**Center for Diversity and Inclusion**

**Charge:** The charge of the Task Force was to lead a public, transparent discussion with key stakeholders regarding the creation of a new Center for Diversity and Inclusion. Specifically this conversation focused on the mission of the Center, the communities it would serve, and the type of facility that would most effectively address the broad interests of the campus community. There are many noteworthy examples of similar centers at other institutions around the country, but ultimately the Task Force was charged with providing ideas for a Center to support the unique educational and co-curricular experiences at Washington University, and meet the needs of our students in the context of a modern global community.

**Tasks:**
1. Benchmark other centers for best practices; 2. Hire an outside consultant to provide recommendations for a new center; 3. Provide a report with recommendations to the Vice Chancellor for Students by December 2013; 4. Implement the recommendations of the report in the spring of 2014, and open a Center in fall 2014.

**Outcome:**

*Center Mission*

The mission of the new Center was a topic of spirited debate during the Fall 2013 process. It is important for the future success of the Center that there be a clearly defined mission and set of achievable goals from the outset. It should also be noted that while the Task Force offered clear direction on the initial mission and goals for the Center, it is expected that the mission, like that of all healthy organizations, will change over time to adjust to changes in the needs of the University community. The mission statement for the Center is as follows:

The Center will enhance and strengthen Washington University’s commitment to fostering a diverse and inclusive community. The Center will support and advocate for students from traditionally underrepresented or marginalized populations, create collaborative partnerships with others on campus, and promote dialogue and social change. The Center will be an integral part of the University’s core mission to develop students as future leaders in the diverse global community of the 21st Century.

*Focus Areas*

The Task Force recommends that the Center focus on the following four key areas.

**Advocacy:** The Center, its staff, and its programs should advocate for the type of a community aspired to in the University’s mission statement: “an inclusive community that is welcoming, nurturing, and intellectually rigorous”. To be an effective advocate, the Center must have a direct line of communication with senior University leadership to effectively champion ongoing progress and institutional change in the area of diversity and inclusion. The Center must also be a place that supports other campus organizations that are sources of advocacy for positive social change.
Support: The new Center must be a place where students from marginalized or traditionally underrepresented populations at Washington University can find a safe, inviting, supportive, and friendly environment. It must be a place where students can be empowered as leaders in the community. The Center must also be a place where students seek guidance and nurturing support as they explore identity, identity formation, and the intersection of multiple identities. The staff in the Center must be knowledgeable, accessible, approachable, and helpful.

Collaboration: Collaboration for the new Center has two meanings. First, the Center must be a place where organizations and people who want to bring in speakers, put on programs, and plan activities related to diversity can come together. Center staff must look for opportunities to bring together groups and people with similar interests. Resources should be made available to individuals and organizations that are willing to partner on activities related to diversity.

Second, the Center should actively maintain cross-campus partnerships. This past fall, the Task Force identified many organizations that have strong interests in working with the Center and individuals who are key stakeholders in making the Washington University community more inclusive. These include school-based efforts such as those in the Brown School of Social Work and the School of Medicine, as well as other, more specific organizations and departments such as the Undergraduate Admissions Office, the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership, Residential Life, the Teaching Center, Student Health and Counseling Services, the First Year Center, Campus Ministries, the Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies, and the Social Justice Center. Rather than replace other campus efforts related to diversity, the Center should become the hub of activity that encourages and supports others as they engage in their work. The importance of sharing responsibility for diversity-related programs with the Center and others on campus was a key recommendation of Professor Lori Patton Davis and several directors of similar centers on other campuses.

Education and Outreach: Inspiring and empowering individuals to learn more about their own unique identities and to explore the identities of others will be a key objective for the new Center. Over time, the Center should develop a resource library and far-reaching programs that touch everyone on the Washington University campus. There are important places where outreach can take place, such as programs in the First Year Center where all new students will participate. Student leaders in organizations such as Greek Life, Residential Life, the Graduate and Professional Council, and Student Union should be encouraged to collaborate on programs and trainings developed by the new Center.

Throughout the process, students asked for more academic courses related to diversity and intercultural communication. While there are already courses and majors within the existing curricula that focus on diversity, the Center, in concert with the faculty, must play a key role in expanding these offerings and finding ways to increase the numbers of students enrolled in these types of courses.
Programs of the Center should help people to understand privilege and power, systems of oppression, interculturalism, intersectionality, identity, equality vs. equity, and intent vs. impact. There should be resources available through the Center that students, faculty, and staff can access to develop programs that focus on these important concepts, as well as other topics related to diversity and social justice.

Center Advisory Board:
In January of 2014, the Center Advisory Board chairs were appointed. The chairs met throughout the spring semester and appointed a smaller steering committee comprised of 14 people. The steering committee met three times during the spring semester. The committee will continue to meet in the fall and will host several larger meetings to include a larger group of representatives from the campus community, to ensure that many different voices are heard.

Center Location:
The fall task force recommended that the new Center be located in a central, accessible space on the Danforth Campus. The Center should be highly visible to prospective members of the University community, and it should be in a location that is viewed as accessible to undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, faculty, and staff. The space should have an office for the Director and office spaces for additional staff. It should have space that can be reserved for meetings and should also include places where students can informally gather during the day and into the evening. Students should actively be involved in the design of the space. It was also suggested that the Center include permanent artwork such as a mural or other student art.

In April 2014, the Center Steering Committee formally approved the inaugural space for the New Center on the 2nd floor of the Olin Library. They approved this as a temporary location, as the mission of the new Center continues to develop. Planning is currently underway with a group that includes the new Center Director as well as both graduate and undergraduate students to design the new space so that it will open in time for the arrival of new students in August.

Center Staffing:
The fall task force recommended that the Director of the Center must be the first hire and that this person should report to both the Provost and the Vice Chancellor for Students. A search committee was appointed by Provost Holden Thorp and Vice Chancellor Sharon Stahl in January 2014. In May, the committee announced that LaTanya Buck would be the Center’s founding Director and she began her role on July 1, 2014. Ms. Buck has hired an administrative coordinator and both undergraduate and graduate student workers.

Center Name:
The name of the new Center is of critical importance. The name should convey the mission of the Center and the populations it will serve. Several key phrases and terms were suggested as possibilities to include in the name. These terms cross-cultural, identity, inclusion, advocacy, and intercultural
should be considered in the name of the new Center. The fall task force recommended that the Advisory Board should finalize the name of the new Center in collaboration with the new Director.

Conclusion
The New Center for Diversity and Inclusion opened in the fall of 2014. The Center, and its new Director, have already had an immediate impact on the campus community. Many students, faculty and staff have been involved in the process. While much work related to the Center remains to be done, it has been a productive year related to the development of this new program and new space.

Next Steps:
1. The Center will be staffed with a full-time Director, an administrative assistant, and undergraduate and graduate student workers. Additional staffing needs will be re-examined after the first year of operation.
2. As recommended by the Task Force, the Center will become “the hub” for student diversity-related activity, housing the BRSS, administering the campus climate survey, reviewing diversity policies and procedures on a regular basis, and assisting with initiatives developed by the Community Values and Expectations working group and the Diversity and Inclusion within Student Groups effort.

Task Force Members:
Chair: Seiko Shastri, College of Art & Sciences, Class of 2015
Chair: Rob Wild, Associate Vice Chancellor for Students
Ayah Abo-basha, College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2014
Josh Aiken, Mosaic Project Co-Chair, College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2014
Amee Azad, College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2015
Christine Dolan, Coordinator of LGBT Student Involvement & Leadership
Tyler Hackmann, College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2015
Tabea Linhard, Associate Professor of Spanish
Leanndra Martinez, MSW Student, Brown School
Nick Miller, Doctoral student, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
David Patterson, Assistant Professor of Social Work
Michelle Purdy, Assistant Professor of Education
Valronica Scales, Assistant Director of Residential Life
Naomi Sigg, Former Assistant Director of Student Involvement and Leadership
Jessica Wilen, Mosaic Project Coordinator
Brendan Ziebarth, Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts, Class of 2015

Center Advisory Board Members:
Chair: Heather Corcoran, Associate Professor of Art, Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts
Chair: Trevor Dawes, Associate University Librarian
Chair: Sam Lai, College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2015
Brian Carpenter, Associate Professor of Psychology
Empris Durden, College of Arts & Sciences, Class of 2016
Mike Hayes, Executive Director of Campus Life
Bianca Kaushal, Arts & Sciences, Class of 2017
Nick Miller, Doctoral student, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
David Patterson, Assistant Professor of Social Work
Valronica Scales, Assistant Director of Residential Life
Seiko Shastri, College of Art & Sciences, Class of 2015
Erika Wesonga, Doctoral Student, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
Rob Wild, Associate Vice Chancellor for Students (ex officio)
Jessica Wilen, Special Projects Coordinator (ex officio)