



COMMISSION<sub>ON</sub>  
DIVERSITY<sub>AND</sub>  
INCLUSION

# Introduction

Submitted to:  
Chancellor Mark S. Wrighton  
Provost Holden Thorp

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May 25, 2017

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Washington University is deeply committed to diversity, inclusion, and equity and is actively engaged in a process of institutional transformation. Our Board of Trustees established strategic priorities in the University’s Plan for Excellence, which includes the goal to “strengthen diversity and improve gender balance and inclusiveness in all segments of the University community.”<sup>1</sup> Additionally, our mission statement affirms that the University is to:

“Welcome students, faculty, and staff from all backgrounds to create an inclusive community that is welcoming, nurturing, and intellectually rigorous...”<sup>2</sup>

In February 2015, following a semester of campus activism and dialogue, Chancellor Mark Wrighton and Provost Holden Thorp convened a Steering Committee for Diversity & Inclusion to create a university-wide plan for diversity. The Report of the Steering Committee for Diversity and Inclusion, led by Nancy Staudt, Dean of the Law School and the Howard and Carolyne Cayne Professor of Law, defined a two-year, 12-point action plan that included the establishment of a Diversity Commission to implement the plan. To accomplish this goal, Adrienne Davis, Vice Provost and the William Van Cleave Professor of Law, was appointed as Chair of the Commission. Linling Gao-Miles, Lecturer, International and Area Studies Arts & Sciences, Julia Macias, Assistant Dean, Scholars Program and Director, Annika Rodriguez Scholars Program and Will Ross, Associate Dean for Diversity and Professor of Medicine, School of Medicine, served as Vice Chairs.

The Commission on Diversity and Inclusion began its work in August 2015,

and was comprised of 28 members of the Washington University community, including faculty members, staff, and students—undergraduate, graduate, and professional students—from all campuses. To tackle the action items, the Commission appointed 12 working groups and utilized the perspectives, experiences, and expertise of over 230 faculty members, staff, and students. The working groups were as follows: (i) Data Framing; (ii) Diversifying Staff; (iii) Diversity Training; (iv) Eliminating Technology Barriers; (v) Events; (vi) Faculty/Faculty Pipeline; (vii) Graduate Student Diversity; (viii) Honors and Recognition; (ix) Race/Identity/Social Justice Institute Task Force; (x) Sex and Gender Equity; (xi) Task Force on Diversity Strategic Planning; and (xii) Undergraduate Student Diversity.

In addition, the Commission itself took on the task of making recommendations on: an institutional Scorecard; Chief Diversity Officer; centralized “Academy” to house training and other inclusion initiatives; Tenure Standards; Gender

Equity; Urban Fellows; Publicity/ Communications Strategy; and support for the University’s Supplier Diversity Initiative. It also solicited input from the University’s standing LGBT Advisory Committee.

To understand the shifting landscape of institutional leadership in diversity and inclusion, the Commission engaged thought leaders in academic diversity, meeting with three academic chief diversity officers at peer institutions<sup>3</sup> and one local corporate chief diversity officer.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the Commission met with key leaders at the University, including Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Holden Thorp, Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration Hank Webber, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources Legail Chandler, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Public Affairs Ellen Rostand, Director of Integrated Marketing Communications Michael Spear, Gephardt Institute leaders Amanda Moore McBride and Stephanie Kurtzman, and Manager of Supplier Diversity, Stephanie Smith.

<sup>1</sup> A Report of the Steering Committee for Inclusion and Diversity, August 14, 2015, at [diversity.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf](http://diversity.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf) (pages 8-10.)

<sup>2</sup> Mark Wrighton, “Chancellor Statement on Diversity,” Washington University in St. Louis: Diversity at WUSTL [diversity.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf](http://diversity.wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf) (at page 8) and [wustl.edu/about/mission-statement](http://wustl.edu/about/mission-statement)

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Simms, Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer, University of Wisconsin; George Hill, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Chief Diversity Officer, Vanderbilt University; and Jerry Kang, Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, University of California, Los Angeles.

<sup>4</sup> Emily Pitts, Chief Diversity Officer, Edward Jones.

Finally, the Commission invited the broader University community to participate in our work, through formal meetings and town halls; engaging many of the campus diversity and inclusion advocacy groups; and many informal “coffee hours” hosted by the individual working groups at the Center for Diversity & Inclusion.

This Report represents the culmination of two years of deep engagement, focused strategizing, fact finding, benchmarking, and listening to the voices of the Washington University community.

Developing an action plan that promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity at Washington University requires a shared understanding of these key values and recognition that many of these ideas, terms, and definitions are evolving and will require a commitment to continuous learning over the course of time.

We at Washington University believe that the twin goals of diversity and inclusion are essential to our mission of excellence in teaching, research, patient care, and service.<sup>5</sup> Diverse communities that are also inclusive produce knowledge, solve complex problems, teach and learn, and offer patient care better than homogeneous and non-inclusive ones. Inclusion thus supports the University’s foundational goals and mission. Enhancing the diversity of our university community is but one component necessary for achieving our goals; we must also critically examine and be prepared to change our institutional structures, practices, and policies as needed to create an environment that is welcoming, collaborative, productive, and inclusive.

## DIVERSITY

As Provost Holden Thorp’s “Statement on Diversity” makes clear:

Washington University welcomes difference on our campus in the form of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, geography, socioeconomic status, age, politics, religion, philosophy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and veteran status. We seek to bring these different backgrounds and perspectives to the great problems facing the world.<sup>6</sup>

Within this comprehensive array of identities, expressions, and experiences are many points of intersectionality, reflecting the complex and dynamic nature of human beings in their social environment. Washington University recognizes that social location and historic and enduring structural inequalities have unfairly disadvantaged some in our community. Consequently, Washington University is committed to expanding access to members of underrepresented groups and other marginalized groups both because it is just and it results in a more vibrant, innovative, and productive institution.

Diverse groups are very important, but so are diverse experiences and viewpoints within each group. Underrepresented identities are not interchangeable—indeed we believe that equity and respect is valuing each individual as unique even if individuals share background characteristics across the group. True diversity reflects a wide range of cultural differences and encompasses many different individual attributes, both visible and invisible.

## INCLUSION

An inclusive academic community commits to establishing the best possible conditions to support and promote the diverse people that comprise the community by ensuring fair access to educational and employment resources and opportunities. It meaningfully conveys respect for and recognition of the value that diverse individuals and groups bring to our institution. It fosters thoughtful interaction across groups, promotes the expression of diverse viewpoints in discussions and debates, and seeks inclusion in our decision-making processes across the university. An inclusive Washington University will leverage our diversity to achieve our mission and goals of excellence in education and scholarship.

As Chancellor Mark Wrighton has noted:

Diversity strengthens our sense of community, and is vital to our knowledge creation, problem solving and productivity—all of which are essential to our mission as a world-class university. Enhancing our diversity, while making Washington University a more inclusive place, is not an option. It is an imperative. And, we know that we have work to do.<sup>7</sup>

As described above, the Commission engaged over 200 members of the University community in our work, principally through working groups, as well as informal focused coffees and other large forums with interested community members. Each working group produced its own report, which it presented to the Commission for the Commission’s review and approval.

<sup>5</sup> Washington University in St. Louis, “Mission Statement: Strategic Priorities” at: [wustl.edu/about/strategic-priorities](http://wustl.edu/about/strategic-priorities) also Steering Committee Report, at page 8: [wustl.edu/about/diversity-wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf](http://wustl.edu/about/diversity-wustl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Diversity-and-Inclusion-Report-2015-1.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Holden Thorp, “Provost Statement on Diversity” at [provost.wustl.edu/diversity](http://provost.wustl.edu/diversity)

<sup>7</sup> Wrighton, “Chancellor Statement on Diversity” at [diversity.wustl.edu/framework/chancellor-statement](http://diversity.wustl.edu/framework/chancellor-statement)

Taken together, these reports provide a roadmap to achieve that goal.

There are some important issues the Commission was unable to tackle at this juncture, most notably the specific needs of contingent faculty members, contract workers, professional school students, and international school students. In addition, the Commission encourages Washington University to

focus more on other forms of diversity, such as religious diversity and disability differences. These issues and points are addressed at various junctures in the following reports, nevertheless the Commission strongly recommends that the University would benefit from a more sustained focus.

It is the Commission's belief that

Washington University in St. Louis is poised to become a leader in the areas of diversity and inclusion within higher education, research, and patient care. It requires commitment and dedication of time and resources to implement new initiatives and build upon existing strengths in each of the areas taken up below.

To view the full report click [here](#);  
to view the Executive Summary of the report, click [here](#).