*Some suggestions for an Action Plan to Address Issues of Multicultural Inclusion and Integration at La Salle University*

*Ferguson and Beyond*

**The Challenge:**

We have a robustly diverse student body at the undergraduate and graduate levels, a characteristic that distinguishes La Salle University from all of our peer and aspirant institutions locally and nationally. However, despite this diversity we remain a predominantly white institution (PWI) demographically given the racial makeup of our faculty, administrators, Board of Trustees, and other influential stakeholders,

Moreover, cultural evidence of our PWI identity can be seen in a variety of aspects University life, where diversity (representations of difference) is often championed but multiculturalism (meaningful engagements with difference that increase individual and collective commitments to equity on campus and beyond) and a culture of inclusion (the dispositions and virtues put forward in our “Affirmation” or mission value of “together and by association”) are less frequently sought out and enthusiastically supported. This is evidenced in academic hiring decisions, curricular offerings, and tenure and promotion guidelines, all of which reflect whiteness as the cultural norm; a dearth of ongoing trainings and workshops on multicultural teaching and learning for all stakeholders; lower retention/graduation rates of students of color; unilateral and transactional interactions with our predominantly African American neighbors; and weak institutional commitments to integral economic development in our Northwest Philadelphia neighborhood to name a few.

To be sure, these are challenges that we share with other colleges and universities. But they are *specifically* problematic for us in light of our identity as a Lasallian institution and our location in one of the most racially segregated cities in the U.S.

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| *Without an institutional commitment to multiculturalism and inclusion we cannot:* | With an institutional commitment, WE CAN: |
| Honor our Lasallian legacy of educating the economically disadvantaged;  Live fully our Lasallian mission of teaching and learning “together and by Association;”  Prepare all students for life in a multicultural world;  Hire and retain faculty and professional staff of color;  Capitalize on the racial diversity of our student body;  Move past an embattled posture in our neighborhood. | Fulfill our Lasallian mission to educate the economically disadvantaged  Live more fully our value of “together and by Association,” and in so doing attract students, faculty, staff, and neighbors interested in this value  Matriculate students who know how to engage people who are different from them in the spirit of equity and unity  Expand our pool of educators to include people with a variety of life experiences and perspectives  “Brand” our commitment to multiculturalism  Collaborate with neighbors in a “mesh and prosper” approach to building a sustaining a safe, vibrant, and economically viable corner of NW Philadelphia |

To that end, members of the Ferguson and Beyond Ad Hoc Committee have been meeting to study the situation at La Salle. Committee members formed working groups to address issues related to the various operational and academic dimensions of the University required to make such a commitment possible: alumni relations, trainings, student leadership development, hiring of faculty and professional staff, and curriculum. . Theses working groups identified the recommendations that are presented below. The recommendations have been separated into the categories “Immediate,” Intermediate,” and “Long-Term.” For our purposes immediate means that these are issues that we must address with in the next semester or so in order to make the necessary changes before the 2017-2018 AY, if not sooner; intermediate issues should begin to be planned during the 2017-2018 AY for implementation in the 2018-2019 AY; and, long-term issues are issues that we need to begin to address now, but they will occur as part of a longer sustained effort.

We have also discussed the need to identify possible funding sources for this Action Plan. We would look forward to working with Advancement to identify potential donors who might be interested in working with us on issues. We would also appreciate the opportunity to have representatives from Ferguson and Beyond meet with potential donors if they come to campus to visit.

Finally, we believe it would be advantageous to explore the possibility of having a Graduate Assistant assigned to work with us on further developing this Action Plan and making it a reality.

**Action Plan:**

|  | **Immediate** | **Intermediate** | **Long-Term** |
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| **Operations** |  |  |  |
| **Alumni Relations** | Conduct a needs Assessment survey with the Alumni Relations Office to get feedback on hosting Affinity Groups Weekend group and getting more alumni involvement. |  | Increase involvement of Multicultural Alumni in the Lasallian Interview recruitment opportunity with Admissions Office. |
|  | Revive the Multicultural Alumni Association Group (MAAG) that composed of all of La Salle’s Students of Color alumni |  |  |
| Faculty/Staff Training | Hire an outside organization to train all constituencies of the University (students, staff at all levels, faculty, Trustees). The training needs to be ongoing – not once and done – so there might be an element of “Train the Trainers” by the outside group. Two groups mentioned were Training for Change and the People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond. Another resource can be found at http://www.gse.upenn.edu/equity/content/mission-and-services |  | More diversity in staff and faculty. And, many of the staff and faculty who are here do not know how to handle diversity. They use phrases like “you people” in the classroom, for instance |
| **Student Leadership/Training** |  |  |  |
|  | Host listening sessions on micro-aggressions and discussions More discussion of micro-aggressions and the historical context of oppression the historical context of oppression, along with more training for students leaders such as R.A.’s and Service leaders to address these issues | Create faculty incentives for integrating this content into their classes in meaningful ways | Create curricular and co-curricular content for all students in an ongoing way |
|  | Examine how students see and talk about our community/neighborhood. When students think they are better than the residents they do not understand the historical racist undertones of that attitude |  | Integration of diversity issues across the curriculum where there is a chance for profound dialogue and study |
|  | Faculty incentives for integrating this content into their classes in meaningful ways |  | Better integration of students of color |
| **Hiring and Retention for Diversity** |  |  |  |
|  | Work with the Provost’s office for initiatives around hiring:   * Have LaSalle General Counsel meet with each and every faculty hiring committee convened to review EOE laws and Affirmative Action policies to ensure all are knowledgeable about same at the beginning of a search and to affirm institutional goal of working toward faculty diversity. * Follow through on EOE reports at the conclusion of hiring processes, and hold departments accountable when protocol is not followed * Perhaps review the EOE protocol for faculty hires   Develop and share a list of best practices around hiring for diversity | Explore partnerships with other institutions around hiring in particular areas; we have done this in the past – what worked and what didn’t? | Fundraise to create endowed chairs and visiting professorships that allow for targeted hiring |
|  | Establish a Diversity Advocate position for each hiring committee (draft developed by Holly Harner) | Create a representational committee in the Provost’s office for screening/coordinating hiring plans and searches with an eye for increasing diversity (language in ads, placement of ads, protocols for campus visits); this group would receive formal training on best practices for hiring for diversity |  |
|  | Generate an alternative list of places to post openings (list developed by Holly Harner) | Work with the Multicultural and International center to explore the hiring J-1 Professors [The J-1 Visa provides countless opportunities for international candidates that are already on our campus. This can enable foreign nationals to come to the U.S. to teach, study, conduct research, demonstrate special skills or receive on the job training for periods ranging from a few weeks to several years.]  The J-1’s would represent various International professors from various continents and backgrounds, and would be an action that can be useful for a global perspective while we continue to search nationally for diverse hires. |  |
|  | Expand the circle of folks tapped for diversity trainings or asked to speak to these issues so as to broaden the base of those committed to this work  Create a digital story telling initiative through DART that captures peoples’ personal experience with these issues and can be used as a teaching tool for a variety of constituencies, from BOT to freshmen | Address insular nature of departmental hires by adding a faculty member outside of the department to the search committee |  |
|  | Prioritize bringing speakers of color to campus in various capacities (lectures, class visits, etc.) in order to increase exposure of students and faculty to racial/ethnic difference | Require all search committees to complete training for best practices for hiring for diversity |  |
|  | Bring alumni of color to campus to in various capacities (lectures, class visits, etc.) in order to increase exposure of students and faculty to racial/ethnic difference | Consider making ILEEP a “home” for this work |  |
|  | Bring our neighbors to campus in various capacities (lectures, class visits, etc.) in order to increase exposure of students and faculty to racial/ethnic difference |  |  |
| **ACADEMICS** |  |  |  |
| Professional Development | Provide support for faculty and professional staff to attend the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities’ conference on diversity in January, 2017 - *Inclusion on Campus: Exploring Diversity as an Expression of God’s Grandeur* |  |  |
| First Year Ideas | Provision of institutional resources and backing for a program in the Fall of 2016, featuring a well-known speaker on campus, and designing faculty-led discussion groups to examine themes. This could be offered to faculty teaching FYO courses for inclusion in their syllabi. | Create a first-year seminar that includes issues of diversity, including race   * Institutions with programs we might explore include De Paul’s First-Year Program, Drexel’s First-Year Civic Engagement Course, Cabrini’s Engagement with the Common Good Series, and St. Joseph’s First-Year Seminar * If the Philadelphia Seminar moves forward, might it be a place for integrating issues of diversity and integration? |  |
| Core for the 21st Century | Conduct a benchmark survey of how peer and aspirant institutions integrate multiculturalism into their core | Integrate exposure to multiculturalism throughout the core curriculum |  |
| Co-Curricular | Tweak the Philly Phind in order to highlight sites of racial struggle and history | Offer a teach-in or other educational forum that highlights race instead of/in addition to a day of service | Team teach courses with faculty and community experts on issues of inequality rooted in various forms of difference, as well as creative responses to it |
|  | Offer faculty-led and/or staff and faculty co-led discussions in the residence halls to complement RC and RA-sponsored trainings |  |  |
| Faculty Training | *Conduct an inventory faculty needs* when it comes to engaging issues of difference, particularly racism, in their classrooms.   * + Reach out to faculty who do not currently attempt to engage racial difference to determine why this is the case   + Surface student perspectives on what works and does not work in our classrooms via a basic survey (already drafted) | *Provide* ongoing resources—internal and external—for faculty to learn how to infuse diversity and inclusion into any course, and not just those with direct connections to these courses. For example:   * + Send faculty to external trainings with the expectation that they bring what they learn back to the campus   + Bring to campus local experts in the area of anti-racism training   + Create internal pedagogy workshops during the year and during the Summer Institute   + Read a common pedagogical text and reflect together. Topics might include pedagogy for inclusive learning environments, dynamics of power and privilege in the classroom, the challenges of racially diverse classrooms, etc.   + Read a common text as a whole community, and foster conversation in various pockets around campus |  |
|  | *Gather* demographic data (age, race, geographic place of origin and current home zip code, income levels, etc.) about students *and* faculty and residents of our immediate community in order to be able get a more complete picture of the context in which we are doing our teaching and learning |  |  |
|  | *Identify* external funding sources to support an institutional commitment to resisting racism in the classroom |  |  |

We believe that this Action Plan will allow La Salle University to effectively move forward in creating a campus climate that honors and integrates diversity, and challenges us all to confront racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of discrimination.

This, of course, will require some resources on the part of the University at a time when the budget is tight. We are committed to using resources wisely and to making sure that the use of resources benefits the wider University and not just those involved. To that end, recently a group of faculty and staff attended a conference on White Privilege. Deans’ offices provided financial support for the conference. Those who attended brought back what they learned and shared it in a pedagogy workshop at the Summer Institute. They continue to engage in reflection on what they learned and are developing other ways to share their new knowledge with the community. We would expect that this reporting back and sharing lessons learned would be standard procedure as we move forward.