Last year the Chancellor and Provost charged Washington University’s Commission on Diversity & Inclusion with making recommendations to implement a 12-point action plan designed to make Washington University a more diverse and inclusive community. Action item 11 from the Steering Committee is: “The university will issue and post annual diversity and inclusion scorecards...”

Measuring and assessing our progress will be crucial to the long-term success of the University’s goal of transforming diversity and inclusion from value into culture and practice. The Commission Report recommends an ambitious and far ranging set of transformations and innovations. If the Commission recommendations, and other initiatives being generated around the campus, are accepted and implemented, what will be different about Washington University and how will we know? Assessment, through a process of clearly identifiable and measurable goals and objectives, will be crucial to understanding what works and what does not. It will guide future investment and, equally importantly, sun-downing of initiatives and efforts that either do not have the anticipated outcomes or have achieved their purpose. Importantly, the chief diversity officer at a peer institution regarded as a diversity leader cautioned that universities can easily begin to equate diversity efforts with legacy programs that continue without evidence of impact.

Meaningful, rigorous diversity and inclusion assessment can pose several challenges. For instance, while a University-wide “scorecard” can seem appealing, the reality is that the University is comprised of distinct units that are widely variant in their mission, needs, and current diversity indicators. At the same time, we need universal metrics that lend themselves to comparison across units and time. Another challenge is to balance transparency and accountability with giving incentives for units to undertake risk and innovation, which may have a temporarily negative effect on their indicators. Finally, assessment must be integrated into daily decision-making and long-term planning and resource allocation if Washington University is to promote assessment as a practice of reflection, learning, and continual improvement. We take as a helpful understanding of assessment the goals developed by the University of California, San Diego. (See the Appendix) for a summary by Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Emelyn dela Peña.

The Commission has undertaken extensive consideration of the best ways to measure, analyze, learn from, and make transparent Washington University’s progress in implementing our diversity and inclusion values. This included a meeting on December 2, 2016 with Tim Bono, Assistant Dean, Student Affairs; Joseph Frank, Manager, Human Resources Reporting &
Compliance; Associate Provost Lynn McCloskey, who leads the Office of Institutional Research in the Office of the Provost; and Lisa Wiland, Director of Institutional Research. An especially influential factor was the three vice chairs’ meeting with University of California, Los Angeles Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Jerry Kang in June 2016. We believe that Washington University can join UCLA and a small set of other research universities as a national leader in diversity and inclusion assessment.

Background

Ongoing, consistent, transparent assessment of diversity and inclusion indicators and climate is institutionally crucial for several reasons. First, histories of discrimination and exclusion rightfully lead underrepresented groups to mistrust assurances of progress that are not grounded in transparent data and metrics. Transparent assessments ensure the accuracy of information and build trust. Second, assessment enables institutions to appropriately commit and direct resources. Assessments determine what works and, equally importantly, what does not work. The Commission met with one chief diversity officer at a major, public research institution who observed that their university has many “legacy” programs that are decades old and have never been assessed. As we continue to invest financial and human resources in making our campus more diverse and welcoming, we need to appropriately direct these commitments and make necessary adjustments to programs, initiatives and strategies, so we are always improving and continually moving forward toward becoming a best practice institution. Third, assessment invites all of our units into the collective reflection and learning necessary to forward movement. Opting out is not an option when everyone is held accountable. Finally, in the social sciences, assessment is itself considered an intervention that shapes behavior, in this case, encouraging strategies, programs, and behaviors that will help the University achieve its diversity and inclusion goals.

Some peer universities have adapted conventional “scorecard” assessments from the private sector that benchmark success against set diversity and inclusion goals, typically headcounts and percentages. Some institutions publicize their scorecards; others publicize only portions. These scorecards vary in type from ones that rate the entire university to those that disaggregate scores by specific units. After much discussion, the Commission has determined not to recommend that Washington University in St. Louis adopt a conventional scorecard approach. We are concerned that conventional scorecards will not yield the ambition, investment, and innovation that we seek.

First, conventional scorecards often are “uni-dimensional,” i.e., they only measure progress against a single indicator, e.g., headcount. We are concerned that this type of assessment discourages the sort of innovation and risk that is needed to make real change in our diversity and inclusion climate. Unit heads may determine that the wisest course of action is to “stay the
course,” and maintain the status quo or aim for only modest progress, rather than take a risk that could yield real innovation and progress. In addition, conventional scorecards are often static, i.e., they measure only at set times, typically annually, and always employ the same metrics. They do not provide, and are not designed to provide, rapid, real time assessment of campus climate or needs in times of external or internal stress, e.g., the death of Michael Brown or following a bias incident on campus. Third, conventional score cards typically are overwhelmingly quantitative in nature, when what is needed is a mixed methods approach that combines quantitative measurements with qualitative assessments of progress and climate change. Finally, scorecards can unintentionally impose artificial ceilings. Once goals are established, institutions aim for those goals.

Hence, in lieu of a “scorecard,” the Commission envisions a robust system of diversity and inclusion assessment that embraces the following principles:

- Assessment must be clearly and explicitly connected to the University’s academic and health care mission and vision.
- We cannot fully understand campus progress, challenges, and climate without a mixed methods approach that incorporates objective indicators; climate surveys; and nimble, real time assessments of campus climate that identifies groups in need of immediate support or situations in need of immediate intervention.
- All key surveys, i.e., those that drive institutional decision-making, strategic planning, and commitment of resources, should meet academic social science standards. Centralizing the University’s “signature” surveys may help ensure this standard is met.
- Artificial ceilings may reduce our ambition; we can accomplish far more than we can currently envision.
- Assessment is not the endpoint; it is only valuable and useful if we use it to determine long-term strategic planning and program design, guide direction and commitment of resources, and inform daily decision-making and priorities. In sum, much of the work of assessment comes after the assessment itself. The goal is to make our campus more diverse and welcoming.
- Assessment of progress and ongoing challenges should be transparent. We should not avoid transparency out of fear. Discomfort can be empowering. Those who are not performing should not be shamed or blamed but rather should expect University resources to help them improve.
- We should embrace assessment metrics, methods, and tools that offer incentives for and reward risk and innovation. Our goal is to become a best practice institution and a leader among universities.
Recommendation #1

The Commission recommends that the University pilot an innovative approach to measuring our progress in diversity and inclusion. In lieu of static scorecards, we conceive of diversity and inclusion assessment in two ways: longitudinally through objective indicators; and as real-time “snapshots” of climate and need. Because of the wide array and distinct nature of these inquiries and outcomes, we recommend that the research design and measurement strategies adopted incorporate a mixed methods approach. The first part, on Longitudinal Assessment, takes an innovative approach to measuring and tracking the individual units that comprise our institution and our culture. The second part embraces a pioneering approach being piloted at UCLA of real time, highly nimble assessments of climate and aggressive rapid interventions. In both cases, the goal is to rigorously use diversity and inclusion assessment to inspire learning, collaboration, and innovation. We also recommend a framework to support our assessment investment, including our existing climate surveys and diversity and inclusion initiatives. Finally, we recommend ways to support all of these efforts through transparency and the creation of a new position that will function as both technical advisor and implementation consultant.

The explicit goal is for each of our units to ultimately achieve best practice status in diversity and inclusion domains and for the University to emerge as a thought leader among universities.

Recommendation #2

As noted assessment, or “scorecards,” are not ends in themselves. Rather, transparent assessment serves several purposes. It identifies issues and problems; establishes baselines and goals; helps institutionalize learning; and provides a framework for continuous improvement. In sum, transparent assessment ensures the University is continually engaging with our stated values of aspiring to a community in which every member can learn, teach, produce knowledge, give and receive care, and achieve at the height of their potential.

Importantly, the University should adopt a universal approach to diversity and inclusion assessment that enables us to measure progress across units, identify common obstacles and opportunities, and leverage high performing units. At the same time, the approach must be flexible and nimble enough to be adapted to our highly variant academic and administrative units. It should be as useful to Alumni and Development as to the University Libraries or the Physics Department. This requires a large number of domains of indicators and flexibility in implementation. Ultimately the University should become a best practice institution across the domains and indicators in our individual units.

The Commission devoted significant time discussing the connection between assessment and innovation. Importantly, we do not want our community to perceive assessment as solely
bureaucratic or punitive regulation. Nor do we want assessment to stifle risk and encourage units to be “safe.” Rather, we want our campus units to feel empowered to make change and to truly move culture and climate. We want to inspire innovation. Our recommendations are designed with these goals in mind.

**Longitudinal Assessment Recommendations:**

1. **Washington University in St. Louis should pilot a universal assessment instrument that can be adapted and customized for our different units and their specific missions, goals, and needs.** We recommend the *Global Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World*, published by The Diversity Collegium, a non-profit organization. ([http://diversitycollegium.org/usertools/GDIB-V-03072016-6-5MB.pdf](http://diversitycollegium.org/usertools/GDIB-V-03072016-6-5MB.pdf))

   The instrument is designed to establish baselines and then measure improvement across a comprehensive set of diversity and inclusion domains such as: leadership and accountability; work-life integration; recruitment, retention, development, and advancement; job classification and compensation; learning and education; communications; and community relations. One of the innovative approaches to assessment and measurement that it takes is to evaluate each domain on a continuum from inactive, reactive, proactive, progressive, to best practices. This allows for a more nuanced and customizable assessment across units, and provides an opportunity to highlight areas of best practice within an institution that can be recognized, rewarded and potentially replicated in other parts of an organization. We note that the specific elements under each domain that are being measured and assessed will need to be adapted for a university context and customized for the needs of our widely variant units, but it has been successfully employed in an array of educational settings. Because the instrument is conceived as longitudinal, measuring progress towards best practices over time, we recommend the University commit to a pilot of at least five years.¹

2. **Use the Diversity Commission Report as a guide.** As units customize the *Global Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarks* to identify the domains and metrics relevant to their individual mission, goals, and needs, we recommend that they integrate the areas and specific recommendations set out in the Commission Report.

3. **Implement institutional assessment through the University Council; each member that heads a unit will oversee the implementation for their unit.** We recognize that University Council members lead units that vary greatly in size and complexity and

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¹ We note The Diversity Collegium does not charge a fee to use their instrument, but that permission must be obtained, including advising of our intention to tailor and customize the instrument. For document, click on: [file:///C:/Users/Carol/Downloads/commission.scorecard.Global.Diversity.Inclusion.Benchmarks.pdf](file:///C:/Users/Carol/Downloads/commission.scorecard.Global.Diversity.Inclusion.Benchmarks.pdf)
hence the implementation of assessment will accordingly vary. For instance, leaders of smaller units might themselves implement assessment while leaders of the largest ones may need to task their direct reports with implementation. Although we recommend that the specifics of assessment, e.g., timeframe and customization, be discretionary, we also recommend a common, transparent accountability structure, either to the Council itself or to the Chancellor.

4. **Make assessment appropriately transparent to the internal campus community and external stakeholders.** We recognize that naked transparency will discourage units from engaging in the rigorous, honest assessments requisite for improvement and strategic planning. We recommend the assessment be done as transparently as feasible, in order to facilitate trust; engage the community; and encourage assessment as a process of collective reflection and learning.

5. **Incorporate units’ assessments into both long-term strategic planning and daily decision-making at the University.** As is the case with other institutional assessment, diversity and inclusion assessments should be integrated into the institutional culture and not be viewed as stand-alone projects or mere bureaucratic requirements. Approached as a method for engagement, reflection, and learning, assessment will play a key role in transforming our University culture, with our University Council leading the effort.

6. **Create institutional incentives and/or awards for both best practice units and those units making consistent progress.** There are opportunities to leverage our high-performing units. We can learn from them; in addition, we may reap real value from deeper targeted investment in high performing units. For instance, academic units might receive additional resources through hiring lines, post-doctoral fellows, or professional development and conference funds. Other examples of incentives include budget premiums and progress or support grants, as appropriate. We note it will be important to identify ways to encourage and recognize both administrative and academic units.

**Recommendation #3**

In addition to longitudinal assessments and building towards best practices, organizations can have acute real-time needs. The University is a closely-knit living/learning community. Incidents and conflicts, external and internal to the campus, can create shocks, trauma, and intergroup conflict that interfere with our academic mission of teaching, learning, research, and patient care. These incidents can affect the entire University or be confined to a specific
community, school, or unit. Often, we struggle to understand the nature, scope, and acuteness of climate following an incident. We especially struggle to understand lingering effects and how to offer appropriate support. A clear example is offered by Michael Brown’s death in August 2014, which was one of the catalysts for the Commission. We knew that the death and subsequent local and national tumult had a deep impact on our entire campus. Yet we struggled to understand the scope and acuteness of feeling in different campus communities. We also struggled to discern the strength of feeling over time and the corresponding shifting needs.

The Commission recommends Washington University in St. Louis join UCLA in pioneering a system that can take ad hoc, instant measurements, or “snapshots,” of climate and need.

**Rapid Climate Assessment Recommendations:**

1. **Invest in new, nimble systems designed to take rapid, real time measurements of climate, especially in times of institutional and/or external stress, e.g., following a campus bias incident or national/international conflict.** These new tools could be designed internally or acquired from external vendors or peer institutions such as UCLA.

2. **Use these real-time measurements to make immediate, targeted interventions and adjustments and to direct resources and support.** We envision these results can support all of our units, and especially our student-facing ones, in understanding the needs of our campus at any given time.

**Recommendation #4**

**Assessing our Existing Diversity & Inclusion Infrastructure:** The University has made diversity and inclusion a priority and committed significant resources to it through myriad stand-alone units and programs as well as diversity efforts embedded within programs and unit. Examples of the former include the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and Institutional Diversity; the Center for Diversity and Inclusion; and the Office of Diversity Programs on the medical campus. Examples of the latter include the many diversity pipeline programs within our academic schools and units and our Human Resources Department. Although much of our diversity and inclusion infrastructure is relatively new, we risk pilots and test initiatives becoming “legacy” programs that linger without proven outcomes or past their efficacy. Much as we must measure our other units’ progress, the University should rigorously assess the efficacy and outcomes of its diversity and inclusion infrastructure, adjusting allocation of resources and programming and sun-downing programs where appropriate.
The University has also devoted significant resources to understanding the diversity and inclusion climate for our students, staff, and faculty members. Collectively, across all of our campuses we employ a wide-ranging set of surveys that seek deeper understanding of our community’s needs, challenges, and progress. Yet utilization of the survey results is uneven. This is a lost opportunity to leverage hard sought data. The Commission believes we can do more to integrate the results of these surveys into shaping strategic planning, allocation of resources, program design and redesign, and daily decision-making.

**Diversity & Inclusion Program Assessment Recommendation:**

Integrate evaluation and assessment mechanisms into diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives. Diversity and inclusion programs and initiatives should be regularly assessed for outcomes and impact. The University should continue to invest in and grow high performing programs. We should revise or sundown programs and efforts that have either served their purpose or have not had the anticipated outcomes.

**Leveraging Climate Survey Recommendations:**

1. **Ensure all diversity and inclusion climate surveys meet academic social science standards.** As a global research university with significant strength in the social sciences, Washington University in St. Louis is in a relatively unique position to leverage our faculty members in designing and implementing surveys. This will not only support our aspiration to become a national leader in diversity and inclusion, but will also build campus trust in the University’s assessment system.

2. **Integrate into climate surveys a plan for leveraging their findings.** Climate surveys yield important information that should be systematically analyzed and integrated into daily decision-making and long-term institutional planning. When climate surveys are designed they should include a plan for how their findings will be analyzed and used and how implementation efforts will be reviewed.

3. **Create a standing Climate Review Team charged with understanding and ensuring consistent use of the many surveys we conduct, including reviewing implementation efforts.**

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2 The Climate Review Team might include: (1) survey designers; (2) students; (3) faculty members, especially social scientists; and (4) Key administrators (administrators could be static or vary depending on the nature of the survey).
Recommendation #5

Transparency & Accessibility: Many campus community members find the University’s diversity and inclusion assessment results inaccessible, i.e., they cannot find them or, once found, they cannot interpret them. This frustrates those who want to use assessment outcomes for planning or program design as well as those who want to understand the University’s progress and challenges. There is also mistrust, from all levels of the University, of the processes governing the transparency of assessment results. Some supervisors or unit heads feel undermined that their teams learn the unit’s assessment results or “score” before they do. Others believe the University hides outcomes to protect units or administrators. Assessment should inspire trust, learning, collaboration, and engagement, all of which rest on transparency.

Transparency & Accessibility Recommendations:

1. Create an online repository to make both assessment methods and outcomes transparent. Wherever possible, include plain language explanations and analysis and user-friendly visuals, e.g., infographics, charts and graphs.

2. Be transparent about the limits on transparency, e.g., how it protects individuals’ confidentiality and privacy as well explaining processes that advise supervisors and unit heads in advance of publicizing assessment outcomes.

3. Plan regular presentations of outcome data in open forums that allow for questions and comments and create an open-door policy that encourages those with questions about the data to talk by phone, in person or online with a member of the data analysis team.

Recommendation #6

Assessment Consultant: Rigorous assessment requires expertise in design, data mining, and qualitative engagement. All of these take both time and resources, i.e., people who can rigorously design tools, as well as dig into, analyze, and interpret outcomes. The University has several outstanding people with this expertise. Indeed, we rightfully pride ourselves on national leadership in pioneering rigorous assessment across our academic and administrative units. The Office of the Provost, Human Resources, and Student Affairs each have outstanding teams that do assessment, research, and analysis, including on diversity and
inclusion. However, none of these teams currently have the resources to do the deep consulting envisioned for piloting the longitudinal assessment tool.

Given the University’s ambitions for diversity and inclusion assessment we need to join our peers in creating a dedicated position that can be nimble and flexible in meeting this increasing institutional need that will vary significantly across the units. As we aspire to best practice status, our many academic and administrative units will need significant design assistance in customizing the *Global Diversity & Inclusion Benchmarks* instrument to their individual missions, goals, and needs. They also will benefit from a readily available consultant who can assist in their navigation toward best practice status. Similarly, implementation of a rapid, climate assessment tool will require significant technical expertise.

**Assessment Consultant Recommendations:**

1. **Designate a full-time diversity and inclusion assessment position.** This could be an expansion of one of our existing assessment offices or teams or could be a stand-alone role housed elsewhere. We take as aspirational the infrastructure created at UCLA, which is composed of a small team of dedicated researchers. Importantly, as noted earlier, assessment is near meaningless if it is not integrated into institutional decision-making and resource allocation. Hence, this new position optimally would be crafted to consult with units not only on assessment but also the strategic planning recommended in this Report (see Report 16). The role might also be well-suited to overseeing the execution of the data repository recommended in Report 17. We also recommend the position collaborate closely with our existing assessment resources, including Tim Bono, Assistant Dean, Student Affairs; Joseph Frank, Manager, Human Resources Reporting & Compliance; Associate Provost Lynn McCloskey, who leads the Office of Institutional Research in the Office of the Provost; and Associate Vice Chancellor for Students & Dean of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion Emelyn dela Peña. We also envision they will be an integral part of the accreditation processes led by Vice Provost Gerhild Williams.

2. **Hire post-doctoral fellows to assist in assessment design and implementation.**

**Conclusion**

The Commission believes that Washington University in St. Louis is on the cusp of becoming a leader among universities in diversity and inclusion. In a short period of time we have sparked a culture of innovation in inclusion, with multiple stakeholders across units piloting and pioneering many discrete initiatives and efforts. We want to continue this collective ambition, directing our ideas and investments in the most productive ways. We also want to encourage
that all of our units use objective indicators to engage in continual reflection and learning, aspiring to best practice status across an ambitious array of diversity and inclusion domains. Finally, we need to understand our campus climate, both over time and in real time, to effectively direct resources and interventions.

The Commission believes that the proposals made in this report—using longitudinal assessment to inspire learning and improvement; incorporation of rapid climate assessment tools; rigorous assessment of existing legacy programs; leveraging climate surveys; embracing transparency; and designating a role to consult on all of the above—are the right ones to support the University’s continued growth as a best practice diversity and inclusion institution that is welcoming and supports every community member in achieving at their highest capacity.
Appendix

UC San Diego
Student Affairs Assessment Coalition
(prepared by Emelyn A. dela Peña)

Background:

In May 2008, then Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Penny Rue, convened the Student Affairs Assessment Coalition to discuss current theories and trends about learning and assessment in higher education (PDF of her presentation at the first meeting is attached).

In order to support this new commitment to build a culture of assessment, Student Affairs hired Student Voice (now CampusLabs), an outside consulting firm.

https://www.campuslabs.com

UC San Diego Student Affairs Assessment Philosophy

- We're creating a culture of assessment, not just a project
- We're committed to assessment for, but not limited by, learning
- We believe in assessment as an engaged practice, working towards a continuous improvement
- We see assessment as a reflective practice, where we step back from day to day in order to engage the deeper meaning of our work
- We promote assessment as transparent practice, where we eagerly share findings with the community and hold ourselves accountable for our actions

2008 Structure:

The coalition was chaired by Vice Chancellor Rue for the first quarter, and was then transferred to the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Life. Volunteers from across Student Affairs and partner offices met monthly to discuss student learning, best practices, education, and capacity building within Student Affairs.

Education and Capacity Building

- A team called “Assessment Buddies” visited departments to help them design and build their assessment plans.
- Volunteers from the coalition presented workshops throughout the year. Topics included:
  - Qualitative Assessment: Conducting Effective Interviews
  - Measuring and Assessing Learning Outcomes
  - Survey Design and Questionnaire Writing Guidelines
  - How to Write an Effective Learning Outcome Statement
Reporting Assessment Results Website
(http://vcsa.ucsd.edu/assessment/index.html) A website was created to house:
- Information about the coalition and its members
- Archives of presentations and related materials
- Assessment Toolkits and various assessment resources
- Information on how to request access to StudentVoice/CampusLabs
- Assessment reports from various Student Affairs units

Today:
A Director of Assessment and Evaluation reports to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Assessment Coalition has been renamed the “Assessment & Evaluation Learning Community.”
From their website:

The Student Affairs Assessment & Evaluation Learning Community is a learning collaborative that can help you hone your assessment skills, assess the outcomes of your programs and services, and learn more about how students are growing.

Learning Community Activities and Goals
Learning Community members meet to:

- Advance their knowledge of the value and practice of assessment and evaluation in Student Affairs
- Brainstorm assessment and evaluation projects
- Give and receive feedback on assessment and evaluation projects

As a member of the Assessment & Evaluation Community, you focus on answering these questions:
- What are we trying to do and why?
- What is my program supposed to accomplish?
- Is my program accomplishing what it's supposed to accomplish? How do we know?
- How do we use the information to improve or celebrate successes? If we make improvements, do they work?

Possible Implementation at Washington University: Although the Assessment & Evaluation Learning Community at UC San Diego serves only the Division of Student Affairs, as division in a large public institution, Student Affairs is a very complex organization serving over 30,000 students. This program could be scaled campus-wide for an institution the size of Washington University with the implementation of a leadership structure and the help of a technical adviser well-versed in assessment, evaluation, and institutional research.