Kent State University Anti-Racism Task Force Final Report and Recommendations

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AREI – Anti-Racism and Equity Institute

ARTF – Anti-Racism Task Force

ARTFTT – Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team

BBA – Bachelor of Business Administration

BMRT – Business Management and Related Technology

BIPOC – Black, Indigenous, People of Color

BUS – Black United Students

BTAS – Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies

DEI – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DPAS/AFS – Department of Pan-African Studies (now Africana Studies)

DSA – Division of Student Affairs

ERG – Employee Resource Group

KC – Kent Campus

KSU – Kent State University

PAFSA – Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association

RC – Regional Campus

RTP – Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion

UCM – University Communication and Marketing

Acknowledgments

The Steering Committee for Kent State University's Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) acknowledges the impact of racism and anti-Black racism on all our students, staff, faculty and administrators on all campuses, but particularly our Black and Brown community members. We are honored to have worked with the members of the ARTF and the members of the subcommittees, whose names are listed on the pages below, to try to dismantle the systemic nature of racism. We are very appreciative of the generosity of so many Kent State University (KSU) students, staff, administrators and faculty who committed their valuable time, insights and collective wisdom to the work of the Task Force to reform policies, procedures and practices that harm.

We would also like to thank Jennifer Hebebrand, who provided incredible project management support, and Brianna Molitor, who assisted with additional administrative support.

Dismantling systemic discrimination requires a commitment of organizational leadership and a reallocation of resources. This Task Force would not exist without the support of the 13th President of Kent State University, Todd Diacon. We thank him for his courage in supporting the work of the Task Force and various other anti-racism initiatives on KSU campuses.

Amoaba Gooden, Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Lamar Hylton, Senior Vice President, Division of Student Affairs

Melody Tankersley, Senior Vice President and Provost

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Executive Summary

The 2020 death of Mr. George Floyd along with the deaths of Ms. Breonna Taylor and Mr. Ahmaud Arbury and the intergenerational and multi-ethnic responses to their deaths put institutions and organizations across the nation under greater scrutiny with regard to racial equity. This has forced institutions of higher education to reconceptualize, re-define and operationalize racial equity.

On Kent State's campus, the painting of racist messages on the Rock, a symbol of free speech located on Kent's Front Campus, also served as glaring evidence that "Kent State University and our country needed to do better when addressing racism and violence against Black Americans."

At the core of Kent State values, kindness and respect "demand that we step up to become part of the conversation that leads to a solution" that works at "dismantling the systemic racism that has plagued our communities throughout history, and our university."

In keeping with our Kent State values, the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) was charged by President Diacon to explore all facets of racism at Kent State and to work proactively and collaboratively to identify institutional and individual racism in all its forms, and to forge a clear plan of action to address racism on Kent State campuses. The Task Force was also charged to begin its work with a focus on anti-Black racism and to later expand to examine all areas of racism on Kent State's campuses.

An intentionally broad and diverse representation from the campus community was invited to serve on the Task Force. The Task Force consisted of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff and administrators who understood and were committed to anti-racism and racial equity. To accomplish its goals, the Task Force members also invited additional members to serve on subcommittees. Each subcommittee was chaired or co-chaired by a Task Force member.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all work of the Task Force was done virtually using the platform Microsoft Teams. The work was supported by a Steering Committee made up of Vice President Amoaba Gooden, Senior Vice President Lamar Hylton and Senior Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley.

The Steering Committee identified the following fourteen (14) areas of focus:

i.   Academic Curriculum
ii.   Accessibility
iii.   Admissions and Prospective Students
iv.   Business Practices
v.   Community Engagement
vi.   Education for our Faculty and Staff
vii.   Faculty Recruitment and Retention
viii.   Graduate and Doctoral Student Life
ix.   Health and Wellbeing/Mental Health Support and Services
x.   Learning and Education
xi.   Policies and Procedures
xii.   Safety and Security
xiii.   Staff Recruitment, Retention and Promotion
xiv.   Undergraduate Student Life

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Task Force Members:

The work of the Anti-Racism Task Force was made possible by twenty-six (26) core team members as well as about one hundred and sixty-five (165) subcommittee members who understood the urgency of racial equity and access during the ongoing pandemic and the social unrest. The names of the individuals who served on the Task Force can be found in the full report. The willingness of so many KSU community members who approached this work with the sense of urgency it deserved, their insight and their collective knowledge assisted Kent State in embarking on this journey of anti-racism. They worked diligently and researched their areas, consulted with key stakeholders and developed recommendations that will advance anti-racism conversations and practices at Kent State University. The Steering Committee is profoundly grateful to each of the Task Force members and the members of the subcommittees who contributed their time, knowledge, expertise and ideas. Each played an incredibly valuable role, and we are thankful to each member for being an integral part of the change at Kent State University.

Recommendations:

As the final report and recommendations details below, the work of the ARTF committee was aimed at generating actions toward transformational change. The recommendations offered a way to increase access and embed equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging across Kent State campuses. Fifteen (15) subcommittees were announced in August 2020. After discussion, the Steering Committee collapsed Health and Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Services into one subcommittee. In March 2021, a total of 108 recommendations were submitted to the Steering Committee. In April 2021, at a university town hall, the fourteen (14) subcommittees presented their provided short and long-term goals. The recommendations drew attention to the need for a deep anti-racism engagement with access and equity across all Kent State campuses. They acknowledged that continued commitment and conversation beyond the life of the Task Force were needed. Additionally, recommendations highlighted the need for work across the campuses with regards to curriculum (curricula and co-curricular) policies, procedures and processes. While all the recommendations were accepted, the Steering Committee noted that the recommendations related to faculty fall under the purview of the AAUP. In all these instances the AAUP must be a partner in this effort.

Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team:

The Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team (ARTFTT) continues the work started by the ARTF. Formed in Summer 2021, the committee consists of faculty, staff, students and administrators. Working with appropriate faculty, staff and student stakeholders, the ARTFTT will move the work of the ARTF forward by working in subcommittees on 13 recommendations that were proposed by the ARTF during the 2020-2021 academic year. The other recommendations are being managed within the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

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The ARTFTT will focus on the following 13 recommendations:

i.   Develop a diversity and mental health statement for syllabi.

ii.   Create a framework to cultivate strong and authentic relationships between senior leaders and Black students.

iii.   Develop a faculty and staff recruitment and hiring handbook.

iv.   Create a framework for a yearly conference focusing on anti-racism; Organize a conference for the 2022-2023 academic year.

v.   Development of retention and promotion initiatives for Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American/Pacific Islander and all POC staff and faculty members.

vi.   Develop a process whereby campuses would advance action plans focusing on issues identified in the 2021 Climate Study.

vii.   Work with HR to ensure all staff participates in required anti-racism Beyond Compliance training.

viii.   Eliminate barriers to application, specifically create bilingual applications.

ix.   Compile a list of current equity and anti-racism training opportunities that are available to students.

x.   Review of Human Resources Hiring/Search Committee workshops.

xi.   Formalize a mentorship program for faculty.

xii.   Create a KSU anti-racism effort strategic communication plan.

xiii.   Create a university staff handbook.

The work of the ARTFTT is supported by a Steering Committee made up of Vice President Amoaba Gooden, Senior Vice President Lamar Hylton and Senior Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley.

While this final report does not include background on anti-racism work already underway at Kent State University, it does recognize the work over the past 50 years of Black United Students, the Department of Africana Studies (formerly the Department of Pan-African Studies) and the Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association. Each organization has worked tirelessly to remove racial barriers and increase equity and belonging for Black students, faculty, administrators and staff of color at Kent State University.

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Final Report

Task Force Members and Subcommittee Members

Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Amoaba Gooden

Senior Vice President for Student Affairs, Lamar Hylton

Senior Vice President and Provost, Melody Tankersley.

Task Force

- Gabrielle Blake – Student, Black United Students, Political Affairs and Grievance Chair
- Sean Broghammer – Associate VP, Enrollment Management; Admissions
- Amanda Dolan – Director, Enrollment Management and Student Services
- Jean Engohang-Ndong – Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Stephanie Evans – Special Assistant, Office of Student Conduct
- Gary Goldberg – Assistant VP, Student Services and Engagement, Division of Student Affairs
- Linda Hoeptner-Poling – Associate Professor, Undergraduate Coordinator, School of the Arts
- Chazzlyn Jackson – Student, Diversity Senator, President of Undergraduate Student Government
- Tierra James – Graduate Student, Black Graduate Student Association, Department of Sociology
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- Gregory King – Assistant Professor, School of Theatre and Dance
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- Shana Lee – Assistant Dean of Students
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- Eboni Pringle – Dean, University College
- Renee Romine – Director, Human Resources; Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association
- Sarah Schmidt – Assistant Director, Global Education Initiative
- Scott Sheridan – Chair, Department of Geography
- Anna Solberg – Student, Graduate Student Senate, Advocacy Chair
- Lashonda Taylor – Executive Director, University Events and Protocol
- Julie Vandegrift – Analyst, Center for Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement
- Sean Veney – Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Theresa Walton-Fisette – Professor, Sports Administration
- Jameka Wilson – Assistant Director, One Stop for Student Services

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Academic Curriculum Subcommittee

Linda Piccirillo-Smith and Chazzlyn Jackson - co-chairs

- Eugene Shelton, Professor, Media and Journalism
- Andrew Barnes, Associate Professor, Political Science
- Nadia Dansani, Student, Accounting
- Jasmine Toney, Student, English
- Hailey Mezurek, Graduate Student, Higher Education Administration and Student Affairs
- Elizabeth Wagoner, Assistant Professor, Department of English
- Keiana Newell, Student, Political Science
- Ann Walter, Director, Fashion Design and Merchandising
- Mary Parker, Vice President, Enrollment Management (inactive as of SP21)
- LaToya Littles, Graduate Student, Aeronautics and Engineering

Accessibility Subcommittee

Amanda Dolan – chair

- Abe Osbourne, Associate Professor, College of Podiatric Medicine
- Josh Perkins, Director, Student Success Programs
- Darcy McBride, Coordinator of Academic Services, Stark Campus
- Nicholas Hull, Student, Business Management Technology, Ashtabula Campus
- Valerie Gonzalez, Graduate Student, Master of Education and Admissions Counselor, Ashtabula Campus
- Jennifer McCullough, Assistant Professor, Communication Studies
- Maya Satlygylyjova, Assistant Director, TRIO Upward Bound
- Babacar Mbaye, Chair, Department of English
- Valerie Samuel, Associate Director, Assessment and Accreditation, Student Affairs
- Moriah Peoples, Graduate Student, Podiatric Medicine

Admissions and Prospective Students Subcommittee

Sean Broghammer and Shana Lee - co-chairs

- Najelle Gilmore, Graduate Student, Master of Education (inactive as of SP21)
- Liz Piatt, Assistant Dean, University College
- Fabio Palanco, Associate Professor, School of Theatre of Dance

- Jasmina Waters, Director, TRIO Upward Bound
- Jeanne Smith, Senior Lecturer, Department of English
- Angie Stevens, Finance and Student Services Director, Office of Continuing and Distance Education
- Ashante Price, Graduate Student, Advisor in College of Education, Health and Human Services
- Barb Boltz, Director, Information Technology
- Ken Ditlevson, Director, LGBTQ+ Student Center
- Amy Sydlowski, Associate Director, Admissions Operations and Processing
- Shaunquelle Sapp, Graduate Assistant, Dean of Students
- Joshua Rider, Executive Director, Center for Adult and Veteran Services
- Mary Lynn Delfino, Admissions Coordinator, Geauga Campus
- Jesmin Akter, Graduate Student, Higher Education Administration and Student Affairs
- Beau Gannon, Senior Admission Counselor, Stark Campus

Business Practices Subcommittee

Gary Goldberg - chair

- Alice Fermaintt, Student, Psychology
- Duriel Milton, Cashier II, Flashcard Operations
- Mary Hricko, Library Director, Geauga Campus
- David Haas, Residence Hall Director
- Hunter Chenevey, Student, College of Arts and Sciences
- Tameka Ellington, Interim Associate Dean, College of the Arts
- Patty Robinson, Program Director, TRIO Upward Bound
- Tim Konczal, Director, Procurement
- Parry Lopez, Supervisor, Kent Student Center Operations
- Sydney Jordan, Assistant Director, Center for Student Involvement
- Cynthia Williams, Director, University Libraries
- Amanda Mandee Cleveland, Clerical Coordinator, Residence Services

Community Engagement Subcommittee

Dana Lawless-Andric and Sarah Schmidt - co-chairs

- Cathy DuBois, Associate Dean, College of Business Administration
- Barbara George, Assistant Professor, English, Salem Campus
- Amy Murfello, Marketing and Communications, Geauga Campus

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- Mwatabu Okantah, Associate Professor, Africana Studies
- Nicole Willey, Professor, English, Tuscarawas Campus
- Amanda Woodyard, Director, Community Engaged Learning
- Qunxing Ding, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences, East Liverpool/Salem Campus
- Dinah Walter, Student, Biology
- Jeff Harrell, TRIO Upward Bound Coordinator
- Shandna Burroughs, Graduate Student, Philosophy
- Lester Sanders, Academic Program Coordinator, Stark Campus
- Joan Steidl, Associate Lecturer, Ashtabula Campus

Education for Our Faculty and Staff Subcommittee

Theresa Walton-Fisette and Renee Romine - co-chairs

- Kamesha Spates, Associate Professor, Sociology
- Lance Williams, Operations and Special Project Director, Geauga Campus
- Sandra Morgan, Director, External Affairs and Communication, College of Arts and Sciences
- Hyong (Brian) Yim, Assistant Professor, Sport Administration
- Claudia Garcia, Graduate Student, College of Education, Health and Human Services, Pre-major
- Lydia Rose, Associate Professor, Sociology, East Liverpool Campus
- Daniel Nilsson, Director, Office of Diversity and Outreach, College of Education, Health and Human Services
- Natalie Huya, Associate Lecturer, Theatre, Ashtabula Campus
- Douglas Delahanty, Interim Vice President, Research and Sponsored Programs
- Michael Shipe, Custodial Worker, Regional Campus, Dean, Stark Campus

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Faculty Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee

Gregory King and Jean Engohang-Ndong - co-chairs

- Haithem Zourrig, Associate Professor of Marketing, Stark Campus
- Louise Steele, Assistant Professor of Biology, Salem Campus
- Roshinee Perera, Assistant Professor of Chemistry, Tuscarawas Campus
- Charity Miller, Director, University Advising
- AJ Leu, Academic Diversity Officer, College of Communication and Information
- Alicia Crowe, Associate Dean, College of Education, Health and Human Services
- Hai Dinh, Professor, Mathematical Science, Trumbull Campus
- Jasmine Jefferson, University Libraries
- Courtney Brown, Associate Professor, Theatre and Dance
- Cheryl Ann Lambert, Associate Professor, Public Relations
- Tom Humes, Assistant Professor, Stage Management

Graduate and Doctoral Student Life Subcommittee

Jenny Marcinkiewicz and Anna Solberg - co-chairs

- Gail Fraizer, Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Sarah Malcolm, Director, International Partnerships, Marketing and Communication, Office of Global Education
- Kenia Cruz, Research Assistant, Psychology
- Kyle Reynolds, Director of Student Services, Graduate Studies
- Imani Reynolds, Coordinator, Community Engaged Learning
- Jamie Jittapirom, Lead Coordinator, College of Education, Health and Human Services Doctoral Student Forum
- Maxwell Adjei, Graduate Teaching Assistant
- Evan Faidley, Graduate Student Career Liaison, Graduate Studies
- Maria Zaldivar, Assistant Professor, Modern and Classical Language Studies
- Joycelyn Harrison, Associate Dean, College of Aeronautics and Engineering
- Cody Ruiz, Graduate Student, Philosophy

Health and Wellbeing & Mental Health Subcommittee

Deric Kenne and Sean Veney - co-chairs

- Lana Frankle, Graduate Student, Philosophy
- Megan Anderson, Research Assistant, Division of Mental Health and Substance Use Research
- Kim Laurene, Assistant Professor, Center for Public Policy and Health
- Emily Ribnik, Professional Clinical Counselor and Supervisor

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- Lanar Nettles, Graduate Assistant, College of Public Health
- Leslie Heaphy, Associate Chair and Associate Professor, History
- Peggy Nzomo, Resident Global Education Librarian, Library
- Lakitia Avery, Senior Program Manager, Kent State Online
- Denise Harrison, Lecturer, Africana Studies
- Jill Jenkins, Executive Director, Residence Services
- Lisa Sims, Psychologist, Counseling and Psychological Services, DeWeese Health Center
- Lindsay Nelson, Student, Nursing
- Shandna Burroughs, Graduate Student, Philosophy

Learning and Education Subcommittee

Eboni Pringle and Scott Sheridan - co-chairs

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- Alicia Sloan, Graduate Student, Geography
- Lisa Audet, Assistant Professor, Health Sciences
- Octavia Jones, Administrative Assistant, Communication Studies
- Marquis Davis, Project Coordinator, Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Hannah Hartman, Graduate Student, Biological Sciences
- Lee Gilman, Assistant Professor, Psychology
- Danielle Weiser-Cline, Director, Enrollment Management, Geauga Campus
- Amy Quillin, University Ombuds
- Michael Daniels, Director, Student Multicultural Center
- Mark Jenkins, Student, Aeronautics
- Asantewa Sunni-Ali, Assistant Professor, Africana Studies
- Jim Raber, Executive Director, Information Technology

Policies and Procedures Subcommittee

Linda Hoeptner-Poling and Jameka Wilson - co-chairs

- Elizabeth Kenyon, Associate Professor, Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies
- Sheri Klein, Faculty, Part-time, School of Art
- Emmett Drugan, Graduate Student, M.Ed. and Certificate in Addictions Counseling (inactive as of FA20)
- Latesha Dukes, Assistant Director, Donor Recognition Programs
- Jazmyn Montanez, Graduate Student, Public Health

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- Louise Valentine, Director, School of Fashion
- Alicia Marchland, Applicant Support Analyst
- Janine Tiffe, Assistant Professor, School of Music
- Christina Timmons, Graduate Student, Art Education
- Nichole Decaprio, Associate General Counsel
- Kimberly Edge, Senior Assistant of Registration and Enrollment Services
- Ayesha Jones, Counselor, One Stop for Student Services
- Laura Rodriguez, Financial Aid Counselor

Safety and Security Subcommittee

Mike Pasquarella and Tierra James - co-chairs

- Lori Boes, Director, May 4th Center
- Marie Bukowski, Director, School of the Arts
- Dennis Campell, Assistant Director, Fraternity and Sorority Life
- Sherylynn Chapman, Senior Assistant Director, Admissions
- John Hummell, Assistant Director, Safety and Security
- Melanie Jones, Director, Academic Diversity Outreach, University College
- Sergeant Michquel Penn, Police Services Division
- Nick Potts, IFC Representative
- Imani Reynolds, Coordinator, Engaged Learning
- Sierra Roundtree, Coordinator, Safety and Security
- Irene Skleres, Advisor, Regional
- Thomas Smith, Student, Vice President, Black United Students

Staff Recruitment, Retention, and Promotion Committee

Lashonda Taylor and Julie Vandegrift – co-chairs

- Ed Butch, Senior Director of Academic Recruitment and Retention, College of Arts and Sciences
- Ellen Glickman, School Director, Health Sciences
- Talea Drummer-Ferrell, Dean of Students, Office of the Dean
- Michael Kavulic, Assistant Vice President, Research Administration
- Brittani Peterson, Marketing Associate, School of Fashion Design and Merchandising
- Kasey Ray, Assistant Professor, Sociology
- Bethany Sava, Associate Director, Annual Giving Program
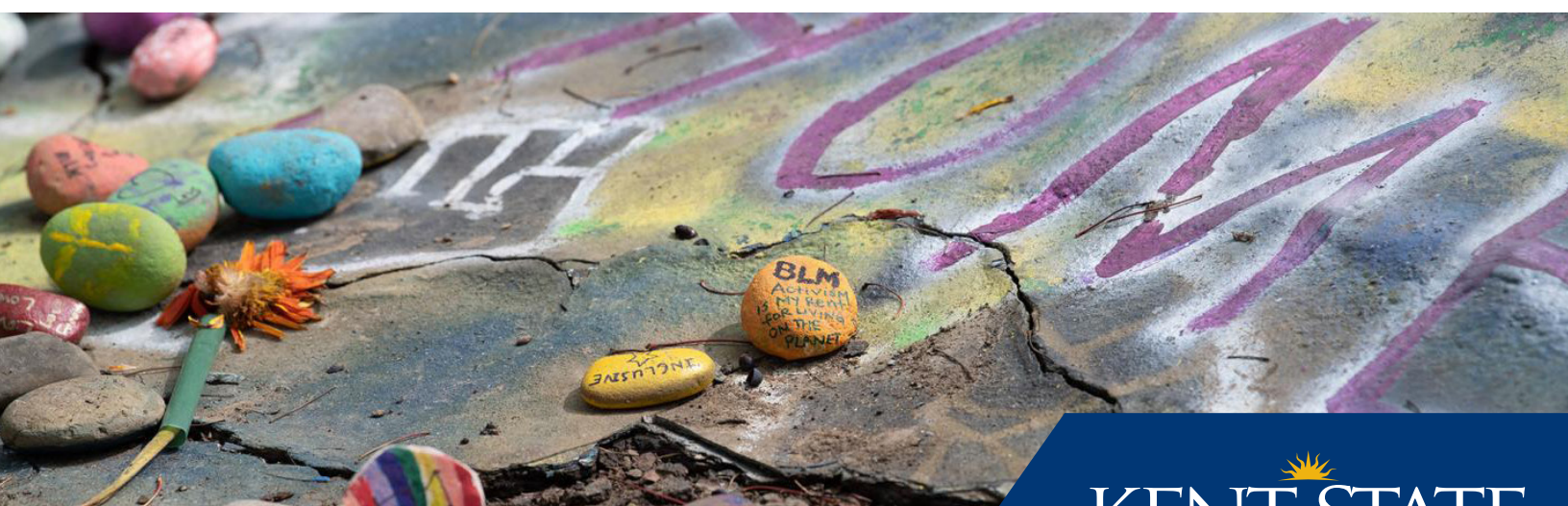
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- Katie Schillings, Associate Director for Student-Athlete Development
- Misty Sommers, Transfer Operations Analyst
- Sonya Williams, Executive Director, University Outreach and Engagement
- Dawn Alexander, Graduate Student, Business Administration
- Lisa Steigmann-Gall, Lead Business Systems Analyst

Undergraduate Student Life Subcommittee

Stephanie Evans and Gabrielle Blake - co-chairs

- Angelique Daniels, Associate Director, Student Success Programs
- Sharon Jackson, Assistant Director, Residential Communities
- Margarita Benitez, Associate Professor, Fashion Design and Merchandising
- Aloysius Katsuriarachi, Associate Professor, Mathematical Sciences, Stark Campus
- Tabitha Messmore, Assistant Director, LaunchNet
- Denise Seachrist, Dean, Stark Campus
- Charmaine Crawford, Associate Professor, Africana Studies
- Alonzo Burriss, Student, Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship
- Maria Finney, Student, Ambassador Crawford College of Business and Entrepreneurship
- Jaylon Smith, Student, Technical and Applied Studies
- Kristofer Braxton, Assistant Director, Academic Diversity Outreach

We also thank Jennifer Hebebrand and Brianna Molitor who provided project management support that was invaluable.

Background: Racial Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging at Kent State University

At Kent State, many members of the community have long advocated for change. Those who currently work for equity recognize that they stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before. Of note is Dr. Oscar Ritchie, who was appointed as a full-time faculty member at KSU in the fall of 1947. Dr. Ritchie was the first African American professor to serve at any predominantly white university in Ohio. During his time at KSU, Dr. Ritchie advocated for racial equity. For example, he pushed Kent State to allow the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to have a chapter of the organization on campus. In 1962, Dr. Ritchie, along with other faculty members, co-founded the Portage County Family Planning, Counseling, and Mental Health Center in Ravenna (see the Daily Kent Stater, November 15, 1977). To honor the legacy of Dr. Ritchie and in response to a proposal made by the Black United Students (BUS), the "old student union" was dedicated as Oscar Ritchie Hall on November 10, 1977.

Black United Students, The Department of Africana Studies and PAFSA

BUS, which was formed in 1968, along with other Black faculty and staff at Kent State, also pushed KSU to become a more diverse, equitable and inclusive institution. The 1968 Black student walkout, dubbed the "BUS Walkout," protested the absence of curricula and co-curricular activities that reflected the Black experience. The protest led to the creation of the Institute of African American Affairs (IAAA), which later evolved into the Department of Pan-African Studies (now Africana Studies, or AFS). IAAA now exists as an entity within the Department of Africana Studies. Emerging out of student-organized demands, AFS is one of the first Black Studies programs in the nation. Honoring the diversity within cultures and societies, AFS recognizes the connections between peoples and offers a wide range of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective courses and research opportunities that are anti-racist and that center the experiences and knowledge of People of African Descent specifically, and People of Color generally. BUS's advocacy also led to the creation of the Center of Pan-African Culture (CPAC), also housed within AFS. CPAC supports and provides leadership guidance to Black and Brown student organizations on campus. IAAA, AFS and CPAC are all located in Oscar Ritchie Hall.

We would be remiss not to mention that BUS, along with KSU staff, is credited with moving Negro History Week to Black History Month. In February 1970, the first month-long celebration of Black History was proposed and celebrated at Kent State. Before 1970, the celebration was week-long. Two members of BUS, students Carl Gregory and Dwayne White (Brother Fargo/Ibrahim Al-khafiz), along with two KSU staff, Dr. Milton Wilson and Dr. Edward Crosby, are the four individuals on record who led the world in this historic change.

Other noteworthy pushes for racial equity included the creation of KSU's first Employee Resource Group (ERG), the Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association (PAFSA), which was created by faculty and staff in the Department of Pan-African Studies. There are now seven ERGs that focus on unity and inclusion at KSU: Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association (PAFSA), Spectrum: Connecting LGBTQ+ and Ally Faculty and Staff, Women of Color Collective (WOCC), Latino Networking Caucus (LNC), Kent Engaged and Emerging Professionals (KEEP), International Faculty and Staff Network (IFSN), and Kent State Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander Faculty and Staff Alliance (AAPIFSA).

Recent Initiatives

Given the above, it is not surprising that in the context of KSU's history of advocacy, several initiatives in recent years have aligned with and/or build upon this historic work. Among others, they include KSU's Student First commitment, which has led to increased retention and graduation rates for historically marginalized students; the 2015 and 2021 Diversity Hiring Initiatives, which have increased diversity among tenure-track faculty; the 2019 participation of the President's Cabinet in the University of Southern California Race and Equity Institute; the formation of the 2019 Ad Hoc on Race Committee; the establishment of the Anti-Racism and Equity Institute (AREI) and the University-Wide DEI Strategic Planning process. These recent initiatives, in addition to the work of the ARTF, speak to a larger need of ensuring that racial equity is designed into the future of KSU.

The Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF)

The 2020 death of Mr. George Floyd along with the deaths of Ms. Breonna Taylor and Mr. Ahmaud Arbury and the intergenerational and multi-ethnic responses to their deaths all served as glaring evidence that Kent State University and our country needed to do better when addressing racism and violence against Black Americans.

At the core of Kent State values, kindness and respect, "demand that we step up to become part of the conversation that leads to a solution" that works at "dismantling the systemic racism that has plagued our communities throughout history, and our university" (https://www.kent.edu/antiracismefforts).

In keeping with our Kent State values, the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) was charged by President Diacon to explore all facets of racism at Kent State and to work proactively and collaboratively to identify institutional and individual racism in all its forms, and to forge a clear plan of action to address racism on Kent State campuses. The Task Force was also charged to begin its work with a focus on anti-Black racism and later expand to examine all areas of racism on Kent State's campuses.

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Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all work of the Task Force was done virtually, using the platform Microsoft Teams. The work was supported by a Steering Committee made up of Vice President Amoaba Gooden, Senior Vice President Lamar Hylton and Senior Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley.

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      iv.   Business Practices

      v.   Community Engagement

      vi.   Faculty Recruitment and Retention

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Final Recommendations:

Academic Curriculum: The Academic Curriculum Subcommittee focused on how Kent State University can create/develop curricular changes that focus specifically on anti-Black racism as well as other marginalized communities and generally on issues related to discrimination and equity. The following recommendations were made:

- Develop a syllabus statement on diversity.
- Revise the FYE course to include a module on inclusivity, diversity, equity and anti-Black racism.
- Revise the Kent CORE such that anti-Black racism is embedded in courses across the curriculum.

Accessibility: The Accessibility Subcommittee focused on access by underrepresented (UR) KSU members, particularly Black community members to three areas: access to information, access to resources and access to opportunities. The following recommendations were made:

- Create a communication and outreach plan with student groups and leaders to increase UR student participation in surveys and assessments.
- Create a strategic communication plan for the resources and information that KSU has on anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.
- Cabinet members to create a shared goal around increasing levels of belonging and engagement for UR students, particularly Black students.
- Academic Deans and Chairs to work towards a shared goal of increasing the levels of engagement and satisfaction for UR faculty, particularly Black faculty.

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Admission and Prospective Students: The Admission and Prospective Students Subcommittee critically analyzed admissions and recruitment efforts with a focus and vision on removing barriers, creating equitable practices and improving the prospective student experience when considering and applying to Kent State University. The following recommendations were made:

- Eliminate barriers to application and enrollment.
- Diversify the admissions and recruitment team at all levels.
- Review and edit recruitment materials to communicate an authentic and inclusive student experience that accurately reflects the Kent State experience.
- Provide foundational training to assist recruiters, application decision-makers and counselors.
- Increase awareness of and access to Kent State throughout Ohio while focusing specific attention on underrepresented populations.

Business Practices: The Business Practices Subcommittee focused on ways of improving supplier diversity, expanding relationships with local Black community partners for dining opportunities and ways of increasing awareness of minority business. The following recommendations were made:

- Identify and collaborate with minority-owned businesses as campus partners and program ambassadors.
- Develop online certificate for Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies (BTAS).
- Regional Campus and BBA program should create awareness and incentivize minority business outreach.

Community Engagement: The Community Engagement Subcommittee envisioned that community engagement activities across KSU will, in practice and partnership, demonstrate the core values of anti-racism and create meaningful, ongoing partnerships with a variety of communities both internal and external to the university that advance the goals of anti-racism. The following recommendations were made:

- Align campus, college and department anti-racist community engagement goals with the Diversity Strategic Plan that will be completed by the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.
- Work with appropriate stakeholders throughout each campus community to develop specific anti-racist community engagement goals that will contribute to an institutionalized, sustained outcome.
- Create a standing working group that includes representatives from each campus (and necessary units) to continue educating, monitoring and providing accountability for anti-racist community engagement throughout the Kent system and our surrounding communities.
- Establish a working document providing clarity on anti-racist values and guidance to inform community engagement policies and activities.
- Allocate necessary monetary, personnel and other support resources to ensure the sustainability of anti-racist community engagement.
- Commit to data-driven strategies to inform actions, projects and programs such that data analysis will be employed to ensure data use and interpretation are reflective of the goals of anti-racism.

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Education for our Faculty and Staff: The Education for our Faculty and Staff Subcommittee laid the groundwork for providing anti-racism education for faculty and staff. The following recommendations were made:

- Develop and enact a process whereby campuses would develop response action plans to any issues identified in the 2021 Climate Study findings.
- Require Beyond Compliance training in anti-racism for staff.
- Formalize mentoring programs for faculty.
- Convene a yearly conference focused on anti-racism education for faculty and staff.
- Create an anti-racism acknowledgment statement to be read, shared or performed at all university-sponsored events.
- Add anti-racism to KSU's value statement and the Codes of Ethics for faculty, staff and students.
- Include anti-racism education in leadership and enrichment programs (Training and Development, Center for Teaching and Learning, etc.).
- Include the signing of an anti-racism value statement in the New Employee Orientation process.
- Promote small conversations focused on anti-racism.
- Identify anti-racism social agents in all units.
- In consultation with the AAUP and Faculty Senate, create a policy for anti-racism education related to Faculty Handbooks, particularly related to yearly reviews, reappointment, tenure and promotion criteria, merit, and other awards.
- In consultation with the AAUP and Faculty Senate, evaluate the reappointment, tenure, promotion and annual review processes. Identify barriers for progression and offer anti-racism training for committee members making recommendations for progression.
- Include anti-racism training/information for all hiring committees through an HR Hiring Certification Course, including a faculty hiring module.
- Create and implement an anti-racism training course for all new hires.

Faculty Recruitment and Retention: The Faculty Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee focused on best practices in the recruitment and retention of BIPOC faculty. The goal is to have well-established protocols with quantifiable outcomes that will foster not only the successful recruitment and retention of BIPOC faculty, but also promote the professional development necessary to achieve reappointment, tenure, and promotion. Recommendations related to faculty handbooks and the RTP process fall under the preview of the AAUP. In all these instances the AAUP must be a partner in this effort. The following recommendations were made:

- Appoint a chair/officer responsible for developing a faculty recruitment best practice handbook.
- Develop a faculty recruitment best practice handbook.
- Seek Faculty Senate approval on the faculty recruitment best practice handbook.
- Implement the use of the faculty recruitment best practice handbook in each academic unit.

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- Formalize a faculty mentoring program.
- Encourage academic units to review and amend discriminatory and exclusionary language in handbooks and university documents.

Graduate and Doctoral Student Life: The Graduate and Doctoral Student Life Subcommittee focused on the recruitment and retention of African Americans, and ultimately all BIPOC graduate students. The following recommendations were made:

- Collect and analyze data related to graduate student success and identify barriers through surveys and targeted focus groups.
- Coordinate graduate student training efforts to empower graduate students to recognize and respond to racial bias in instructional practice.
- Establish a mechanism for graduate students to solicit support/express grievances about those supervising their teaching and/or research.
- Create new pipelines for recruiting more BIPOC graduate students (e.g., pre-college, community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions and other institutions that are not predominantly white).
- Provide equitable access to opportunities through implementing formal professional development plans that involve working with a mentor and bilateral evaluation processes.
- Empower graduate students to recognize and respond to racial bias in instructional practice.
- Create a framework to support and empower graduate student instructors.

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Health and Wellbeing/Mental Health Support: The Health and Wellbeing/Mental Health Support Subcommittee aimed to increase awareness of the importance of mental health and wellness and establish a system that facilitates connecting Black faculty, staff and students with services and resources that support their mental health and wellbeing. The following recommendations were made:

- Establish peer support networks/outreach for Black faculty, staff and students on issues surrounding mental health.
- Increase open discussions regarding race, wellness and mental health.
- Increase awareness of and access to mental health and other supportive resources for Black faculty, staff and students.

Learning and Education: The Learning and Education Subcommittee focused on equitable access to education, including technology and understanding how students learn differently to become workforce ready. Recommendations concentrated on creating barrier-free learning environments that are culturally responsive and prepare students for life beyond Kent State. The following recommendations were made:

- Improve access to technology and internet access.
- Make academic content more accessible and compatible for students with limited bandwidth.
- Assess how Kent State views student success data, and rethink if needed, how the University uses data to define barriers to success.
- Explore admissions policies, including disparities between Kent Campus (KC) and Regional Campus (RC), and how they impact student success.
- Explore expansion of boot camps for incoming students.
- Promote more culturally inclusive pedagogical practices in the classroom.
- Promote texts and course materials that reflect greater diversity.
- Promote affordable and open-source texts.
- Better support students for their future after graduation.
- Promote greater access to research, mentorship, internships and co-op opportunities.
- Develop programs that will assist in addressing a broader array of research interests and increase career preparedness.

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Policies and Procedures: The Policies and Procedures Subcommittee recommendations are aimed at creating systemic change that disrupts and eliminates barriers on all Kent Campuses for faculty, staff and students who may be marginalized based on race, ethnicity, religion, ability, gender, age and/or sexual orientation. Recommendations focused on university and unit-level handbooks for reappointment/tenure/promotion (RTP) for both TT and NTT faculty, staff handbooks, Student Conduct Court and All University Hearing Board- University Policy Register, and Public Engagement/Internships/Engaging with Industry - Office of Career Exploration and Development, including digital platforms, such as Handshake. Recommendations related to faculty handbooks and the RTP process fall under the purview of the AAUP. In all these instances the AAUP must be a partner in this effort. The following recommendations were made:

- Update and/or reorganize definitions for discrimination, gender-based discrimination and harassment within the Code of Student Conduct.

- Update hearing officer recruitment and training.

- Fully examine the structure and process of Student Surveys of Instruction (SSIs) to identify barriers for Black faculty, in particular.

- Formalize the peer evaluation process, assuring minimum set criteria are addressed by peer evaluators to eliminate/decrease racism and bias and to assure a more robust evaluation of faculty teaching based on established criteria.

- Using Anti-Racism Task Force Policies and Procedures supplied model sample statements and strategies, units will audit RTP policies for racist and biased/problematic/non-inclusive language.

- Using Anti-Racism Task Force Policies and Procedures supplied model sample statements and strategies, units will add/look for language acknowledging and crediting a broader range of scholarship, including public scholarship and scholarship that due to its focus may not appear in top tier journals or be as frequently cited as other forms and subject areas of scholarship.

- Audit RTP policies for biased/problematic/non-inclusive language that appears in the university-level handbook.

- Examine tolling policy language for implicit bias, barriers and double standards.

- Review existing department/school/college faculty handbooks (tenure track and non-tenure track) to determine when and where anti-bias and anti-racism statements that address equity, diversity and inclusion should be included relative to mission, faculty expectations, students and other relevant areas.

- Each academic unit should designate a committee to review its current faculty handbook to determine when and where anti-bias and anti-racism statements that address issues of equity, diversity and inclusion should be included relative to mission, faculty expectations, students and other relevant areas.

- Each academic unit should author and adopt anti-bias and anti-racism faculty (tenure track and non-tenure track) handbook statements that address issues of equity, diversity and inclusion relative to mission, hiring and tenure practices, student engagement and other relevant handbooks areas.

- Academic unit committees reviewing and revising handbooks should develop a consistent application of standards in the evaluation of all faculty performance to ensure that evaluation criteria for reappointment, tenure and promotion focus on performance and measurable, objective standards strictly related to assignments (teaching, research and service).

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- Create a University Staff Handbook with language regarding anti-discrimination and anti-racism policies related to workplace culture and staff promotion (hiring within the department).
- Hire, train and place more people of color in leadership roles in HR, including the office that supports the University Staff Handbook.
- Current staff provided and encouraged to read the Staff Handbook.
- Build a place-based partnership in public engagement that is unique to KSU, Ohio and USA.
- Create equitable policies that support various forms of public engagement for faculty, schools, staff and colleges.
- Incentivize public engagement.
- Create an annual award for public engagement.
- Focus on improving equity through financial support for internship opportunities.
- Create a globally diverse and expanded internship program.
- Offer options of enrollment that can offset course costs during the summer, fall and spring semesters.
- Prioritize contracts with small and micro businesses (or business ideas) that are Minority and Women-owned (MWBE) or those that seek to address the needs of disadvantaged groups in the community.
- Work to decrease bias/prejudice from being an obstacle for faculty engaging in industry.
- Generate awareness of the university's efforts to prioritize diversity and equity when engaging with industry.

Safety and Security: The Safety and Security Subcommittee focused on what is needed to ensure that Black students feel safe and secure on Kent campuses and within their local communities. The following recommendations were made:

- Expansion and marketing of Safety Escorts.
- Sponsor cultural competency training for Mutual Aid Partners.
- Strengthen Community Oriented Police Services (COPs) Program.
- Recruit Black police officers.

Staff Recruitment, Retention and Promotion: The Recruitment, Retention and Promotion Subcommittee focuses on policy changes and program implementation to improve the Kent State University experience for BIPOC staff. The following recommendations were made:

- Increase salary transparency and conduct divisional salary audits.
- Develop recruitment initiatives to include intentional recruiting for BIPOC staff.
- Create retention and promotion initiatives for BIPOC staff.
- An external review of Human Resources to examine the current organization and staffing.
- The chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer to join the Strategic Hiring Team.

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Undergraduate Student Life: The Undergraduate Student Life Subcommittee recommendations focus on three main areas: creating a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all students; cultivating a better sense of belonging for students on campus; and fostering an inclusive and anti-racist mindset for all students. These main foci were formed after a student survey of over 220 undergraduate participants who shared their experiences about the climate at Kent State. The following recommendations were made:

- Marketing - communicate what is already being done in the area of anti-racism.
- Foster an inclusive and anti-racist mindset for all students.
- Create a better sense of belonging for students on campus.
- Foster a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all students.

Summary of Recommendations:

1. Develop a syllabus statement on diversity.

2. Revise the FYE course to include a module on inclusivity, diversity, equity and anti-Black racism.

3. Revise the Kent CORE such that anti-Black racism is embedded in courses across the curriculum.

4. Create a communication and outreach plan with student groups and leaders to increase UR student participation in surveys and assessments.

5. Create a strategic communication plan for the resources and information that KSU has on anti-racism, diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

6. Cabinet members to create a shared goal around increasing levels of belonging and engagement for UR students, particularly Black students.

7. Academic Deans and Chairs to work towards a shared goal of increasing the levels of engagement and satisfaction for UR faculty, particularly Black faculty.

8. Eliminate barriers to application and enrollment.

9. Diversify the admissions and recruitment team at all levels.

10. Review and edit recruitment materials to communicate an authentic and inclusive student experience that accurately reflects the Kent State experience.

11. Provide foundational training to assist recruiters, application decision-makers and counselors.

12. Increase awareness of and access to Kent State throughout Ohio while focusing specific attention on underrepresented populations.

13. Identify and collaborate with minority-owned businesses as campus partners and program ambassadors.

14. Develop online certificate for Bachelor of Technical and Applied Studies (BTAS).

15. Develop a campus platform to invite local network of restaurants and food truck operations.

16. Regional Campus and BSA program should create awareness and incentivize minority business outreach.

17. Align campus, college and department anti-racist community engagement goals with the Diversity Strategic Plan that will be completed by the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

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18. Work with appropriate stakeholders throughout each campus community to develop specific anti-racist community engagement goals that will contribute to an institutionalized, sustained outcome.

19. Create a standing working group that includes representatives from each campus (and necessary units) to continue educating, monitoring and providing accountability for anti-racist community engagement throughout the Kent system and our surrounding communities.

20. Establish a working document providing clarity on anti-racist values and guidance to inform community engagement policies and activities.

21. Allocate necessary monetary, personnel and other support resources to ensure the sustainability of anti-racist community engagement.

22. Commit to data-driven strategies to inform actions, projects and programs such that data analysis will be employed to ensure data use and interpretation are reflective of the goals of anti-racism.

23. Develop a process whereby campuses would develop action plans for issues identified in the 2021 Climate Study findings.

24. Require Beyond Compliance training in anti-racism for staff.

25. Formalize mentoring programs for faculty.

26. Convene a yearly conference focused on anti-racism education for faculty and staff.

27. Create an anti-racism acknowledgment statement to be read, shared or performed at all university-sponsored events.

28. Add anti-racism to KSU's value statement and the Codes of Ethics for faculty, staff and students.

29. Include anti-racism education in leadership and enrichment programs (Training and Development, Center for Teaching and Learning, etc.).

30. Include the signing of an anti-racism value statement in the New Employee Orientation process.

31. Promote small conversations focused on anti-racism.

32. Identify anti-racism social agents in all units.

33. In consultation with the AAUP and Faculty Senate, create a policy for anti-racism education related to Faculty Handbooks, particularly related to yearly reviews, reappointment, tenure and promotion criteria, merit, and other awards.

34. In consultation with the AAUP and Faculty Senate, evaluate the reappointment, tenure, promotion and annual review processes. Identify barriers for progression and offer anti-racism training for committee members making recommendations for progression.

35. Include anti-racism training/information for all hiring committees through an HR Hiring Certification Course, including a faculty hiring module.

36. Create and implement an anti-racism training course for all new hires.

37. Require Beyond Compliance training in anti-racism for staff.

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38. Include learning opportunities for international faculty, staff and students about the historical component of anti-racism.

39. Appoint a chair/officer responsible for developing a faculty recruitment best practice handbook.

40. Develop a faculty recruitment best practice handbook.

41. Seek Faculty Senate approval on the faculty recruitment best practice handbook.

42. Implement the use of the faculty recruitment best practice handbook in each academic unit.

43. Encourage academic units to review and amend discriminatory and exclusionary language in handbooks and university documents.

44. Collect and analyze data related to graduate student success and identify barriers through surveys and targeted focus groups.

45. Coordinate graduate student training efforts to empower graduate students to recognize and respond to racial bias in instructional practice.

46. Establish a mechanism for graduate students to solicit support/express grievances about those supervising their teaching and/or research.

47. Create new pipelines for recruiting more BIPOC graduate students (e.g., pre-college, community colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions and other institutions that are not predominantly white).

48. Provide equitable access to opportunities to graduate students through implementing formal professional development plans that involve working with a mentor and bilateral evaluation processes.

49. Empower graduate students to recognize and respond to racial bias in instructional practice.

50. Create a framework to support and empower graduate student instructors.

51. Create a standardized statement about mental health and resources for instructors to include in syllabi and online course landing pages.

52. Establish peer support networks/outreach for Black faculty, staff and students on issues surrounding mental health.

53. Increase open discussions regarding race, wellness and mental health.

54. Increase awareness of and access to mental health and other supportive resources for Black faculty, staff and students.

55. Improve the overall experience for Black students who access and meet with mental health professionals at Kent State University.

56. Improve access to technology and internet access for students.

57. Make academic content more accessible and compatible for students with limited bandwidth.

58. Assess how Kent State views student success data, and if we need to rethink how the university uses data to define barriers to success.

59. Explore admissions policies, including disparities between Kent Campus (KC) and Regional Campus (RC), and how they impact student success.

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60. Explore expansion of boot camps for incoming students.

61. Promote more culturally inclusive pedagogical practices in the classroom.

62. Promote texts and course materials that reflect greater diversity.

63. Promote affordable and open-source texts.

64. Better support of students for their future after graduation.

65. Promote greater access to research, mentorship, internships and co-op opportunities.

66. Develop programs that will assist in addressing a broader array of research interests and increase career preparedness.

67. Update and/or reorganize definitions for discrimination, gender-based discrimination, and harassment within the Code of Student Conduct.

68. Update hearing officer recruitment and training.

69. Fully examine the structure and process of Student Surveys of Instruction (SSIs) to identify barriers for Black faculty, in particular.

70. Formalize the peer evaluation process, assuring minimum set criteria are addressed by peer evaluators to eliminate/decrease racism and bias and to assure a more robust evaluation of faculty teaching based on established criteria.

71. Using Anti-Racism Task Force Policies and Procedures supplied model sample statements and strategies, units will audit RTP policies for racist and biased/problematic/non-inclusive language.

72. Using Anti-Racism Task Force Policies and Procedures supplied model sample statements and strategies, units will add/look for language acknowledging and crediting a broader range of scholarship, including public scholarship and scholarship that due to its focus may not appear in top tier journals or be as frequently cited as other forms and subject areas of scholarship.

73. Audit RTP policies for biased/problematic/non-inclusive language that appears in the university-level handbook.

74. Examine tolling policy language for implicit bias, barriers and double standards.

75. Review existing department/school/college faculty handbooks (tenure track and non-tenure track) to determine when and where anti-bias and anti-racism statements that address equity, diversity and inclusion should be included relative to mission, faculty expectations, students and other relevant areas.

76. Each academic unit should designate a committee to review its current faculty handbook to determine when and where anti-bias and anti-racism statements that address issues of equity, diversity and inclusion should be included relative to mission, faculty expectations, students, and other relevant areas.

77. Each academic unit should author and adopt anti-bias and anti-racism faculty (tenure track and non-tenure track) handbook statements that address issues of equity, diversity and inclusion relative to mission, hiring and tenure practices, student engagement and other relevant handbooks areas.

78. Academic unit committees reviewing and revising handbooks should develop a consistent application of standards in the evaluation of all faculty performance to ensure that evaluation criteria for reappointment, tenure and promotion focus on performance and measurable, objective standards strictly related to assignments (teaching, research and service).

79. Create a University Staff Handbook with language regarding anti-discrimination and anti-racism policies related to workplace culture and staff promotion (hiring within the department).

80. Hire, train and place more people of color in leadership roles in HR, including the office that supports the University Staff Handbook.

81. The University Staff Handbook should indicate that anti-racism training is part of the staff onboarding process.

82. Anti-racism training should be facilitated with diverse (anti-racism) trainers, for all new hires and existing staff.

83. Build a place-based partnership in public engagement that is unique to KSU, Ohio and USA.

84. Create equitable policies that support various forms of public engagement for faculty, schools, staff and colleges.

85. Incentivize public engagement.

86. Create an annual award for public engagement.

87. Focus on improving equity through financial support for internship opportunities.

88. Create a globally diverse and expanded internship program.

89. Offer options of enrollment that can offset course costs during the summer, fall and spring semesters.

90. Prioritize contracts with small and micro businesses (or business ideas) that are Minority and Women-owned (MWBE), or those that seek to address the needs of disadvantaged groups in the community.

91. Work to decrease bias/prejudice from being an obstacle for faculty engaging in industry.

92. Generate awareness of the university's efforts to prioritize diversity and equity when engaging with industry.

93. Expansion and marketing of Safety Escorts.

94. Sponsor cultural competency training for Mutual Aid Partners.

95. Strengthen Community Oriented Police Services (COPs) Program.

96. Recruit Black police officers.

97. Increase salary transparency and conduct divisional salary audits.

98. Develop recruitment initiatives to include intentional recruiting for BIPOC staff.

99. Create retention and promotion initiatives for BIPOC staff.

100. An external review of Human Resources to examine the current organization and staffing.

101. The chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer to join the Strategic Hiring Team.

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102. Marketing - communicate what is already being done in the area of anti-racism.

103. Foster an inclusive and anti-racist mindset for all students.

104. Create a better sense of belonging for students on campus.

105. Foster a safe, secure and welcoming environment for all students.

106. Current staff provided and encouraged to read the staff handbook.

Next Steps

Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team

The Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team (ARTFTT) continues the work started by the ARTF. Formed in Summer 2021, the committee consists of faculty, staff, students and administrators. Working with appropriate faculty, staff and student stakeholders, the ARTFTT will move the work of the ARTF forward by working in subcommittees on 13 recommendations that were proposed by the ARTF during the 2020-2021 academic year. The other recommendations are being managed within the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

The ARTFTT will focus on the following 13 recommendations:

i. Develop a diversity and mental health statement for syllabi.

ii. Create a framework to cultivate strong and authentic relationships between senior leaders and Black students.

iii. Develop a faculty and staff recruitment and hiring handbook.

iv. Create a framework for a yearly conference focusing on anti-racism; Organize a conference for the 2022-2023 academic year.

v. Development of retention and promotion initiatives for Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American/Pacific Islander and all POC staff and faculty members.

vi. Develop a process whereby campuses would advance action plans focusing on issues identified in the 2021 Climate Study.

vii. Work with HR to ensure all staff participates in required anti-racism Beyond Compliance training.

viii. Eliminate barriers to application, specifically create bilingual applications.

ix. Compile a list of current equity and anti-racism training opportunities that are available to students.

x. Review of Human Resources Hiring/Search Committee workshops.

xi. Formalize a mentorship program for faculty.

xii. Create a KSU anti-racism effort strategic communication plan.

xiii. Create a university staff handbook.

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The work of the ARTFTT is supported by a Steering Committee made up of Vice President Amoaba Gooden, Senior Vice President Lamar Hylton and Senior Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley.

The Transition Team membership is composed of employees and students concerned about racial equity and equipped with the experience or expertise to collaborate and work with key stakeholders in completing the recommendations. Subcommittees will consist of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, administrators and staff. Each subcommittee will be chaired or co-chaired by a Task Force member.

Transition Team members include:

- N. J. Akbar – Associate Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Tyrone Berry – Student Outreach Specialist, University College
- Gabrielle Blake – Student, Black United Students, President
- Esperanza Bush – Graduate Assistant, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Charmaine Crawford – Associate Professor, Department of Africana Studies
- Marquis Davis – Project Coordinator, Equity and Diversity Training
- Amanda Dolan – Associate Director, Data Governance
- Gary Goldberg – Assistant VP, Student Services & Engagement, Division of Student Affairs
- Linda Hoeptner-Poling – Associate Professor, School of Art
- Chazzlyn Jackson – Student, Diversity Senator, Undergraduate Student Government
- Sitang (Jamie) Jittapirom – Graduate Appointee, Administrative Affairs and Graduate Education
- Gumiko Monobe – Associate Professor, School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies
- Amy Murfello – Marketing and Communication Engagement Manager, Geauga Campus
- Linda Piccirillo-Smith – Senior Lecturer, Department of Africana Studies; Faculty Senator
- Eboni Pringle – Dean, University College

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- Anna Priore – Area Coordinator, Residence Services
- Shaunte Rouse – Academic Advisor II, College of Public Health
- Scott Sheridan – Chair, Geography
- Anna Solberg – Student, Graduate Student Senate, Advocacy Chair
- Angela Spalsbury – Dean, Geauga Campus
- Julie Vandegrift – Analyst, Center for Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement
- Nicole Willey – Professor, English, Tuscarawas Campus

Appendix A: Terms of Reference – Anti-Racism Task Force

Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF)
Terms of Reference

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF) is to examine the ways that racism, particularly anti-Black racism, exist and persist at Kent State University.

2. **Objectives:** The ARTF will work to deepen efforts to make Kent State an anti-racism institution. It will report on the challenges and barriers that students, faculty and staff have faced at the University, paying particular attention to anti-Black racism which has impeded the success of Black students, faculty and staff. The ARTF will begin with a focus on anti-Black racism, and future initiatives will explore other forms of racism. The committees will offer recommendations that will be implemented and monitored as part of the ongoing work of the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The ARTF will examine, document and make recommendations to address racism at Kent State University in the following areas.

(i)   Academic Curriculum

(ii)   Accessibility

(iii)   Admissions and Prospective Students

(iv)   Business Practices

(v)   Community Engagement

(vi)   Faculty Recruitment and Retention

(vii)   Graduate and Doctoral Student Life

(viii) Health and Wellbeing/ Mental Health Support and Services

(ix)   Learning and Education

(x)   Policies and Procedures

(xi)   Safety and Security

(xii)   Staff Recruitment, Retention and Promotion

(xiii) Undergraduate Student Life

(xiv)   Education for our faculty and staff

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3. **Background:** Kent State recognizes that all forms of racism are connected and that anti-Blackness is the entrance point to examine the ways in which systems of oppression are enacted. The 2020 tragic murders of George Floyd, along with Breonna Taylor and Ahmad Arbery reflect not a recent turn of events, but rather a continuation of a long history of discrimination and violence against Black Americans, people of color and other ethnic and religious groups in our country. The experiences of many Americans who suffer from this legacy of violence, including Kent State University students, staff and faculty require that as an institution, Kent State responds in ways that acknowledge we are a microcosm of society.

4. **Membership:** The Anti-Racism Task Force consist of faculty, staff and students who understand and are committed to anti-racism and racial equity. The work of the ARTF will be supported by a steering committee made up of Interim Vice President Amoaba Gooden, Vice President Lamar Hylton and Interim Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley.

The Task Force membership will be composed of employees and students concerned about racial equity. The members will work proactively and collaboratively to address institutional and individual racism in all its forms. To accomplish its goals, the ARTF committee will invite broad representation from the campus community to serve on subcommittees to address the areas above. Subcommittees will consist of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, administrators, staff. Each subcommittee will be chaired or co-chaired by a Task Force member.

Task Force members include:

- Gabrielle Blake – Student, Black United Students, Political Affairs and Grievance Chair
- Sean Broghammer – Associate VP, Enrollment Management; Admissions
- Amanda Dolan – Associate Director, Data Governance
- Jean Engohang-Ndong – Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Stephanie Evans – Special Assistant, Office of Student Conduct, Student Affairs
- Gary Goldberg – Assistant VP, Student Services & Engagement, Division of Student Affairs
- Linda Hoeptner-Poling – Associate Professor, School of Art
- Chazzlyn Jackson – Student, Diversity Senator, Undergraduate Student Government
- Tierra James – Graduate Student, Sociology
- Deric Kenne – Associate Professor, Public Health
- Gregory King – Assistant Professor, School of Theatre and Dance
- Dana Lawless-Andric – Associate VP, Office of University Outreach and Engagement
- Shana Lee – Assistant Dean of Students, Student Affairs
- Jenny Marcinkiewicz – Director, Center for Teaching and Learning
- Mike Pasquarella – Associate VP, Institutional Advancement
- Linda Piccirillo-Smith – Senior Lecturer, Department of English; Faculty Senator

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- Eboni Pringle – Dean, University College
- Renee Romine – Director, Human Resources, Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association
- Sarah Schmidt – Assistant Director, Global Education Initiative, Stark Campus
- Scott Sheridan – Chair, Geography
- Anna Solberg – Student, Graduate Student Senate, Advocacy Chair
- Lashonda Taylor – Executive Director, University Events and Protocol, Pres. Office
- Julie Vandegrift – Analyst, Center for Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement
- Sean Veney – Associate Professor, Biological Sciences
- Theresa Walton-Fisette – Professor, Foundation, Leadership, and Administration
- Jameka Wilson – Interim Director, One Stop Student Services

5. **Subcommittee membership:** Subcommittee membership will be agreed upon by the ARTF and the steering committee based on acknowledgement of the following criteria:
- Knowledge and understanding of anti-racism
- Commitment to a transparent, accountable and a collective process
- Ability to consult with others
- Skills in listening and analysis
- Ability to work in a team setting
- Interest and commitment to work through consensus
- Availability and willingness to attend meetings

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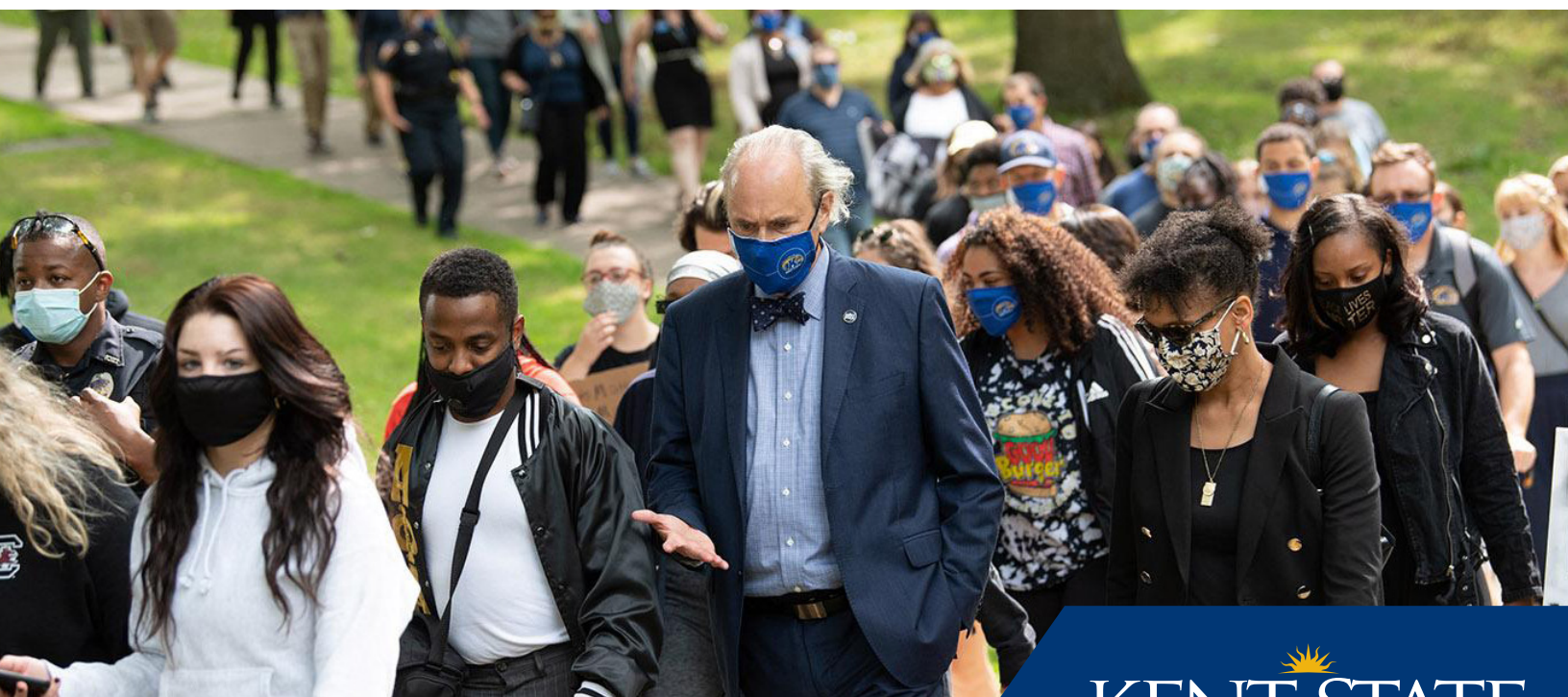
Each subcommittee should have 10-12 members from Kent and regional campuses and reflect a racialized and gender balance. The subcommittee members should, to the extent possible, include staff, faculty and students who are Native American, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian Americans and other racialized groups. Additionally, membership should include student, non-tenure track faculty, tenure track faculty, staff and administrators. Members should only serve on one subcommittee.

6. Roles and Responsibilities: The committees will examine and document the ways in which racism is a barrier to the success of students, faculty, staff and administrators face at Kent State. The Task Force will make recommendations on how Kent State can become a more equitable, inclusive and diverse institution.

Routine updates on the progress of the Task Force will be shared with the Kent State community throughout fall 2020 and we will focus in the 2021-2022 academic year on a clear plan of action to address racism on Kent State's campuses.

The Steering Committee members will meet biweekly, the Task Force will meet monthly and the subcommittees will meet biweekly.

The Task Force will host a Town Hall meeting in Fall 2020 to report on the progress of the work. A brief report will be presented at the end of the Fall 2020 semester and a final report will be submitted in April 2021. The reports will include substantive short, mid-term and long-term recommendations. Recommendations will include steps for implementation.

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Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team
Terms of Reference

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team (ARTFTT) is to continue the work started by the Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF).

2. **Objectives:** Working with appropriate faculty, staff and student stakeholders, the ARTFTT will move the work of the ARTF forward by working in subcommittees on 13 recommendations that were proposed by the ARTF during the 2020-2021 academic year.

The ARTFTT will focus on the following 13 recommendations:

    (i)   Develop a diversity and mental health statement for syllabi.

    (ii)   Create a framework to cultivate strong and authentic relationships between senior leaders and Black students.

    (iii)   Develop a faculty and staff recruitment and hiring handbook.

    (iv)   Create a framework for a yearly conference focusing on anti-racism; Organize a conference for the 2022-2023 academic year.

    (v)   Development of retention and promotion initiatives for Black, Indigenous, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American/Pacific Islander and all POC staff and faculty members.

    (vi)   Develop a process whereby campuses would advance action plans focusing on issues identified in the 2021 Climate Study.

    (vii)   Work with HR to ensure all staff participate in required anti-racism Beyond Compliance training.

    (viii) Eliminate barriers to application, specifically create bilingual applications.

    (ix)   Compile a list of current equity and anti-racism training opportunities that are available to students.

    (x)   Review of Human Resources Hiring/Search Committee workshops.

    (xi)   Formalize a mentorship program for faculty.

    (xii)   Create a KSU anti-racism effort strategic communication plan.

    (xiii) Create a university staff handbook.

3. **Background:** Kent State recognizes that all forms of racism are connected, and that anti-Blackness is the entrance point to examine how all systems of oppression are enacted. The 2020 tragic murders of George Floyd, along with Breonna Taylor and Ahmad Arbery, reflected a continuation of a long history of discrimination and violence against Black Americans, people of color and ethnic and religious groups in our country. The experiences of many Americans who suffer from this legacy of violence, including Kent State University students, staff and faculty, require that as an institution, Kent State respond in ways that acknowledge we are a microcosm of society.

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4. Membership: The Anti-Racism Task Force Transition Team consists of faculty, staff and students who understand and are committed to anti-racism and racial equity. The work of the ARTFTT will be supported by a steering committee made up of Vice President Amoaba Gooden, Senior Vice President Lamar Hylton and Senior Vice President and Provost Melody Tankersley.

The Transition Team membership will be composed of employees and students concerned about racial equity and equipped with the experience or expertise to collaborate and work with key stakeholders in completing the recommendations. Subcommittees will consist of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, administrators and staff. Each subcommittee will be chaired or co-chaired by a Task Force member.

Transition Team members include:

- N. J. Akbar – Associate Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Tyrone Berry – Student Outreach Specialist, University College
- Gabrielle Blake – Student, Black United Students, President
- Esperanza Bush – Graduate Assistant, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Charmaine Crawford – Associate Professor, Department of Africana Studies
- Marquis Davis – Project Coordinator, Equity and Diversity Training
- Amanda Dolan – Associate Director, Data Governance
- Gary Goldberg – Assistant VP, Student Services & Engagement, Division of Student Affairs
- Linda Hoeptner-Poling – Associate Professor, School of Art
- Chazzlyn Jackson – Student, Diversity Senator, Undergraduate Student Government
- Sitang (Jamie) Jittapirom – Grad Appointee, Administrative Affairs and Graduate Education
- Gumiko Monobe – Associate Professor, School of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Studies
- Amy Murfello – Marketing and Communication Engagement Manager, Geauga Campus
- Linda Piccirillo-Smith – Senior Lecturer, Department of Africana Studies; Faculty Senator
- Eboni Pringle – Dean, University College
- Anna Priore – Area Coordinator, Residence Services
- Cherrie Reger-Watson – Administrative Secretary, Accounting
- Shaunte Rouse – Academic Advisor II, College of Public Health
- Scott Sheridan – Chair, Geography
- Anna Solberg – Student, Graduate Student Senate, Advocacy Chair
- Angela Spalsbury – Dean, Geauga Campus
- Julie Vandegrift – Associate Director, Data Intelligence and Technology, Center of Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement
- Nicole Willey – Professor, English, Tuscarawas Campus

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5. Subcommittee membership: Subcommittee membership will be agreed upon by the ARTFTT and the steering committee based on the acknowledgment of the following criteria:

- Knowledge and understanding of anti-racism
- Commitment to a transparent, accountable and a collective process
- Ability to consult with others
- Skills in listening and analysis
- Ability to work in a team setting
- Interest and commitment to work through consensus
- Availability and willingness to attend meetings

Each subcommittee should have members from Kent and regional campuses and reflect a racialized and gender balance. The subcommittee members should, to the extent possible, include staff, faculty and students who are Native American, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Asian Americans and other racialized groups. Additionally, membership should include students, non-tenure-track faculty, tenure track faculty, staff and administrators who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+, veteran and first-generation community. Members should only serve on one subcommittee.

6. Roles and Responsibilities: To accomplish their goal, each committee will identify and work with key stakeholders. Subcommittees should develop a timeline and action steps needed to achieve their goals. The Steering Committee members will meet every three weeks, the Transition Team will meet monthly, and the subcommittees will meet biweekly.

An update on the progress of the Transition Team will be shared with the Kent State community in December 2021. The outline of the committee's progress will be due in early December 2021. The outline should include a list of key stakeholders consulted, work in progress, and a plan with action steps. Depending on the focus of the subcommittee, a final implementation plan or actions steps to complete the recommendation will be due early March 2022. A final report is due April 1, 2022. The Transition Team will have a public town hall to announce the completed recommendations or steps to complete the recommendations and any additional progress made on the ARTF recommendations.

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