectures of these series as books; similarly, Rutgers-New Brunswick's Paul Robeson Distinguished Lecture Series could coordinate with Rutgers University Press to offer the lectures as a published book.
- Rutgers-New Brunswick should support and promote the efforts of Rutgers Class of 1971 to build a Paul Robeson plaza on the College Avenue Campus. Perhaps Rutgers-New Brunswick can complement this initiative by placing a statue bench⁶ of Robeson in a prominent location.
- Work with the Paul Robeson Cultural Center to establish yearlong celebratory programs and events to honor and commemorate the 100th anniversary of Paul Robeson's graduation during the 2018-2019 academic year.
- Rutgers-New Brunswick should establish a short-term Scholar/Activist in Residence program so that students and the Rutgers-New Brunswick community at large can engage with prominent academics, policy makers and/or activists who are involved in struggles

⁵ See W.E.B. Du Bois Lectures, Harvard University, <http://dubois.fas.harvard.edu/w-e-b-du-bois-lectures> and Toni Morrison Lectures, Princeton University, <http://aas.princeton.edu/lecture-series/toni-morrison-lectures>

⁶ For examples of statue benches, see https://www.google.com/search?q=statue+bench&biw=1007&bih=507&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj4l7-a3YbQAhUESiYKHeFaCVgQ_AUIBygC

for cultural pluralism, religious tolerance, and racial and economic justice. Student members of the Task Force as well as other student leaders have spoken very positively about meeting and interacting with recent guest lecturers at Rutgers-New Brunswick such as Professor Craig Wilder, Sister Souljah, Mayor Ras Baraka and Angela Davis. Students particularly benefitted from interacting with these individuals in small-scale forums. Having such individuals spend a few days or a week at Rutgers-New Brunswick attending specific classes and/or talking with students over a meal would prove to be an enriching experience for the campus community.

African Americans, Latinos and Afro-Latinos

While the Black population of New Jersey stands at 15 percent, Black students currently constitute only 8 percent of the student population at Rutgers-New Brunswick. Rutgers Black student organizations and Rutgers Black alumni have expressed concern at this disproportion, further noting that the percentage of black students at Rutgers-New Brunswick was much higher during the 1990s.

Likewise, Latinos and Afro-Latinos represent 19.7 percent of the New Jersey population and 49.9 percent of the New Brunswick population, according to the Census, but only 13 percent of Rutgers-New Brunswick's undergraduate student population. The Latino population in New Jersey has become widely diverse in the last 10 years to include increased populations of Mexican American, Central American and South American descent who coexist with an increasingly diverse Caribbean and West Indian population. Finally, the growth of the Afro-Latino population in the nation and in the state also calls for a transformation of fields of knowledge like Ethnic, Latino and Africana studies to include a mixed race growing population that identifies simultaneously as Hispanic/Latino, Caribbean and Black.

- The Task Force suggests analyzing enrollment patterns among different racial, gender, and ethnic groups at Rutgers-New Brunswick; precise enrollment data would help the Office of Enrollment Management, together with the Paul Robeson Cultural Center, and the Centers of Latino Arts and Culture; the Asian American Cultural Center; Black and Latino student organizations; and Black and Latino alumni to develop a robust strategy to increase Black and Latino enrollment at Rutgers-New Brunswick.

A common area of concern for African Americans and Latinos is lower access to higher education. In 2015, nationally, 34.9% of African Americans and 36.6% of Latinos between the ages of 18 and 24 were enrolled in a degree-granting post-secondary institution. Based on the latest data available, the 6-year graduation rate for cohorts beginning college in 2008 was 40.9% and 53.5% for African Americans and Latinos, respectively, and 63.2% for whites. In the last 10

years, research shows that Black and Latino males have a decreased possibility of completing a college degree.

The relatively low numbers of Black and Latino students majoring in STEM fields is a cause for concern. Preliminary discussions between members of the Task Force and a few science faculty members have highlighted the need for innovative pedagogic strategies to help increase enrollment and retention of historically marginalized groups in the sciences. One such strategy has been employed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where the traditional lecture model for large science courses has been restructured into a more interactive class format. After three semesters of using this new interactive pedagogic model, UNC-Chapel Hill has seen dramatic improvement in the performance of all students, and in particular, that of African American, Latino, and first-generation students. Currently, UNC-Chapel Hill is investing \$1.8 million into transforming the style of introductory science instruction. Similar pedagogic innovations and initiatives should be explored and supported at Rutgers-New Brunswick.⁷

There are a number of efforts afoot to strengthen and expand programs that help disadvantaged racial groups and low-income students gain access to college and navigate their higher education experiences. One of the most recent initiatives emerging from Dr. Sifuentes-Jáuregui's office and Chancellor Edwards's office is RU-1st, which aims to increase support, coordination and programming for first-generation, high-need and/or underrepresented students. A central part of the RU-1st initiative is the Paul Robeson Leadership Institute (PRLI), an expansion of the federal TRiO Student Support Services Grant, which provides students with an infrastructure of support specifically geared towards increasing graduation rates, with an emphasis on underrepresented men of color. The PRLI includes a summer bridge experience for students who have been admitted to the University outside of the EOF Program or other support programs. The Departments of Africana Studies and Latino and Caribbean Studies are partnering with Undergraduate Academic Affairs and SAEE to coordinate and execute the goals of the Institute; in the summer of 2016, they collaborated in the three week Paul Robeson Leadership Institute Summer Training.

African American and Latino students have observed the lack of a "go-to dean" within the School of Arts and Sciences who deals specifically with issues relating to diversity and inclusion. Some students mention learning about positions such as "Dean of Minority Affairs" or "Dean of Emerging Population and Special Retention Efforts" from alumni and parents who attended Rutgers-New Brunswick in earlier decades. These offices specifically catered to the needs, concerns, and interests of historically disenfranchised groups. While Student Support Services is charged with addressing these populations' needs today, SAS, the largest school at Rutgers-New Brunswick, does not have the equivalent of a "Dean of Minority Affairs." It would

⁷ See "Where Diversity Works", *Christian Science Monitor Weekly*, pp.26-32

be worthwhile for the Chancellor's Office and SAS to initiate a conversation about establishing such a position within SAS.

First Generation & Underrepresented Students

There are approximately 10,000 undergraduate students at Rutgers–New Brunswick whose economic and educational circumstances have put them at a disadvantage. Currently, approximately 2,000 of these students receive critical support through initiatives like Student Support Services, as well as other state-and federally funded programs. To that end, Rutgers-NB has begun coordinating all support programs under its RU-1st Initiative, which draws upon the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) model to offer support to those approximately 8,000 students—first generation, low income or minority—who do not receive advising or financial support like traditional EOF students do.

Indeed, RU-1st strategies such as intrusive advising, high impact programming, and the coordination of information have proven effective to support the needs of first-generation, low-income and/or underrepresented students. Thus, the Task Force recommends that, along the lines of identifying and naming an office of Dean of Minority Affairs, Rutgers-New Brunswick restore the Office of Multicultural Affairs, as well as strengthen programs such as RU-1st by providing appropriate and permanent funding to carry out its mission effectively. More than ever, first-generation students need high impact programming (conferences, special events at Orientation) and advising; Black and Latino students, in particular men, need focused programming to support their academic endeavors. In summary, RU-1st promises to be an effective structure; however, it needs to be funded and supported at the highest levels and across all schools.

Recommendations:

- Permanently authorize RU-1st as a part of the institution to support more students.
- Immediate support should be given by the Chancellor's office to elevate signature High Impact Programming such as the Annual Access Week and the James Dickson Carr Lecture Series, in order to increase their presence on campus and to draw high profile speakers to educate the campus community on issues surrounding access, diversity and equity.
- Organize an event for Students of Color at the beginning of the Academic Year and provide spaces for these students to feel welcome during their transition to Rutgers-New Brunswick.
- Create a role for an established staff member and program to support historically underrepresented men, particularly Black and Latino.

- Provide additional Advisors for first-generation students, to support research indicating that first-generation students have a higher graduation rate when intrusive advising is provided.

Asian American Studies

Currently, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders comprise 20% of the 40,000 undergraduate and graduate students at Rutgers-New Brunswick. During the Task Force's conversation with students representing Asian American interests, many lamented the lack of an Asian-American Studies major, department, or program at Rutgers-New Brunswick. Asian American Studies, currently an underrepresented area of study at Rutgers-New Brunswick, could benefit from the establishment of an Asian American Studies department or program.

The Task Force recommends that resources be dedicated to pursue the establishment of an Asian American Studies department or program at Rutgers-New Brunswick. This department/program can serve as an academic counterpart to the Asian American Cultural Center, as Latino and Caribbean Studies is for the Center for Latino Arts and Cultures, and Africana Studies is for the Paul Robeson Center.

Asian American Studies, through its analysis of the history and experience of Asian Americans in the United States context, provides a vital intellectual lens through which the study of race and ethnicity can be complicated beyond the black-white binary. It also provides a critical framework through which to understand how the black-white binary is deployed during key moments of political turmoil. Analysis of these concerns would complement the examination of inequality and identity in other disciplines as well, such as Africana Studies, Anthropology, Political Science, American Studies, and Women's and Gender Studies.

Another issue central to the Asian American Studies discipline is that of immigration policy, currently a critical and controversial topic in world politics. As a field, Asian American Studies strives to analyze the ways in which race, ethnicity, culture, and experience intersect with colonialism as well as the policies relating to the movement of peoples from Asia to the Americas. In what ways do these forces impact the political power of Asian Americans, issues pertaining to nation-state exclusion, and labor practices? What role do the contested borders of the United States, both locally and globally, play in the position of people of Asian descent in America? Since Asian migrants and immigrants have historically been included into and excluded from the national framework on the basis of racial and political theories, Asian American Studies is a powerful lens through which to explore these questions, and thereby perform "critical studies of democracy," a burgeoning field of analysis in a variety of disciplines.

In addition to enabling scholarship on national political life, modern citizenship, and exclusion laws, Asian American Studies is also critical for the analysis of transnationalism and how belonging and cultural production are constructed beyond the nation-state. As the axes of economic and political power shift globally and China, South Korea, and India emerge as newly prospering nations, it would be worth exploring how Asian American communities envision themselves in light of these shifts, particularly whether they lean towards embracing a cosmopolitan identity or a diasporic identity.

Asian American Studies has grown in recent years as a direct response to increased undergraduate demand, faculty research and job placement. This growth has been spurred by demographic shifts in the Asian American population. While 45 years ago, the majority of 1.5 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the US at the time had been American-born, today 12 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the nation are immigrants.

The establishment of an Asian American Studies department or program, and the Asian Americanists based therein, can strengthen the intellectual bonds between the humanities, the social sciences, the life and physical sciences, and the professional schools. An Asian American Studies department/program would be integral in building Rutgers-New Brunswick's global citizenship and public engagement; by working with various units across SAS, it would increase the diversity of the SAS curriculum and would be a crucial aspect of Rutgers-New Brunswick's international outreach efforts.

Religion, Muslim Students and the Quest for an Inclusive Community

Religion has emerged as a major axis of conflict in the contemporary period. With respect to how institutions should respond to different religious beliefs, one of the Task Force's members, Stephen Bronner, has written, "it is useful to consider the famous remark by Voltaire from his *Letters from England* in which he notes that a state with one religion tends towards despotism, a state with two religions toward civil war, while a democratic state with thirty [religions] enables its citizens to pray after their fashion and sleep soundly at night."⁸ As a public institution of higher learning, Rutgers-New Brunswick should afford all members of its community the opportunity to practice their faiths in a climate of tolerance and mutual respect. However, institutions of higher education are not immune from broader societal prejudices and bigotry. Recently, much of this prejudice has been directed against members of the Muslim faith. Approximately 4,000 Muslim students attend Rutgers-New Brunswick. During the Task Force's

⁸ See Stephen E. Bronner, *Reclaiming the Enlightenment: Toward a Politics of Radical Engagement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004: p. 141.

focus group meetings with the executive boards of every Muslim student organization on the New Brunswick/Piscataway campus, Muslim students expressed their concern that Rutgers-New Brunswick has not reached out to them to the extent they have reached out to other minority or historically disenfranchised groups on campus. Citing a sense of marginalization and alienation on campus, Muslim students voiced the following recommendations to the Task Force to address these concerns:

- The Rutgers-New Brunswick curriculum should offer more courses that focus on the Muslim experience, especially in the United States. Additionally, Rutgers-New Brunswick should explore the possibility of establishing an Islamic Studies minor and/or major. Students raised the point that while a strong Jewish Studies Department exists at Rutgers-New Brunswick, the intellectual field of Islamic Studies is not represented.
- An attempt should be made to increase the number of Muslim faculty, administrators, and student affairs professionals who understand the needs and concerns of the Muslim community at Rutgers-New Brunswick.
- Develop more proactive initiatives and programs to address the rising tide of Islamophobia, Anti-Semitism, and other forms of bigotry currently pervading American society. In particular, students have voiced concerns about the current bias incident reporting system, especially as it pertains to incidents against the Muslim population. During the Task Force's focus group meetings, Muslim students mentioned that approximately seventy bias incidents against Muslim students took place (and were reported) during the 2016-2017 academic year, including verbal and physical threats; physical assaults, commonly in the form of forced removal of a Muslim woman's headscarf; and bias discrimination by professor or instructor. Very little action was taken to address these incidents, however, as a majority of those who filed reports were never contacted after the fact, and the Bias Prevention and Education Committee has not recently carried out any initiatives to address or educate the campus community on bias prevention. While the Rutgers-New Brunswick police have reached out to the Muslim community, the bias reporting system needs to be improved.
- The Task Force recommends that the Bias Prevention and Education Committee meet with Muslim, Jewish, and other groups' student leaders to strategize not only on bias reporting but also on improving the ways in which bias incidents against Muslim students are addressed. Additionally, the Task Force recommends that statistics on reported bias incidents should be made publicly available.
- The Task Force also recommends that the Bias Prevention and Education Committee be enabled to undertake educational programmatic initiatives in collaboration with student organizations in order to spread awareness about bias prevention.

- Prayer spaces for the Muslim community are needed on all of the New Brunswick campuses. Recently, a new prayer space has been established on Livingston campus as well as in the Civic Square Building at the Bloustein and Mason Gross schools. However, students mentioned that they are particularly needed in residence halls because early morning prayer can pose a problem for students who do not want to be awakened by a roommate engaging in prayer. We therefore recommend the Office of Resident Life be receptive to working with Muslim student organizations to demarcate inter-faith meditation spaces in the residence halls. Better signage is need for the interfaith space in the College Avenue Campus Student Center.
- Students expressed concern that facilities for ablution in preparation for prayer are lacking on the New Brunswick campus, and that existing restrooms do not meet their needs for this purpose. They recommend that such facilities be built on each campus and that students be made aware of their locations. New York University’s Islamic Center might serve as a model for an ablution facilities infrastructure; Rutgers-New Brunswick should explore how such accommodations can be developed here.
- A need exists for more vendors serving halal food on the New Brunswick campus, as well as to improve halal and kosher dining options within dining halls. According to students with whom the Task Force spoke, the only halal vendor at Rutgers-New Brunswick at the moment is King Pita in the College Avenue Student Center (excluding food trucks). The lack of halal vendor options poses particular challenges for commuter students who are not on Rutgers-New Brunswick meal plans, as it often forces them to go without food all day while on campus. To serve their needs, Rutgers-New Brunswick should strive to have at least one vendor that serves halal food in each of the student centers. In addition, Muslim students voiced their frustrations with the current Rutgers-New Brunswick meal plans, which require them to call ahead to order halal food. To address this difficulty, the students propose that halal food should be commonly available at dining halls, and that Dining Services should work toward the creation of a halal meal plan.
- The need for faculty and staff cultural competency and sensitivity training was highlighted in our conversations with Muslims students, who observed that they are frequently called upon to speak for their group (i.e. “Muslims”) in classrooms and elsewhere on campus. Such training can help make faculty aware, for example, that students cannot be penalized for absences due to attending prayers on Fridays or religious holidays (as per New Jersey law and Rutgers-New Brunswick policy).
- The senior administration of Rutgers-New Brunswick and the University president should hold regular annual meetings with representatives from historically marginalized groups and groups impacted by the rising tide of bigotry, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and Anti-

Semitism. This will provide these groups with opportunities to voice their concerns to the University leadership, and discuss proactive strategies to deal with the challenges that confront them.

- Additionally, a focus group survey was disseminated to the Jewish student community, which also expressed concern with bias incidents and prejudice targeted towards Jewish students. These incidents included the use of swastikas, derogatory terms and offensive language about the Holocaust to intimidate Jewish students. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the Bias Prevention and Education Committee meet with the Jewish student community to ensure that these incidents are addressed.

Native American Students

Institutions of higher education are just beginning to respond to the needs of Native American students, who are all too often rendered invisible on American college campuses. The Task Force saw an urgent need for Rutgers-New Brunswick to not only better serve the Native American students currently attending Rutgers-New Brunswick, but to also increase its outreach to the Native American communities of the surrounding areas. The following are specific recommendations made by the Task Force:

- Provide Native American students with the intellectual spaces and student support services necessary for them to thrive at Rutgers-New Brunswick.
- Incorporate Native American students into existing programs at Rutgers-New Brunswick that support students from underrepresented groups and aim to increase their retention rates.
- Hire faculty in an appropriate department to facilitate the development of a curriculum that addresses Native American history and culture.
- Hire a Student Affairs professional to develop programs and co-curricular initiatives to support Native American students, and to launch outreach efforts that engage the broader Native American communities of the surrounding areas.
- The Task Force endorses the recommendation of the Committee on Enslaved and Disenfranchised Populations in Rutgers History to “establish an exchange program with the Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas.”
- In an effort to recognize the identities and histories of Native American peoples, many cities, states, and some universities have renamed Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Discoverers’ Day, or Native American Day. Brown University was the most recent

university to announce that it would now celebrate Columbus Day as Indigenous Peoples' Day.⁹ At Rutgers-New Brunswick, resources should be committed towards the establishment of an Annual Ivan Van Sertima Lecture Series, to take place on Columbus Day. The late Ivan Van Sertima, a faculty member in the Department of Africana Studies, pioneered the interrogation of Columbus Day in his book, *They Came Before Columbus: The African Presence in Ancient America*. Van Sertima testified before the Congressional Committee on Columbus's Quincentennial. He argued that the 500th anniversary of Columbus's arrival should not be celebrated as a discovery but rather as a "celebration of the extraordinary meeting and mixing of the peoples of the world."¹⁰ This Lecture Series would help carry out Van Sertima's reflections on the intersection of the various cultures that contributed to the history of the Americas.

Transgender Rights

The daily struggles of transgender Americans for recognition, rights, safety, and acceptance is emerging as one of the major social justice issues of our time. Historically, transgender people, individuals who identify with a gender that does not correspond with the sex recorded on their birth certificates, have been subject to various forms of harassment and violence. In recent times, however, transgender activists have raised important questions regarding their rights and accommodations, and icons of pop culture, such as Janet Mock, Laverne Cox, have helped to bring transgender issues to the fore.

The issues surrounding transgender rights gained national attention when conservative activists in Houston, Texas mobilized around the slogan, "No men in women's bathrooms"¹¹ to successfully pass a ballot measure in 2015 against Houston's equal-rights ordinance. On May 9, 2016, the Obama administration stated that students must receive equal treatment regardless of their gender identities, and that individuals' perceptions and feelings regarding their gender identities (and not simply their registered sex at birth) must be legally protected. U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch told the transgender community, "We see you, we stand with you, and we will do everything we can to protect you going forward."¹²

⁹ See "At Brown University, Columbus Day is Now Indigenous People's Day," *The New York Times*, Feb. 3, 2016.

¹⁰ Quote by Ivan Van Sertima, p. 10., in "The Place of Africa in History and Scholarship: A Conversation with Ivan Van Sertima." Interview with Ivan Van Sertima by Edward Ramsamy in Edward Ramsamy and Gayle T. Tate, eds. *The Black Experience in America*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 2011.

¹¹ Quoted from *Time Magazine*, May 30th, 2016, p.36

¹² Quoted from *Time Magazine*, May 30th, 2016, p.32

Over the last few years, the number of students identifying as transgender has increased substantially on university campuses across the country. At Rutgers, the Center for Social Justice has collaborated with staff in admissions, student life and housing to contribute to the creation of a trans-safe space on campus. In an ideologically polarized society where sex-specific structures and institutions have been the norm, the struggle for transgender rights on campus has stirred intense sociopolitical debate. During the Task Force’s deliberations, a number of campus groups, including the Queer Caucus, strongly suggested that Rutgers-New Brunswick address the needs of transgender students. The Task Force recommends the following measures:

- Rutgers-New Brunswick should aim to create a safe and supportive environment for transgender students. This would be particularly important given that transgender students are often susceptible to isolation and rejection from family and friends.
- Student support professionals, campus health professionals, and CAPS professionals should be adequately trained to address the needs and concerns of transgender students. Rutgers-New Brunswick should administer a “climate survey” (a recommendation made earlier in the report) in which students can assess whether campus services meet the needs of transgender students in an effective manner. Currently, the Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities offers a monthly SafeR Space Training module that focuses on supporting queer and trans students; however, this training is optional and limited in capacity. The university should explore digital training modules for LGBTQA sensitivity within the cultural sensitivity training efforts listed above.
- Faculty and staff training on cross-cultural sensitivities and competencies (discussed earlier in the report) should include a segment on the needs and concerns of transgender students.
- The fact that Rutgers-New Brunswick’s anti-discrimination policy includes and protects the rights of transgender individuals should be well advertised.
- Access to bathrooms has emerged as a focal point in the struggle for transgender rights. During our focus group meetings, students have complained that Rutgers-New Brunswick buildings contain few bathrooms that can be considered trans-safe, and that trans-safe bathrooms are often absent altogether in classroom buildings. Rutgers-New Brunswick needs to perform a comprehensive inventory and assessment of trans-safe bathrooms, and, where necessary, establish and clearly demarcate such facilities. The locations of trans-friendly bathrooms should be clearly advertised.
- A major concern of transgender students is having the option to change their names to match their gender identities. While transgender students can currently use their preferred names on platforms such as Sakai and class rosters, they cannot change their names and

gender designation on University ID cards. This poses a number of practical and logistical challenges for trans students, especially when various campus records are matched. The Task Force recommends that the Center for Social Justice Education & LGBT Communities, the Queer Caucus, the Registrar's Office, Title IX, Public Safety, and other relevant constituencies create a coordinated system through which transgender students can change their names on official but not federally reported university records. At The Ohio State University and the University of Maryland, for example, students can change their names and genders on official records by procuring a letter of support from a mental health professional. The University of Vermont permits transgender students to request a University ID with a name other than their birth name.¹³ Rutgers-New Brunswick should pursue some of these options.

This is an opportune moment for dialogue and innovative programming at Rutgers-New Brunswick on transgender rights. Programming is an effective way to garner interest and generate conversation across ideological perspectives;¹⁴ it can also serve to bridge polarizations across a variety of different constituencies. For the last 5 years, the Center for Social Justice Education and LGBT Communities have coordinated a Transgender Awareness and Empowerment Week featuring performers, artists, advocates, and community-based activists. Entities across the university should consider how to work collaboratively to develop trans-inclusive programming. In the academic year 2012-2013, the Institute for Research on Women ran a very successful and well-attended year of programming on Trans Studies. Activities during this year included a distinguished lecture series, a graduate student and faculty weekly seminar, an undergraduate learning community, and a two-day conference dedicated to Trans Studies. The IRW experience made it evident that Rutgers-New Brunswick has student, faculty and staff interest in these issues, and needs to expand its intellectual and institutional spaces to members of this community. Another example of recent programming is a talk sponsored by the Rutgers Law School's LGBTQ Law Caucus and the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy Studies. This program invited dialogue and debate on the controversial North Carolina law that requires transgender people to use bathrooms that correspond with the sexual identities stated on their birth certificates. The Rutgers School of Medicine is also organizing a Trans Health initiative that is transforming the medical services offered to trans youth in New Jersey.

¹³ See Beemyn et al., "Transgender Issues on College Campuses." *New Directions for Student Services*, no 111, fall 2005

¹⁴ See <https://law.rutgers.edu/news/rutgers-law-hosts-discussion-transgender-bathroom-law>

Undocumented Students

Undocumented students encounter a number of difficulties and hindrances as they try to navigate their university careers. To better serve their needs, the Task Force recommends the following:

- The Division of Student Affairs and the Dean of Students should meet with undocumented students to become familiar with their needs, and to strategize ways in which their concerns might be addressed.
- The Office of Legal Services and other legal clinics at Rutgers should strategize on how they can best assist undocumented students in the current political climate.
- Rutgers should celebrate the legacies of undocumented students who have graduated from the university. One such individual is Ms. Marisol Conde Hernandez (SAS Class of 2011). Marisol was the co-founder of the NJ Dream Act Coalition and won the Rutgers Human Dignity Award for her activism on behalf of undocumented students. She recently established a scholarship in honor of her parents through the Rutgers Foundation. Efforts should be made to introduce members of the Rutgers undocumented community to individuals like Ms. Hernandez and other role models and activists.
- Undocumented students should be made aware of scholarships that do not require citizenship or residency requirements.
- In conjunction with the Cultural Centers, Rutgers-New Brunswick should create safe spaces on campus for undocumented students, where they can share stories, connect with allies, and start conversations about immigration issues in the US.
- Foundation and scholarship offices at Rutgers-New Brunswick should engage in fundraising efforts to help build financial support for undocumented students.
- The Task Force endorses President Barchi's memorandum "Clarifying Rutgers' Position on Protecting Student Rights" (December 8th, 2016). Rutgers should collaborate with allied universities throughout the country to develop collective strategies to address the changing political climate, and continue to advocate for, support, and protect our undocumented student population. Stronger coordination of efforts across institutions might help identify the best ways to initiate future discussions and to help advocate that paths to legalization be made available to these students.

Conclusion and Future Steps

Promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation remains one of the most pressing issues of our time, especially in this moment of deep ideological division. Diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence are mutually reinforcing dimensions that ought to be at the heart of the intellectual mission of institutions of higher education in the 21st century. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, once remarked that there are no exclusive, closed cultural communities but, rather, a collection of interconnected differences. In this age of cultural and political fragmentation, is it vital that institutions of higher education create spaces and provide resources for historical marginalized groups to empower themselves while simultaneously working to foster meaningful, positive interactions among diverse individuals and communities. Diversity broadens perspectives and enriches education when individuals interact and collaborate with those who are different from themselves.

In light of the current political crises, recognizing diversity, fostering inclusion and working towards common core values have become more urgent than ever. However, unity seems elusive as we search for ways to deal with our multiple shared problems. As globalization renders our society increasingly multicultural, the answer lies in thinking more, not less, about the common bonds, public resources, and civic systems that bind us together as a nation, lest the very diversity we celebrate divides us. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. observed in his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly... Anyone who lives inside the United States can never be considered an outsider anywhere within its bounds.” We must recognize our shared humanity before our cultural, ethnic, racial, and political differences isolate us during these difficult times. In this period of economic uncertainty and political parochialism, King’s message is more relevant than ever.

Promoting diversity and fostering a climate of inclusion are key pillars of the University-wide and Rutgers-New Brunswick strategic plans. These goals cannot be met without a clear signal from the Rutgers-New Brunswick academic and administrative leadership that advancing diversity and inclusion is central to the institution’s academic mission; further, this commitment ought to be matched by tangible and sustainable actions. The major purpose of this report is to contribute to the ongoing conversation regarding specific measures that can be implemented in the short to medium term to ensure that the needs and aspirations of diverse communities are accommodated and addressed at the institution.

This report concentrated on diversity largely through the lenses of race, gender, sexuality and religion. However, there are multiple factors and forms of identity in addition to these that shape the lived experiences of the Rutgers-New Brunswick community that were not examined in this report. For instance, the increasing class inequality that impedes access to, and success in, higher

education; the challenges faced by disabled individuals when negotiating physical environments that do not accommodate their needs; and the difficulties of veterans struggling to complete their degrees are just a few examples of concerns that need to be heard and addressed. In this respect, this report by the Task Force on Inclusion and Community Values should be seen as the beginning of an important conversation on how Rutgers-New Brunswick can work toward creating a supportive environment for all members of the University community.

With specific reference to this report, the Task Force recommends:

- The development of a website featuring the findings of the Task Force.
- Convening a meeting with key stakeholders (e.g. deans, heads of administrative units, student leaders) to present the findings of the Task Force.
- Publishing an electronic and print version of the report.
- Disseminating the report to the entire Rutgers-New Brunswick community.
- Organizing meetings with RUSA and other student groups to discuss the report
- Advising the incoming Chancellor that s/he establish a standing committee to work with relevant units to oversee the implementation of the Task Force's recommendations.

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