



PennState

University Faculty Senate

101 Kern Graduate Building
University Park, PA 16802
Phone: 814-863-0221

Date: April 24, 2020

To: Nicholas Rowland, Chair, University Faculty Senate
Senate Council, All Councilors
University Faculty Senate

From: Joshua Kirby, Chair, More Rivers to Cross Response Task Force

Subject: Senate Response to *More Rivers to Cross: Part 1 (University Park) Report*

Attachments: <https://psu.box.com/v/faculty-senate-more-rivers>

Prologue

Penn State University explicitly states that it “is committed to and accountable for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all its forms.”¹ It has been established in University policy AD-91 that “Discriminatory conduct ...violates the dignity of individuals and impedes the realization of the University’s educational mission, and **will not be tolerated**” (emphasis added).² But in fact, we are far from achieving equity; violations have happened and continue to happen, and discriminatory conduct has been and still is tolerated. It has been abetted by the failures of individuals across the University—administrators, faculty members, and staff alike—and by the structure of the University itself. There can be no other conclusion to draw from the reading of the *More Rivers To Cross: Part 1 (University Park)* report. For over forty years, African American faculty members, staff, and students have raised concerns, documented injustices, and articulated frustrations about the lack of racial diversity and the persistence of explicit and subtle racism within the University’s walls. The relentlessly low numbers of faculty members, staff, and students of color tell an important part of the story, but they do not tell it all. When one turns to the narratives of personal experiences, from the myriad subtle indignities, to the explicit racist words and actions that our community members of color experience, the professional as well as the basic human costs of racism begin to become clear. Damage has been done to members of the Penn State community, and it continues to be done **We need more than another study. We need more than another committee to assess the problems.** Reports issued by black faculty members from 1981, 1999, 2000, 2013 and now 2020 are more than enough to ascertain the breadth and depth of the problems. It is now incumbent on each of us individually and all of us

¹ See <http://equity.psu.edu/diversity-statement>

² See Policy AD-91 (Discrimination and Harassment and Related Inappropriate Conduct) - <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ad91>

together as the University Faculty Senate, to act so that *More Rivers To Cross* becomes the last report needed to document racism and inequality at Penn State.

Provenance of the Task Force

The *More Rivers to Cross: Part 1 (University Park)* (MRTC1) report was disseminated by its authors, Drs. Gary King and Darryl Thomas, on January 20, 2020, the observed holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. On that day, Dr. Nicholas Rowland, chair of the University Faculty Senate, received and reviewed the report, sharing and noting its magnitude and importance with other Senate officers. Chair Rowland and the Senate officers viewed this report as an articulate and comprehensive statement of concern and need by a community of faculty members, thus warranting the immediate attention of the Senate. On January 21, Chair Rowland received an inquiry regarding the Senate's planned response to the MRTC1 report from Dr. Joshua Kirby, Senate Councilor representing the College of Education. Councilor Kirby noted the critical importance of addressing the challenges identified in the report for the sake of black and underrepresented faculty members in his home unit.

Chair Rowland identified that an initial step for responding to the report was to engage a select number of key committees of the Senate to form a small task force to thoroughly read, discuss, process, and create connections related to the MRTC1 report. Councilor Kirby was appointed as chair of the task force, and members of the task force were solicited from the chairs of the Senate Committees on Educational Equity and Campus Environment, Education, Intra-University Relations, Faculty Affairs, and Student Life.

The task force was created with seven members, and, subsequently, charged with providing a focused and timely first response to the MRTC1 report on behalf of the Senate. The task force was intentionally small, and the aim for its composition was collaboration among representative perspectives of the Senate committees. The task force was charged to work on behalf of the Senate as a whole with a thorough first read and summarization for the Senate Record, giving due diligence to the data and challenges presented, learning from the report authors, initiating a continuing dialogue with the authors and the members of the black faculty community, and providing recommendations for the Senate's engagement in addressing the challenges faced by black and other underrepresented faculty members across the University system.

The task force maintained regular contact with Chair Rowland throughout its assignment. Chair-Elect Elizabeth Seymour, a primary stakeholder audience for the report, was also briefed at intervals. In March 2020, the University community's response to COVID-19 challenges ultimately altered the task force's timeline in consultation with Senate leadership. Despite the abrupt transition to schedules and operations, the COVID-19 pandemic has not diminished the necessity of a full and informed response to the MRTC1 Report by the Senate or the University more fully. In fact, the pandemic has shown the entire university community and beyond that the university is indeed capable of quickly implementing significant changes when properly motivated. The task force composing this memorandum believe that change is within our reach on matters relating to equity, diversity, and inclusion across the entire faculty, and spanning the

university community. We ask the university to devote similar investments in time and attention to these matters and demonstrate a similar willingness to change when it comes to systemic pervasive social issues.

The remainder of this memorandum is intended to provide the University Faculty Senators with a framework for moving forward with concrete action. It includes a summary of the key findings of the MRTC1 report as well as responses to it from within the University and externally. Moreover, it places the current initial responses in a larger historical context regarding the University's responses to numerous prior reports that have documented racism within Penn State. Finally, this document offers a series of recommendations which the task force stresses are only the first steps of a more substantial and comprehensive university response.

Executive Summary of MRTC1 Report

The *More Rivers to Cross: Part 1 (University Park)* report was written to (1) document the lack of racial diversity among Penn State's faculty members, and (2) describe the racism and discrimination experienced in the past and present by African American faculty members. Issued January 20, 2020, the MRTC1 report focuses on the University Park campus, and is the first part of an intended two-part report. Part 2 of the report will focus on the experiences and challenges faced by African American faculty members at the University's Commonwealth Campuses. In MRTC1, the authors provide details about the current situation as well as the history of racism and discrimination at the University Park campus.

While not an exhaustive historical accounting, the MRTC1 report documents pivotal moments as well as sustained efforts by African American faculty members and students to expose systemic as well as individual racism and discrimination at Penn State dating back to at least the 1960s. The report highlights important student actions and faculty efforts over the decades. One example described in the report was the student protests in 2001 which included a 10-day occupation of the student union building, the HUB-Robeson Center, at University Park. In response to those actions and the media attention they garnered, the University administration created *A Plan to Enhance Diversity at Penn State*. A second notable example occurred in 2013, when Penn State's Forum on Black Affairs (FOBA) published a report titled *2013 Status of Black Faculty and Staff at the Pennsylvania State University*.³ This report was an extension of previous reports written in 1981, 1999, and 2000 on "the status of Black People at Penn State." In the 2013 FOBA report, faculty and staff delineated **four challenges** for the University to address in order to improve the climate for African American faculty:

1. Overcoming stagnation in increasing black faculty at Penn State,
2. Increasing representation in senior leadership,
3. Ensuring transparency in reporting data, and
4. Changing African American faculty members' experiences of bias and isolation on campus.

³ Full report (PDF) may be downloaded from <https://www.fobapsu.org/our-history>

The report proposed several recommendations for the University to address these challenges; however, evidence of the University's response to the 2013 recommendations is not documented in journalistic, scholarly, or legislative materials available to the current Senate task force.

The MRTC1 report also references two other recent examples. It discusses the University's recent "All In" initiative, stating that in spite of this attempt at improving race relations at Penn State, there is much work to be done. A live forum in April 2019, *An Afternoon with African American Faculty at Penn State: More Rivers to Cross*, also contributed to the need for producing the MRTC1 report. The live forum featured a presentation focused on the difficulties encountered by African American faculty members at the University Park Campus. Overall, MRTC1 is borne of nearly 60 years of history of racism and discrimination specific to our University community.

The MRTC1 includes a comprehensive discussion of the nationwide problem of underrepresentation of African American faculty in universities. Drawing on a wealth of empirical research, Dr. King and Dr. Thomas discuss various reasons why African American faculty members are underrepresented. For example, there are relatively few African American students in the U.S. getting PhDs, and those who are may not be as likely to receive their degrees from elite universities and working with prominent mentors. Without looking further into applicants' qualifications as candidates, African American candidates may be overlooked in hiring. Many faculty search committees at predominantly white universities are not well-trained to recruit racially diverse faculty members. Ironically, often the very few African American faculty members or other faculty members of color are asked to serve on multiple search committees because of the expectation that they will be better able to find other faculty members of color to hire. Although this responsibility should be everyone's, the existing burden of African American faculty recruitment on the African American faculty members themselves adds service burdens and potentially slows their progress toward tenure or promotion.

Additionally, the MRTC1 report presents findings from national research studies that describe the challenges that African American faculty members face on predominantly white college campuses once they are hired. Research discussed in the report also shows that the unwelcoming environment on predominantly white college campuses may make it difficult to retain those African American faculty members. There are many challenges demonstrated in this wide body of research literature. One problem is the "invisible labor" required of faculty members of color. As discussed above, African American faculty members are often sought out to serve on various committees to ensure that the committee is "diverse." Other invisible labor involves supporting African American undergraduate and graduate students when they encounter racism on campus. African American faculty members describe a corresponding "battle fatigue" that comes from surviving these types of invisible labor as well as regular microaggressions at work. Another problem African American faculty members contend with is a feeling of being *hypervisible*—because they are one of few faculty members of color, they sense that they are required to be "twice as good" as their white counterparts. Along with this hypervisibility, African American

faculty members have suggested that the quality of their research is routinely questioned or devalued. The MRTC1 authors describe African American faculty members' feelings of exclusion from social networks in their departments and a corresponding lack of support that faculty members should expect to receive from their colleagues and from administrators. Finally, the report details the problem faculty members of color and female faculty members' experience in relation to student evaluations. The report shows that numerous studies document that female faculty members, and/or faculty of color, are subject to sexism and racism in their students' evaluations of the faculty member's effectiveness as instructors.

Drs. King and Thomas, the authors, demonstrated in MRTC1 that many of the experiences that were found repeatedly in published scholarship (regarding matters external to Penn State) also surfaced in prior reports by black faculty members at Penn State (e.g., 1981, 1999, 2000, 2013), and have been corroborated by reports of recent experiences by current African American faculty members at the University Park Campus. They provide data to show how the number of African American faculty members at Penn State has decreased over the past several decades. MRTC1 cites the 2013 FOBA report which found that the growth of black faculty members at Penn State has been "less than 1 percent in over 30 years in relation to the growth in the total number of faculty." The authors go on to add to this picture by presenting more recent data. For example, there was a 22.1% decrease in African American tenure track faculty members between 2004 and 2018, and there was a general decrease in the number of African American faculty members in that same period of time. The report also details college-specific underrepresentation of African American faculty members. Some other groups of faculty members of color, such as Latinx, Asian, and international faculty, have increased their presence at Penn State during this same time period.

Finally, MRTC1 offers possible next steps and recommendations, based on data specific to Penn State, previous research, and the authors' years of personal experience with the struggles of being African American faculty at Penn State.

Historical Context and Response to MRTC1

In a meeting between the task force and report authors, Drs. King and Thomas indicated that the report was disseminated broadly across Pennsylvania, as it highlights issues that are critical to both the University and The Commonwealth. At the University Faculty Senate meeting on January 28, 2020, Chair Rowland noted that the report is "something that every Senator should read," and President Barron and Provost Jones offered comments and answered questions from Senators related to the report, which are captured in the Senate record.⁴ This discussion was summarized as the featured topic of *Penn State News* on January 30, 2020.⁵ The *Penn State News* article emphasized the significance placed on the report by President Barron and Provost Jones, who spoke about shared governance and accountability being necessary to solve the issues

⁴ See <https://senate.psu.edu/senators/agendas-records/january-28-2020-record/#Minutes>

⁵ See <https://news.psu.edu/story/606308/2020/01/30/academics/senate-discusses-report-status-african-american-professors-penn>

identified in the report. The article focused on initiatives that were already underway across the University, such as considering changes to hiring practice guidelines and comprehensive reviews of Affirmative Action Plans by deans and chancellors. During his remarks, President Barron acknowledged the shortcomings of the “All In” initiative. He also discussed the issue of transparency, identified as one of the four challenges faced by African American faculty in the MRTC1 report. The report calls for more transparency in data, however President Barron cited small numbers as the reason for not being able to share Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE) indices or salary information without making individuals identifiable. In response, President Barron suggested to Chair Rowland, and, indeed, the Senate as a whole, that a small working group established by the Senate, in coordination with administrative University leadership, and held to a standard of confidentiality, be empowered to review such data. Chair Rowland confirmed the utility of such a working group and vowed to form it. In his remarks, Provost Jones particularly emphasized accountability, both within the organizational structure of the university and to ourselves.

The MRTC1 report has been noted by student organizations, such as the University Park Undergraduate Association (UPUA), and is discussed in student publications, such as the *Daily Collegian*. On February 13, 2020, a *Daily Collegian* article presented a summary of the report’s data on African American faculty in each of University Park’s academic colleges.⁶ The chair of the UPUA Academic Affairs Committee circulated the report to all committee members and noted several existing committee initiatives that were related to diversity and bias: 1) working to improve student evaluations (SRTEs) by addressing bias, drafting new questions, and considering incentives for students to complete them; 2) developing global citizen and fluency training to address microaggressions and bias in the classroom; and 3) conducting a survey of students to document their experiences related to bias in the classroom.

Local media sources have also featured the MRTC1 report. On February 16, 2020, a *Centre Daily Times* article highlighted some of the shortcomings in faculty search committees and student evaluations that are discussed in the report.⁷ The article implied that proposed changes to AC-13 under review by the Senate are in response to the report. In fact, these changes have been in progress since approximately Fall 2018, and were presented to the Senate as a legislative report on April 28, 2020. Broadcast media also took note of the MRTC1 report. On March 6, 2020, WPSU broadcast an interview with the report authors on the radio program, “Take Note”.⁸ In the discussion, the authors emphasized some of the key challenges identified in the report including stagnation (“marching in place” as the percentage of African American faculty at Penn State has remained exceedingly, consistently low at 1-3% of the faculty since 1976), transparency, isolation, and invisible labor. They also pointed out that the number of tenure-track faculty has declined since 2004 even though the number of African Americans receiving

⁶ See https://www.collegian.psu.edu/news/campus/article_01a7368e-4df9-11ea-8605-d33a2c2a43ab.html

⁷ See <https://www.centredaily.com/news/local/education/penn-state/article239468688.html>

⁸ See <https://radio.wpsu.org/post/take-note-psu-professors-more-rivers-cross-report-which-outlines-shortage-black-faculty>

doctorates increased in the same time period. The report's authors noted that the "All In" initiative had commendable motives, but lacked tangible actions, a point President Barron stressed during his comments to the Faculty Senate.

There is some indication that the MRTC1 report is receiving the attention that it warrants outside the University. At the Pennsylvania House Appropriations Committee budget hearing for State-Related Universities on March 3, 2020, Representative Stephen Kinsey (D-Philadelphia) addressed President Barron.⁹ Rep. Kinsey reported that elected officials had received concerns regarding the lack of minority faculty at Penn State and that he had reached out to President Barron's administration for a response. Rep. Kinsey commended President Barron's administration for arranging an upcoming meeting at Penn State for them to have a discussion and see how they can be helpful. The MRTC1 report has also received further dissemination in online higher education resources, i.e. *Inside Higher Ed* (February 18, 2020)¹⁰ and the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* (JBHE, February 10, 2020).¹¹ The *JBHE* article, along with WPSU, were the only responses identified by the task force that provided a link to the full MRTC1 report.

While the MRTC1 report is hopefully stimulating discussion and action across the university, there has been minimal official, public response as of April 24, 2020, three months after the report was first shared. The members of the task force represent various Colleges and Commonwealth Campuses, yet even after extended inquiries to Senators we are aware of only Dean Kimberly Lawless of the College of Education as being a unit-level official who disseminated a link to MRTC1 to their entire college (on January 21, 2020).

It is critical that the MRTC1 report is heeded as the call to action that the authors intended it to be. We believe there have been too many past calls (see Table 1) that have not led to tangible results and actions, particularly in terms of recruiting and retaining African American faculty. Historically, African American student protests have occurred on an approximate 10-year cycle (e.g., 1968, 1979, 1988, 2001). Notably, the student demands presented to the administration in 1968, 1988, and 2001 all requested that the University dedicate more resources to increasing the number of African American faculty.

⁹ See <https://pcntv.com/pa-budget/> and launch the video titled, "PA House Appropriations Committee budget hearing with Lincoln University, University of Pittsburgh, Temple University & Penn State University"

¹⁰ See <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2020/02/18/report-finds-biases-hiring-black-faculty-penn-state>

¹¹ See <https://www.jbhe.com/2020/02/the-dwindling-number-of-black-tenured-and-tenure-track-faculty-at-penn-state/>

Table 1. *Timeline of selected past protests, reports, actions related to diversity at Penn State*

Protests/Appeals	Faculty Senate Reports/Actions	University Reports/Actions
1960 – Direct Action for Racial Equality (DARE) organized “barbershop poster-walk” to bring attention to discriminatory practices in State College		
1961 – DARE campaigned to remove restrictions on fraternity/sorority membership	1962 – Senate voted that all student organizations must remove any constitutional rules that restrict membership based on race or religions	
1968 (May 13)* – Student protest at Old Main with demands presented to VP of Student Affairs, 1969 (May 18) - Jesse Arnette gave speech on lack of social progress at Penn State at Football Awards Banquet and declined first Annual Alumni Award		1969 - Afro-American Studies concentration added, 1969 - Jesse Arnette elected first African American member of the Board of Trustees
1969 – PA higher education operating under racially segregated system, according to Office for Civil Rights (OCR) in US Dept. of Education		1971 – Student operated Black Cultural Center on campus, 1972 – Paul Robeson Cultural Center established
1979 – Student protest		
Penn State included in “PA’s 1983-1988 Desegregation Plan”		1987 – Campus Environment Team created at request of President
1988* – Student protest	1989 – Added three credits of diversity coursework to degree requirements	1989 – Creation of position of vice-provost for educational equity, Commission of Racial and Ethnic Diversity, construction of new Paul Robeson Cultural Center
	1990 – Coalition on Campus and Classroom Climate established to address concerns about “chilly climate” for underrepresented groups at Penn State	1990 – Employee Opinion Survey conducted by Commission on Racial/Ethnic Diversity
		“Framework to Foster Diversity 1998-2003”

2001* – Black Caucus members and supporters occupied the HUB (“The Village”)	2001 – Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs charged with reporting on Best Practices for Recruitment/Retention of Women and Minority Faculty (informational report presented to Senate in 2002)	2001 – After negotiations with student protestors, University endorsed “A Plan to Enhance Diversity at Penn State” (included funding for Africana Research Institute, review of university’s diversity requirements)
	2007 – Forensic discussion on adding SRTE question related to climate/diversity (previously recommended by 1990 Coalition but Undergraduate Education voted against in 1995)	
	2007 – Informational report presented at mid-point of second cycle (2004-2009) of “Framework to Foster Diversity”	
	2013 – Joint Diversity Awareness Task Force (JDATF) charged by Provost and Faculty Senate Chair (recommendations presented in 2015, task force then continued with new charge in 2015)	
2013 – Forum on Black Affairs (FOBA) published “2013 Status of Black Faculty and Staff at Penn State” which presented four key challenges along with specific recommendations		MRTC1 cites University response to 2013 FOBA report as unknown (2013 FOBA report was extension of previous reports in 1981, 1999, 2000)
	2016 – JDATF presented advisory reports on “Embedding Diversity Policy” and “Diversity Best Practices”	
	2017 – Committee on Educational Equity presented forensic report on concerns about SRTE bias	
	2017 – Special Committee on Tenure and Equity formed (advisory report presented in 2019, highlights need for additional data collection)	
2019 – Protests over police-involved shooting of Osaze Osagie		
2020 (Jan. 20) – MRTC1 report on the Status of African American Professors at University Park released	2020 (Feb. 3) – Faculty Senate task force on MRTC1 report initiated	

Note 1: Sources for the events summarized in Table 1 include Penn State University's Black History Chronology,¹² the Honors Thesis by R. Hoecker,¹³ articles about Jesse Arnelle,^{14,15} and University Faculty Senate historical records. The task force extends sincere appreciation to Senate Historian Roger Egolf for locating many useful documents.

Note 2: (asterisk) * = Student demands during each of these protests included increasing the number of African American faculty.

Conclusions

The points below summarize earlier findings and highlight the task force's key takeaways from their reading of the MRTC1 report, and the task force's investigations, interviews, and discussions with regard to issues raised in MRTC1.

1. The MRTC1 report is a fact-based, authoritative reference source on the state of African American faculty at Penn State University's University Park campus. The authors employed official data, sound methodology, and reviewed their findings with a collection of collaborators to ensure objectively defensible results. The authors and their collaborators have done the university a great service.
2. A follow up report, MRTC2, offering a similar analysis for the Commonwealth Campuses' context, is underway. Preliminary findings as well as testimony collected by the task force indicate that the same general problems exist across the Commonwealth Campuses of the University and are even worse at some campuses.
3. The issues documented in the report impact the entire university body, including students, staff, faculty, and the extended university community. This MRTC1 report is effectively a *statement of need*, defining a critical and chronic deficiency of African American recruitment, advancement, retention and respect on the Penn State faculty.
4. While the overall diversity of the Penn State faculty is an important goal, the evidence clearly indicates that racism affects black faculty to a greater extent than other groups included in the diversity pool. Therefore, the issues regarding African American faculty require focused attention and should not simply be merged into a generic diversity, equity, and inclusion response.
5. Appreciating diversity within the university must include employing more African Americans and people of color; and yet, hiring and retention alone are not sufficient. The University culture must evolve to appreciate the concomitant diversity of culture and individuality as they are manifest in communication, collaboration, problems solving, and all aspects of conducting research, teaching, learning, service, and engagement. Equally, we need diversity in our University's people, and we need diversity in our people's perspectives.

¹² See <http://blackhistory.psu.edu/chronology>

¹³ See <http://blackhistory.psu.edu/assets/pdf/theblackandwhitebehindtheblueandwhite-RobinHoecker.pdf>

¹⁴ See http://blackhistory.psu.edu/assets/timeline/African_American_Chronicles_Arnelle_1968speech.pdf

¹⁵ See <https://onwardstate.com/2014/02/07/jesse-arnelle-a-catalyst-for-change-in-1968/>

6. Though these issues are not unique to Penn State, this is an opportunity to become a national leader in overcoming these problems.

7. Decades of guidelines, encouragement, and financial support from the central administration have been essentially passive, lacking tangible enforcement of progress. This “benign neglect”¹⁶ has resulted in very limited progress, indicating deep systemic problems that will not resolve on their own simply by making resources available. Meaningful progress will require comprehensive intervention involving the entire University.

Overall, the task force asserts that a primary responsibility of the Senate is to address issues of faculty diversity, equity, and inclusion to the full extent of its authority and influence. The Senate is capable of authorizing and influencing the creation of new and revision of existing policies and processes that affect diversity, equity, and inclusion across the University faculty. Through its long-held and highly valued collaboration in shared governance with the University administration, the Senate is capable of advancing the University beyond decades of study and rhetoric and toward action and change in pursuit of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive faculty.

Recommendations for Faculty Senate Action

Based on the January 2020 report titled *More Rivers To Cross: Part 1 (University Park)*, the task force recommends that the University Faculty Senate do everything in its power, including policies within its legislative purview and recommendations in its advisory and consultative role, to address the challenges to the hiring, retention, satisfaction, and success of African American faculty at Penn State University.

We perceive that the actions necessary to address the challenges faced by African American faculty have broad scope and/or involve complex interdependencies of University governance. We urge the Senate to devote its time, energy, expertise, and authority to build upon our recommendations in the coming year, further refining their potency and efficacy for action that will indeed address the persistent and systemic racism as well as faculty diversity and inclusion described above. The task force considers the following recommendations to be actionable pursuits that will unite the Senate and its shared governance partners across the University. We call upon the Senate to engage with the Office of the President, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, and the University Board of Trustees to catalyze the component actions for these recommendations to ultimately establish systemic reforms that permanently enhance

¹⁶ The authors of MRTC1 repeatedly use the expression “benign neglect”. This phrase references U.S. political history, when advisor Daniel Patrick Moynihan recommended in a memo to President Richard Nixon in 1970 a period of “benign neglect” toward addressing the civil rights concerns of African Americans. This policy became an infamous example of a failed approach to race relations and civil rights, and White society’s reluctance to initiate change, while politely couched as well-intentioned rhetoric. See <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/03/01/archives/benign-neglect-on-race-is-proposed-by-moynihan-moynihan-urges.html>.

the conditions for significant growth in faculty diversity across the University and that conclusively address the reality of racism and its serious negative effects on members of the Penn State community. The following recommendations are for the consideration of University Faculty Senate leadership as was the task force's charge. Thus, to this end, the task force recommends the following:

Recommendation 1: Establish and empower an all-encompassing and change-focused committee charged to identify, catalyze, and coordinate reforms across all stakeholders to mitigate and eliminate barriers to the hiring, retention, satisfaction, and success of African American faculty at Penn State University.

The justification for this recommendation derives from the failure to address issues of diversifying faculty throughout the history of Penn State, particularly in relation to the hiring and retention of African American faculty. Well-intentioned policies, process changes, or other proposed solutions have failed because of a lack of sustained commitment to fully address all of the systemic intricacies that create barriers to black faculty success, especially racism and discrimination that have been documented by African American faculty over the decades in a series of reports.

In particular, we recommend the following with respect to the design and implementation of an empowered and all-encompassing committee:

- Call for the Board of Trustees to commit to engagement and action to identify and eliminate point-specific and systemic barriers to the hiring, retention, and ultimate success of African American faculty.
- Identify key personnel and essential bodies of governance, management, and influence, within and beyond University organization itself.
- Plot a specific roadmap for developing a University environment that promotes the hiring, retention and effective support of African American faculty by naming specific roles, offices, committees, and constituencies, and the reforms for which they are responsible to implement.

The Senate is capable of leveraging its organizational strength and broad network for the purposes of gathering together a group of empowered representatives who are committed to action. The MRTC1 report documents the degree to which the challenges faced by African American faculty have been studied, discussed, and documented. It is now time to engage the entire system to create its change.

A fully empowered committee to serve as the catalysts of change must ensure that its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) oriented reforms are codified into the overall University's modus operandi. Their reforms would be documented and disseminated via a work plan represented by Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: Create, maintain, and support a progressive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Work Plan modelled on Penn State University's Sustainability Work Plan (2018-2021).

The task force acknowledges the efficiency and effectiveness of Penn State's Sustainability Work Plan (2018-2021).¹⁷ By requirement, and by necessity, a mission of sustainability has been integrated into all of the University's functions. The Sustainability Work Plan created a framework that is applicable to each Penn State Value,¹⁸ and clearly communicates that sustainability is each Penn Stater's responsibility. The Sustainability Work Plan established new cultural norms for the Penn State community. It is now time for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Work Plan that enhances the strength, and sustainability, of the University community so that the community, in turn, supports a diverse faculty. The following are items to consider in addressing this recommendation:

- Utilize the framework concept to operationalize DEI throughout all aspects of the University. A DEI Work Plan¹⁹ would foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the composition of the Penn State faculty across all aspects of the University, including individual employee recruitment, hiring, promotion/advancement, and evaluation, and also including institutional services, cross-functional operations, community (e.g. "town and gown") relations, instructional and curricular values, and extracurricular enrichment opportunities.
- Implement the conditions necessary to integrate this work plan into every purview of University governance, operations, academics, and culture. There is a necessity for systemic change that modifies actual processes, protocols, policies, and even perceptions that comprise the numerous decisions and actions made by each individual Penn Stater in the performance of their job or affiliation with the University.
- Include provisions in the DEI Work Plan that specifically address the concerns raised by African American faculty and students over the past fifty years and most recently in the MRTC1 report. The MRTC1 report, and its precursors, speak to a distinct history with racism and discrimination toward African American faculty that continues today.

¹⁷ See <http://sustainability.psu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/SI%20Work%20Plan%207-27-2018.pdf>

¹⁸ See <https://universityethics.psu.edu/penn-state-values>

¹⁹ Penn State University has formulated a DEI statement (<http://equity.psu.edu/diversity-statement>). The task force notes the fully-developed DEI work plans of (for example) the University of Iowa (<https://diversity.uiowa.edu/action-planning/action-plan>), and the University of Wyoming (https://www.uwyo.edu/diversity/_files/odei-strategicplan2018-r5.pdf).

Recommendation 3: Commit Senate resources to support the prompt completion of the Commonwealth Campus-focused MRTC2 report.

The authors of MRTC1 are working on *Part 2* (MRTC2) that will include the Commonwealth Campuses. This report will enable the complete University community to have a full understanding of the challenges and barriers that persist in the hiring, retention, satisfaction and success of African American faculty across all locations. It is essential that the report documenting the experiences and data on the Commonwealth Campuses, which enroll nearly 40% of Penn State's total undergraduate population, be completed as soon as possible. Effective solutions require a comprehensive understanding of the whole university picture. The following are items to consider in addressing this recommendation:

- Utilize Senate networks to identify a liason at each Commonwealth Campus who will work with the MRTC2 authors to provide specific data and experiential or anecdotal evidence on behalf of their campus.
- Identify additional sources of evidence, including data and people, that would create a full and authentic report regarding the Commonwealth Campuses, and facilitate access to those sources for inclusion in MRTC2.
- If requested, assist the authors with their preparation and/or dissemination of the MRTC2 report.
- Once the MRTC2 report is disseminated by the authors, the Senate should promptly and formally receive, review, and deliberate appropriate action in response to the report.

Recommendation 4: Establish an annual report that details the status of, and the initiatives to enhance, faculty diversity and inclusion across Penn State University.

The justification for this recommendation derives from our task force's recognition that information captured in the MRTC1 report about the challenges in hiring, retention, support and success of African American faculty at Penn State, should not have been the burden of the authors, but be the responsibility of the University. In order for the university to ensure the hiring, retention, success and satisfaction of its faculty of color, including but not limited to its African American faculty, it needs to collect and document its explicit efforts, progress, problems, and challenges. The data intended in this recommendation are primarily quantitative in nature and should be tracked to measure progress and identify problems. It will also allow for useful comparisons to similar institutions. The following are items to consider in addressing this recommendation:

- Design a recurring report that functions as an accountability measure for all units across the university. Information collected in this report should include actions that can be documented and measured such as hirings, formal and informal service load, professional development support, and promotions.
- Benchmark against other Big Ten and other large, non-urban university campuses to provide a high-level report card as a continuing review of the successes and shortcomings of the University's specific methods to recruit, hire, and retain African American faculty throughout all locations and units.
- Appoint a Faculty Senate committee with the responsibility to create and monitor this report. The Senate must continue and expand precedents set by the MRTC1 report and its multiple report precursors by documenting the University's challenges, progresses, pitfalls, and actions to building a robust faculty community that reflect the University's values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Recommendation 5: Establish hiring policies, processes, resources, and incentives designed to substantially increase representation of African American faculty across the University.

The MRTC1 report explicitly identifies the need to review University policies AC-13²⁰ (Recommended Procedure for Hiring New Faculty) and AC-22 (Search Procedures for Academic Administrative Positions), which outline the procedures for job searches and the hiring of faculty. This task force underscores that there are notable inconsistencies in the resources and support available for different units across the university that can inhibit the ability to draw from a diverse pool and hire a diverse faculty. The following are items to consider in addressing this recommendation:

- Establish budgetary support at the university level for costs/initiatives that will generate a diverse pool of candidates. This item is to ensure that every unit across the university has the same opportunity to meet the expectation and commitment to perform searches that diversify their faculty pool without burdening their budgets.
- Tangible incentives must be created and regularly assessed for University- and unit-level administrators that support the advancement of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the faculty composition of the University. The incentives will reward designed efforts that have enhanced DEI at the University and also fuel the development of new, creative, and authentic approaches to the hiring, retention, satisfaction, and success of African American faculty.
- Disseminate resources consistently throughout the University to ensure that all job searches are drawing from the widest, strongest, and most relevant pool of candidates as

²⁰ The task force recognizes that since the Fall of 2018, AC-13 has been under review and revision, and that it is slated for Senate action at its April 2020 meeting. An effective revision of AC-13 is an essential starting point to ensure that our methods match our commitment to diversity and inclusion at Penn State. AC-13 and all other policies must be continually reviewed and revised in light of the recommendations in this memorandum.

possible. Resources could include the creation and maintenance of a database of job advertising sites and other relevant resources.

Recommendation 6: Establish faculty annual review²¹, promotion²², and tenure²³ evaluation criteria that overcome the documented biases of teaching evaluation tools like SRTEs and the disproportionate service responsibilities of African American faculty.

Current evaluation methods have been shown to include bias and do not equitably account for Penn State's mission of research, teaching, and service. The following are items to consider in addressing this recommendation:

- Eliminate the current Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE) instrument. Both the lived experience of faculty and an increasing amount of scholarly literature document the biases in teaching evaluation tools which negatively impact women and faculty of color. In turn, the shared governance of faculty and the administration must develop a robust and equitable assessment of teaching effectiveness that coincides with Penn State's instructional mission.²⁴
- Consider all forms of service responsibilities of faculty of color in annual review, promotion, and tenure evaluation criteria. The University must acknowledge and respond to the disproportionate service burdens that faculty of color hold, and reformulate P&T evaluation criteria to establish methods that allow these burdens to be shared, and establish methods that will enable these burdens to be appropriately recognized in the P&T evaluation process.

Epilogue

The University Faculty Senate is a vital element of shared governance, that in consultation with the University president has significant authority on all matters that pertain to the educational interests of the University and on all academic and scholarly matters that concern the faculty. This deliberative and legislative body of which we are all a part has the power to introduce, shape, and reinvigorate University policies that affect the professional lives of every one of us and our colleagues. Recognizing the Senate's authority, this memorandum has sought to demonstrate that as Senators we have not only the ability, but also the obligation, to redress the lack of racial diversity of our faculty and the causes of racism within our University. Our Senate must also hold the University leadership accountable for its actions or failure to act. Over the

²¹ See Policy AC-40 Annual Evaluation of Faculty Performance - <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ac40>

²² See Policy AC-21 Definition of Academic Ranks - <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ac21>

²³ See Policy AC-23 Promotion and Tenure Procedures and Regulations - <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ac23>

²⁴ See <https://www.psu.edu/this-is-penn-state/leadership-and-mission/mission-and-character>

past forty years, in report after report, the African American faculty at Penn State University have documented the professional and personal costs of these realities. While the injustices that the black faculty face are indeed outrageous, we want to state unequivocally that moral outrage is not action. Handwringing does not change work cultures or improve people's lives.

We in the Senate are fortunate to be in a position to act in ways that are substantive and transformational for our University. As a first step, we urge each of you to **read** the complete *More Rivers to Cross: Part I (University Park)* report thoroughly. Following your read, **share** it with your respective faculty units and initiate a discussion about local challenges to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Then, **communicate** what you learn from your home-unit peers to Senate and University leadership. This task force has developed its own interpretations and formulated its own recommendations based on its charge and the information that was immediately at hand. There is plenty of space in this subject to welcome your contributions. Together we must ensure that the University Faculty Senate does everything in its power to hold itself and the University administration accountable for implementing the necessary policy changes, ensuring the effective hiring practices, and committing to the cultural transformations required to make MRTC1 the last needed warning about the lack of racial diversity and the persistence of racism at Penn State University.

More Rivers to Cross Response Task Force Membership

- **Dr. Christopher Byrne**, Associate Professor of Mathematics, and member of Senate Committee on Student Life
- **Dr. Julie Gallagher**, Associate Professor of History and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and member of Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
- **Dr. Megan Marshall**, Associate Teaching Professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, and member of the Senate Committee on Education
- **Dr. Karyn McKinney Marvasti**, Associate Professor of Sociology at Penn State Altoona, and Vice Chair of Senate Committee on Intra-University Relations
- **Mr. Joaquim Diego Santos**, chair of the University Park Undergraduate Association Academic Affairs Committee, student senator, and member of the Senate Committee on Education
- **Mr. Terry Watson**, Assistant Director of Student Disability Services for Penn State World Campus, and member of the Senate Committee on Educational Equity and Campus Environment
- **Dr. Joshua Kirby**, Assistant Teaching Professor of Learning, Design, and Technology, member of the Senate Council, and task force chair