



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

June 4, 2021

Dear Professor Montgomery and Members of the President's Task Force on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion:

Thank you for your March 26 and April 30 letters updating me on the activities of the task force and forwarding recommendations based on the work of the subcommittees during the spring semester and approved by the entire task force.

I also appreciate the explanation and context regarding your deliberations about the name of Doak S. Campbell Stadium. I know the Historical Legacy Subcommittee as well as the full task force spent many hours reviewing Doak Campbell's presidency, hearing public input and thoughtfully considering this issue. I especially want to thank Dr. Maxine Jones for her thorough research, analysis and presentation based on hundreds of historical documents and original source material. I have reviewed this presentation, and I agree with the task force's ultimate decision to reject a proposal to remove the name Doak S. Campbell from the stadium.

In addition, I'd like to acknowledge the students, faculty, staff, alumni and others who offered presentations, public comment and correspondence to the task force or reached out to me to share their thoughts and ideas.

The President's Task Force on Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion has had a very productive semester, building on the work begun in the fall. When I convened this task force in August 2020, I envisioned an action-oriented, results-driven group. You have exceeded my expectations, devoting countless hours and meeting nearly every week over the past nine months to examine racial and ethnic disparities on campus. I appreciate your passion and your commitment to making Florida State University a more just, equitable and inclusive place for all.

I was pleased to receive your recommendations with regard to recruitment, retention, diversity training, campus climate and historical legacy. I have considered each of the 26 recommendations. Your recommendations and my decisions are outlined below. For those recommendations that may require funding, I have directed my staff to assess the cost of implementation as well as appropriate funding sources.

The recommendations from the Recruitment, Retention and Diversity Training Subcommittee, as approved by the Task Force:

- 1) **We recommend the review and adoption of an online Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) education tool required of all faculty/staff, students, and Board of Trustee members. Online EDI training should be required as part of new employee onboarding and new student orientation.**
 - *Suggested responsible department: Human Resources and Student Affairs*
 - *Funding: \$10,000 (recurring)*

I support continuing to include equity, diversity and inclusion training as part of existing employee onboarding and new student orientation programming as a reflection of FSU's core values. I believe this can be done efficiently and effectively without an additional training requirement and incurring the cost of a separate online tool. I direct the Office of Human Resources and Division of Student Affairs to incorporate equity, diversity and inclusion training into employee onboarding and new student orientation programming.

- 2) **We recommend the mandatory adoption and maintenance of Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plans at the college and/or department level(s).**
 - *Suggested responsible department: The governing administrative unit.*

Diversity and inclusion are key pillars of the university's overall strategic plan, and we expect all colleges and departments to appropriately align their priorities. Although it may not be necessary to mandate separate plans for each college and department, I applaud those who have taken the initiative to develop plans that reflect their unique missions and objectives. I ask all Vice Presidents to review their unit's plans to ensure they are appropriately aligned with FSU's strategic plan.

- 3) **We recommend the implementation of the following recruitment initiatives:**
 - **Require annual hiring/search training for all involved in hiring (i.e., Deans, Directors, Chairs, Hiring Managers, and Search Committee members).**
 - **Require all searches for faculty in teaching and research positions as well as staff administrative and professional positions to include the submission of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement as part of the application materials.**
 - **Augment the current search committee training with a section on Equal Opportunity subject matter to include implicit bias in hiring and diverse pool development.**
 - **Augment the current search committee training to include a section on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) search procedures.**
 - **Require the inclusion of at least one or two underrepresented faculty for faculty search committees.**
 - *Suggested responsible department: Human Resources*
 - *Funding: N/A*

Recruitment of underrepresented candidates is important to meeting FSU's equity, diversity, and inclusion goals as outlined in the university's strategic plan. Training those involved in hiring enhances recruitment procedures and processes. While training is already required in many instances, more work should be done. I direct the Office of Human Resources to ensure compliance with all required hiring and search committee trainings. Additionally, the trainings should be augmented to include a section on Equal Opportunity subject matter, including implicit bias in hiring and diverse pool development. With regard to requiring the inclusion of one or two underrepresented faculty members, I recognize that this may not always be feasible, and could also place an undue burden on a small number of faculty.

4) We recommend the establishment of a Professional Development Program for administrative and professional and University support personnel system staff from underrepresented groups with a focus on leadership development and professional advancement.

- *Suggested responsible department: Human Resources*
- *Funding: TBD*

Professional development is key to developing a talent pipeline. Additionally, leadership development is particularly needed for lower and mid-level staff. I direct the Office of Human Resources to develop a program with a focus on leadership development and professional advancement for university staff from underrepresented groups.

5) We recommend the exploration, development, and implementation of a historically Black college and university (HBCU) Faculty Exchange Program.

- *Suggested responsible department: Academic Affairs*
- *Funding: TBD*

I direct the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement to explore this proposal to determine the feasibility at FSU.

6) We recommend the development of an institutional mentoring program to provide support to Underrepresented Minority junior and mid-career faculty in relation to promotion and tenure.

- *Suggested responsible department: Academic Affairs/Human Resources*
- *Funding: at least \$75,000 annually and release time for coordinators*

Mentorship is integral to promotion and tenure of junior and mid-career faculty. I direct the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement to evaluate this proposal with a focus on expanding existing programs to support underrepresented faculty.

- 7) **We recommend the expansion of and funding for faculty/staff Affinity groups.**
- ***Suggested responsible department: Human Resources***
 - ***Funding: at least \$75,000 annually***

Fostering a sense of community and belonging is important for our faculty and staff to thrive at FSU and is a crucial component of our retention efforts. The university's affinity group program is expansive and comprises both faculty and staff. I direct the Office of Human Resources, specifically the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office, to continue to manage the program to ensure employee groups have equitable access and support.

- 8) **We recommend the expansion of the Bridge-to-Graduate School Programs targeting Underrepresented Minority undergraduates (e.g., Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Feeder Program). We also recommend the re-establishment of the McNair Program.**
- ***Suggested responsible department: Academic Affairs/Graduate School***
 - ***Funding: TBD***

I fully support the expansion of graduate school pipeline programs. I direct the Graduate School to explore this proposal and recommend appropriate programs to support expansion.

- 9) **We recommend a University committee to review and revise graduate student recruitment procedures with focus on ways of expanding the pool of underrepresented graduate student applicants. The group will be charged with addressing the following:**
- **Evaluating and studying whether standardized tests work against diversifying FSU's graduate school applicant and admission pool, and,**
 - **Researching the viability of eliminating and/or replacing standardized admissions tests, such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), to keep pace with changing national trends (e.g. some law schools now offer alternatives to the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) in admissions decisions.**

The Office of the Provost and the Graduate School continuously monitor graduate student recruitment procedures through the Graduate Policy Committee. I direct the Graduate Policy Committee to develop a report detailing efforts to expand the pool of underrepresented graduate student applicants, including recommendations about standardized admissions tests. This report shall be submitted by the end of this calendar year.

- 10) **We recommend the hiring of additional admissions officers/counselors charged with the recruitment of underrepresented minority populations and mandatory diversity recruitment training for all other admissions officers/counselors. We also advise the creation of opportunities and training resources for faculty, staff, students, and**

alumni to engage with the recruitment efforts of underrepresented minority populations. Such efforts should involve the expansion of recruitment efforts targeting Title One Schools and the expansion of pre-collegiate, mentoring, and service learning.

- ***Suggested responsible departments: Academic Affairs/ Admissions/ Colleges and Departments***
- ***Funding: TBD/Increased staffing***

FSU is committed to enhancing efforts to recruit undergraduate and graduate students from Underrepresented Minority populations. Expanding recruitment efforts targeting Title I schools is one way to help the university advance its goals. I direct the Office of Admissions to explore an expansion of the existing High School Partners Program, which is a collaborative effort between Admissions, Financial Aid, and CARE, including the possibility of increasing scholarship funding. As part of this process, the Office of Admissions should examine the staff resources needed to support the expansion of the program. Additionally, the Office of Admissions should consider the benefits of a partnership with the College Advising Corps, a national group of college advisors for low income schools.

- 11) We recommend the development of a plan to increase funding and admission of Underrepresented Minority populations to the University’s honors and scholarship programs (i.e., Honors Program; Service Scholar Program; and Presidential Scholars Program). Such endeavors should involve the provision of additional resources for underrepresented-minority students to seek lateral admission to the Honors Program.**

- ***Suggested responsible party: Academic Affairs/ Honors Program/Admissions***
- ***Funding: TBD***

In recent years, FSU has taken steps to greatly increase the diversity of the applicant pool for the university’s honors and other scholarship programs. However, it’s clear there is more work to do to enhance these programs. FSU will continue to increase awareness, access and support for enrollment in these programs to ensure all eligible students realize the full benefits of the academic opportunities available to them. In addition, students need to be made aware of the opportunities to seek lateral admission to the Honors Program and other scholarship programs. I direct the Office of the Provost to continue to identify needs and available resources to expand these opportunities.

- 12) We recommend the formation of a working group comprised of faculty/staff, students, and alumni to develop a plan for becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution using the document “Preparing to Best Serve Hispanic/Latinx members of the FSU Community” as a planning tool. We also recommend engaging in an institutional membership in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.**

- ***Suggested responsible department: Human Resources, Students Affairs, and Academic Affairs***

- *The university should appropriate a recurring \$9,000 annual allocation, with any necessary future incremental increases, for institutional membership in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.*

With nearly 20 percent of FSU students identifying as Hispanic or Latino, FSU is very close to reaching the federal designation for a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). I support the establishment of a working group comprised of faculty, staff, students, and alumni to develop a plan for becoming an HSI. I also support joining the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. I direct the Office of Human Resources, the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Affairs to establish the working group.

The recommendations from the Campus Climate Subcommittee, as approved by the Task Force:

- 13) We recommend that the university reinstates and provides recurring funding in support of the One Book/One Campus Initiative (or its future iteration). A One Book/One Campus Committee shall be established in order to oversee this effort in relation to issues of anti-racism, equity and inclusion.**

The university's previous iteration of the One Book/One Campus Initiative was met with mixed results, and I have determined that reinstating this program at this time would not be the best use of the university's resources.

- 14) We recommend the establishment of a Florida State University Community Relations Liaison Committee within the campus police department to include at least one student and faculty/staff member.**

The FSU Chief of Police and members of the FSU Police Department routinely meet with the Student Government Association and other campus leaders to engage in ongoing dialogue and relationship building. I expect the Police Department will continue to do so.

- 15) We recommend that all University contracts and related agreements include terms and conditions that prohibit the utilization of prison and forced labor in addition to prohibiting any actions or practices that violate the Fair Labor Standards Act and Human Trafficking Laws and Regulations. Furthermore, the contracts and related agreements shall include a clause that any such violations of these terms and conditions are grounds for termination of the contract.**

I direct the Office of the General Counsel to review the terms and conditions of university contracts and related agreements to ensure compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act and human trafficking laws.

- 16) We recommend that the President’s Council on Diversity and Inclusion utilizes the Campus Climate Survey to improve the University in issues of anti-racism, equity, and inclusion. We also recommend that the Council creates and implements an evaluation system geared toward monitoring the impact of recommendations from President Thrasher’s 2020-21 Task Force on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion.**

I direct the President’s Council on Diversity and Inclusion to use the upcoming campus climate survey results to help FSU further its goals with regard to anti-racism, equity and inclusion. In addition, I direct the Council to create and implement an evaluation system to monitor the impact of the implemented recommendations from the President’s Task Force on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion.

The recommendations from the Historical Legacy Subcommittee, as approved by the Task Force, are as follows:

- 17) We recommend that the University acknowledges in permanent public display Florida State University’s main campus location on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Apalachee Nation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida, and the Seminole Tribe of Florida. This public display should be situated at all primary entrances to the main campus, placed strategically on all United States campuses, and there should be a virtual acknowledgement on University websites.**

I direct the university’s senior leadership team to engage and collaborate with scholars and subject-matter experts to draft this land acknowledgement statement and determine appropriate placement on campus and university websites.

- 18) We recommend that the University acknowledges the following in some form of permanent display: the labor of enslaved and free African and African-descended people in the construction of Florida State University’s main campus. This acknowledgement should be displayed in high traffic areas throughout the main campus and on sites of historical significance.**

I direct the university’s senior leadership team to engage and collaborate with scholars and subject-matter experts to draft language acknowledging the labor of enslaved and free African and African-descended people in the construction of Florida State University’s main campus. The team will determine appropriate placement in high-traffic areas and historically significant sites on campus.

- 19) We recommend that the University commissions a study of the persons for whom buildings and facilities are named on all of its United States campuses and**

international locations in order to assess ties to racism, sexism, and the oppression of marginalized peoples and to determine whether those individuals – past or present – espouse beliefs or engage in behavior that aligns with the values of Florida State University. We acknowledge the relevance of historical context in such evaluations, but if an individual has engaged in actions that run counter to the University’s core values, we strongly recommend that the University addresses that issue. In addition, there should be a standing committee comprised of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, religious, and ability status groups involved in the review process.

FSU has been responsive to concerns about historical names and will continue to be. The university will continue to evaluate building names and recognitions on a case-by-case basis as appropriate. The framework established by the 2017-2018 President’s Advisory Panel on University Namings and Recognitions provides a strong foundation to guide future discussions. An additional study or standing committee is not warranted at this time.

- 20) We recommend that the Naming Policy (Florida State University Policy 8-2), Section II. G. (The Committee on Campus Names) be amended by September 30, 2021 to include at least one non-employee member of the alumni community. This member (or these members) shall be appointed by the President with the intention of increasing racial and ethnic diversity on the Committee of Campus Names to enhance the range of thought, perspective, and experience of the University community at large. This recommendation aligns with Florida State University’s Strategic Plan Goal III of realizing the University’s full potential of diversity and inclusion.**

The Naming Policy (Florida State University Policy 8-2), Section II. G. defines the Committee on Campus Names to include a member of the alumni community. I wholeheartedly agree that this committee should include broad representation and reflect racial and ethnic diversity, and I will ensure this will be a consideration when making the next appointment.

- 21) We recommend that the University establishes a permanent committee, which reports to the President, to recommend recognitions for outstanding members of the university community. This committee shall consider naming, memorials, monuments, and other recognitions for exceptional contributions, both past and present, to the university’s academic, research, cultural, and service mission. On a regular basis, the committee shall submit recommendations with an emphasis on ensuring the inclusion of diverse and underrepresented groups and individuals. This permanent committee should be comprised of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members and should reflect the racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, ability status, religious, and gender diversity of the University community. This**

recommendation aligns with Florida State University's Strategic Plan Goal III of realizing the University's full potential of diversity and inclusion.

I fully support an enhanced effort to ensure that names, memorials, monuments and other recognitions include diverse and underrepresented individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the university's academic, research, cultural and service mission. I direct the President's Council on Diversity and Inclusion to assume additional responsibilities in support of this effort. In addition, I direct all other nominating committees on campus to consider the contributions and achievements of a wide range of groups and individuals and commit to diversity, equity and inclusion.

- 22) We recommend that the University institutionalizes and supports the development of the History Department and University Libraries' module documenting the history of Florida State University in relation to race and ethnicity with particular emphasis on the experiences of African Americans and American Indians. This module shall be used in First Year Experience (FYE) courses, student orientations, new faculty orientation, staff training, and classes across disciplines as part of the University's ongoing funded research commitment. This module shall be a dynamic resource accessible through the University homepage, websites, and libraries. The University shall promote awareness of and engagement with the module among students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members.**

I direct the university's senior leadership team to continue to support this module as a supplemental resource for student and faculty orientations, staff trainings, and classes across disciplines. The university will promote this resource and make it accessible to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members.

- 23) We recommend that the University supports and sufficiently funds the creation and maintenance of an interdisciplinary Native American and Indigenous Studies Center. The Center would include a full-time director, an undergraduate major, a physical space, and programming. In addition to propelling FSU into a leading institution for Native American and Indigenous Studies, the Center would also provide services and support to current and incoming Native American and indigenous students.**

I direct the university's senior leadership team to begin working with relevant faculty members to develop a detailed proposal, including a proposed budget, and determine feasibility of an interdisciplinary Native American and Indigenous Studies Center.

- 24) We recommend that the University partners with such entities as the Riley House Center and Museum, the FSU Civil Rights Institute, and the FSU Archives to highlight the University's history surrounding race, ethnicity, and representation. These efforts would include educational programs along with storytelling by**

students, faculty/staff, and alumni in the creation of archival material for public access.

I direct the Division of Academic Affairs to support and foster opportunities to partner and collaborate with such entities as the Riley House Center and Museum, the FSU Civil Rights Institute and the FSU Archives to provide educational programming about FSU's history with regard to race, ethnicity and representation.

- 25) We recommend the addition of a high-profile acknowledgement of the contributions on the part of Black and other underrepresented minority student athletes at the stadium. The University and Athletic Department shall engage groups such as the FSU National Black Alumni, Inc. Black Student Union, Black Student Athlete Association, and other appropriate groups to collaborate immediately on this acknowledgement.**

I wholeheartedly agree with this recommendation to acknowledge the significant contributions of Black and other Underrepresented Minority student-athletes at Florida State University. I direct the Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics to move forward by communicating and engaging with FSU constituent groups, including but not limited to the FSU National Black Alumni, Inc. and the Black Student Union to create a high-profile recognition at the stadium.

Recommendation from the Task Force:

- 26) We recommend the establishment of a permanent body comprised of faculty/staff, administrators, students, alumni, and community members that reports directly to the President, Provost, and Human Resources (Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion). That body shall be charged with the following:**
- Working alongside the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in offering a practical, supportive body for students, faculty/staff, administrators, and alumni that upholds the University's commitment to diversity.**
 - Compensating members of the body with a stipend.**
 - Reporting on the barriers that students, faculty, staff, and administrators face at the University, with particular attention to anti-Black racism.**
 - Fostering ongoing, authentic dialogue about race, racism, and anti-racism along with issues of gender, sexual, religious, and ability difference.**
 - Establishing a new institutional culture through the recommendation of programmatic and structural changes that address institutional racism.**
 - Monitoring the creation and maintenance of an Anti-Racism digital platform accessible through the University website documenting the primary outcomes of President Thrasher's 2020-21 Task Force on Anti-Racism, Equity, and Inclusion in the areas of history and culture, education, and representation. Such a**

platform might include links to related documents, a mention of ongoing concerns, and future objectives.

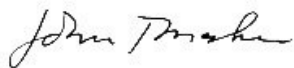
- ***Suggested responsible units: President's Office, Provost's Office, and Human Resources***

I appreciate the work of the task force and the need for an ongoing commitment to the mission of anti-racism, equity and inclusion. The President's Council on Diversity and Inclusion is a permanent body comprised of faculty, staff, administrators and a graduate student. The council's membership and mission should be expanded to include many of the areas the task force has highlighted.

In closing, I would again like to thank Professor Maxine Montgomery, as well as subcommittee chairs Dr. Brandon Bowden, Ms. Michelle Douglas and Professor Maxine Jones and the members of the task force for your dedicated service and commitment to Florida State University. You have completed your work in an exceptional manner, and I am now formally discharging the task force from further responsibilities.

Please be assured that the work you have done will lead to meaningful and lasting change and will ensure that Florida State University fosters a more diverse, equitable and inclusive environment in which everyone is valued, respected and given every opportunity to thrive and succeed.

Sincerely,



John Thrasher
President