

Strategic Commitments to Address Anti-Blackness 2022 Annual Progress Report



Pictured: 2022 Enhancing the Black Student Experience Symposium
Photo: Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
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BACKGROUND

As the COVID-19 pandemic progressed without any signs of ending in early 2020, the state-sanctioned murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor – as well as the resulting national racial reckoning – amplified calls for racial justice and placed issues of racial inequity in higher education at the center of many campus conversations.

During the summer of 2020, all units within the Division of Student Affairs were accordingly asked to create a set of strategic Commitments to address anti-Blackness. The list of Commitments was shared with the broader campus community in August 2020, and the first annual progress report was shared in August 2021.

While we remain wholly committed to addressing anti-Blackness, we also acknowledge that it may be unreasonable to expect that we can fully achieve our ambitious goals amidst a global pandemic, continued overt anti-Blackness and anti-Asian hate crimes, a controversial presidential election, and countless other external considerations.

All of these factors influence our work, especially those who are directly impacted by many of these realities. It is important to remember that this is, and will always be, an imperfect work in progress that we will advance collaboratively.

To ensure that the Division is making progress on these Commitments, the Assessment, Evaluation, and Organizational Development (AEOD) Team invited members from the Assessment and Evaluation Leadership Workgroup to participate in a subgroup to develop processes and participate in the assessment of these Commitments.

VCSA Commitments Assessment Subgroup:

Chair: Elizabeth Jimenez Perez

Members:

- Karen Van Ness | Chancellor's Associates Scholars Program, Student Retention and Success
- Emily Trask | Center for Student Involvement, Student Life, CSI
- Shannon Milligan | Assessment, Evaluation, and Organizational Development, Student Affairs
- Kirby Knipp | Assessment, Evaluation, and Organizational Development, Student Affairs

SUBGROUP CHARGE & PROCESS

Charge

To help guide the creation of an assessment process for the Commitments, which includes:

- Thinking of the best ways to check in with units on progress.
- Envisioning the structure for – and helping with the creation of – a report submitted in August of each year that provides an update on where we are as a division.
- Any other mechanisms for communicating unit/division progress over time.

Process

The AEOD team, along with the subgroup, worked to identify the structure for assessing progress on the Commitments. The process included sending a personalized spreadsheet to each unit that submitted Commitments. The spreadsheet included three different tabs:

- **Status:** On the first page, we asked for a status update on each commitment. When updating the status of each commitment, units had the following options:
 - In Progress – Work on a commitment has begun and there is an expected completion date.
 - Continuous – Work on a commitment has begun and/or is completed but the implementation is ongoing and structural and the commitment has no finite completion date.
 - Completed – Commitment has been achieved or finalized.
- **Questions:** On the second tab, we asked four short-answer questions:
 - Please share 3-5 challenges your unit has faced when implementing your Commitments.
 - List 3-5 bullet points on what information and/or resources would help guide your unit to meet the Commitments and address anti-Blackness in your everyday work.
 - Please share some of the accomplishments around meeting your unit's Commitments.
 - How is your unit ensuring this work continues beyond the Commitments that were made?
- **Revised Commitments:** The final tab was optional. We provided units with the opportunity to revise their Commitments, if they wished.

FINDINGS

Commitments by the Numbers (since 2020)

135	89	46
Total Made	Completed / Continuous	In Progress

In this section, we share units' challenges in implementing and advancing their Commitments, as well as resources needed to support these efforts.

The following themes were identified by analyzing units' submissions – the review of which provided an opportunity to a) reflect; b) recognize the conditions that restrict or enable racial equity work; and c) take action to mobilize efforts to advance racial equity.

Challenges to Implementing Commitments

In this third year of addressing the Commitments, our team identified several barriers to fully realizing the implementation of them. For example, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic's impact on shifting responsibilities left less time for units and the Division to facilitate, reflect, and operationalize our updates and discussions.

Coupled with staff transitions, it has proven difficult for units to identify dedicated personnel to spearhead efforts in support of their Commitments, while student and staff burnout has also hindered progress. Similarly, it has been challenging to procure staff and faculty partnerships while being mindful of the additional pressure placed on faculty of color who are often asked to do an inordinate amount of work on anti-racist education.

We've also learned that funding concerns have imposed additional challenges, as has a perceived lack of awareness around opportunities for resource-sharing between other divisions within the university.

FINDINGS

Resource Needs Identified

We also identified resources that would be beneficial to addressing the aforementioned challenges. For example, a specific need related to funding concerns pertains to funding for programming and intentional student support.

Additional identified resources center on clear communication and guidelines. It would be helpful to have more frequent updates on progress toward the Commitments, potentially at monthly or quarterly intervals. Staff would also benefit from EDI-grounded guidelines through which to review activities and policies.

Finally, we learned a lot about human-centered supports. In addition to more frequent update sharing, our colleagues desire more relevant professional development opportunities, including time allocated for discussion of how to incorporate contemporary, evidence-based practices.

This opportunity for learning and evolution of practice also includes further collaboration and partnerships with the Campus Community Centers. One important part of having capacity for these opportunities is to continue to fill staffing vacancies.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

Units were asked to share key accomplishments and future plans related to the Commitments they made in Summer 2020. On these pages, we acknowledge the efforts made towards achieving transformative change prior to the development of the Commitments – in addition to all the continued efforts from the Division throughout the year. Units with a dotted line to the VCSA were not required to submit updates for the 2021-22 academic year.

VCSA Office

Accomplishment: The VCSA Office prepared the second annual public “report out” on addressing anti-Blackness in our units, scheduled the annual Fall Quarter 2022 Triton Time sessions to provide updates on progress made to date and the critical gaps that remain, and co-created the second annual Enhancing the Black Student Experience (EBSE) Symposium in April 2022 with the VC-EDI Office.

Ongoing Commitment: The VCSA Office will be working on a process and protocol for appointments to the Division and Unit work groups in Student Affairs, in order to better assess and improve committee and work group representation.

Assessment Evaluation and Organizational Development (AEOD)

Accomplishment: The AEOD team, in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Commons, supported the Enhancing the Black Student Experience (EBSE) committee with developing and analyzing the pre and post surveys. Additionally, the team provided data on the Black student experience to support the symposium.

Ongoing Commitment: Continue to assess the division's progress on meeting the Commitments and provide recommendations on how we can work collectively to enhance the experience for Black students and staff.

Student Conduct

Accomplishment: Restorative Justice (RJ) Circles - Social Injustice Community Dialogue and Communities of Support: Social Injustice Community Dialogue uses RJ Circle practice to engage participants in dialogue on the impact of social injustices on their personal and professional lives.

Ongoing commitment: To make an inventory or record of the progress for their Commitments and how they intertwine projects and work.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

Recreation

Accomplishment: The Recreation Inclusion Council of professional and student staff has helped build better relationships with campus groups, student groups, and resource centers.

Ongoing Commitment: Recreation embeds their Commitments in their every day work. It happens as they invite students, staff, faculty, and visitors into their spaces and programs. It also happens as they plan for UC San Diego Athletics and general campus events. Additionally, they embed this work in their hiring and training.

Global Education

Accomplishment: Increased participation of Black students in Global Seminar programs.

Ongoing Commitment: Formation of an internal EDI workgroup in Fall Quarter 2022 to review student advising services and student engagement programs for opportunity gaps. The group will also evaluate office structures and protocols to ensure they are aligned with UC San Diego Inclusive Excellence Initiatives. Also, the group will be charged with submitting recommendations to the ISPO Leadership Team to determine priorities for the year.

Case Management

Accomplishment: Case Management staff attended the Enhancing the Black Student Experience (EBSE) Symposium in April 2022.

Ongoing Commitment: Case Management's Graduate Assistantship (GA) program has made efforts to conduct recruitment and outreach efforts with HBCUs and HSIs to diversify the pool of candidates that serve UC San Diego students, while providing program participants with a pathway to professional roles on campus. The team also holds continued monthly staff EDI discussions to educate and respond to issues impacting BIPOC and other minoritized student populations.

Resource Management

Accomplishment: Reconvened the Diversity in Recruitment Workgroup, to review recommendations and streamline implementation after a year of real-world experience in a quickly evolving and historically fluid employment environment. Without altering initial goals, the workgroup identified improvements in efficiency, while continuing to foster diversity hires and limit bias in the recruitment process. They also performed a division-wide compensation analysis, with the expressed intent of increasing pay for our lowest-paid employees. Student Affairs was able to complete the first phase of a multi-step implementation – which resulted in an average salary increase of 13% for 22% of the Student Affairs workforce.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

Student Retention and Success

Chancellor's Associates Scholars Program (CASP)

Accomplishment: CASP's biggest accomplishment was staying engaged in the work, and not being reactive to continued anti-Blackness, but rather making it a part of their everyday work, instead of something they check off the list. This includes realigning the Learning Outcomes of their Combating Anti-Blackness student leader training, based on ongoing conversations with staff and students.

Ongoing Commitment: For staff to not approach this work as an "addition" to their roles, and to continue to realign their Commitments as student needs evolve.

OASIS

Accomplishment: Through collaboration with Admissions, providing information to students on OASIS programs upon admittance to UC San Diego was especially impactful for HOPE Scholars and TRIO SSSP recruitment.

Ongoing Commitment: Targeted recruitment for TRIO students to community colleges with Black student populations.

Undergraduate Research Hub (URH)

Accomplishment: The Conference on Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CRASSH) has included the topics of "Myth of Meritocracy," "Black Art and Performance," and "Empowering Latinx Students." All three were well attended and successful.

Ongoing Commitment: CRASSH seminars with a focus on inclusivity and pro-Black research will continue; the Research in a Social Justice Framework will continue in revised form.

Student Success Programs (SSP) – Student Success Coaching Program, Undocumented Student Services, Transfer Student Success, and Student Veterans Resource Center

Accomplishment: The SSP Commitments Workgroup morphed into a group which shared best practices and thoughtful inquiry for how to ensure inclusivity within SSP work and practices. This has now evolved into a recurring "touch-base" for all staff inquiries. Although the focus has shifted to become more broad, it opens the channels of communication and trust among our teams.

Ongoing Commitment: Within Transfer Student Success, the team has put a calendar reminder each quarter to talk about their Commitments and track progress. This also allows the team to dedicate time for reflection.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

Student Life

Student Governments, Auxiliaries, and Services

Accomplishment: Supported student leaders in the creation of a Minority Caucus in Associated Students, to increase the representation of Black students in student government and campus spaces.

Ongoing Commitment: Revisit conversations with student leaders at the end of every transition term.

University Centers

Accomplishment: University Centers initiated an Anti-racism Workgroup among their staff, student employees, and the student advisory board (UCAB) to research, learn, and implement strategies within the student union to actively work against racism. The workgroup is co-facilitated by a UCAB representative and a staff member; an action plan was developed and published to the University Centers website.

Ongoing Commitment: University Centers continues to meet regularly with its Anti-racism Workgroup, and with the Student Life EDI Coalition.

Basic Needs

Accomplishment: Basic Needs professional staff participated in the following: Black Resource Center's (BRC) "BSU Overnight Program - Resources Session"; "Black Transfer Student Virtual Yield Session"; Basic Needs Housing Educational Campaign 2022; Enhancing the Black Student Experience Symposium 2022; and "Black Hair Care Program" in collaboration with BRC.

Ongoing Commitment: To create assessments that center Black student needs in their current and new programming, i.e., using their Peer Education Program as a platform for continued outreach that is responsive to the needs of Black students; expanding food security and hygiene product services to reflect needs of Black students; and holding CalFresh office hours at the BRC.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS

Center for Student Involvement (CSI)

Accomplishment: This year, in partnership with the National Conflict Resolution Center, CSI piloted new content on student leaders' roles in anti-racism work. The ART of Inclusive Communication Training is taken by approximately 1,500 student organization principal members annually. After participating in the revised curriculum, CSI saw modest gains in the percentage of students who strongly agreed that: "I am able to create environments where differences are celebrated", "I am able to stand up for others when I see prejudice", and "I am able to speak up when I see discrimination in action." CSI also saw a modest increase in participant Likert scale ratings, who responded "The course made me understand/think more critically about the concepts of diversity, opportunity, and identity."

Ongoing Commitment: CSI will be incorporating this work into their five-year strategic plan.

ArtPower

Accomplishment: Programming an entire season of dance addressing Anti-Blackness, including two artists who went on to be featured in the New York Times and whose shows are at Jacob's Pillow this summer. All of the artists work with students, teaching culture and technique. The majority of ArtPower's Jazz series was not only performed by African-American artists, but directly addressed issues of anti-Blackness, like Afro-futurist "Dizzy Spellz."

Ongoing Commitment: The next ArtPower season includes a variety of artists, including those that address anti-Blackness.

CALL TO ACTION

This is the time for intentional rebuilding, transformative work, deep reflection, and commitment to identifying the practices, policies, and structures that hinder racial equity.

Intentionality must be at the forefront of our commitment to racial equity work; change will require the campus community to work as a collective to inform, advance, and achieve transformative change.



Library
Entrance