Default Report

Academic Specialist Feedback July 2020

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Q2 - What ideas do you have about what faculty/academic specialists and/or the

university can do to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion? Your responses will be

compiled and sent to Academic Governance, and this topic will be discussed at the July

21 combined University Council & Faculty Senate meeting.

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Overall, if MSU wants to create an campus that TRULY values DEI, then
they have to make it part of tenure and promotion for employees/ faculty;
otherwise, it's just lip-service. Having a "engaged diversity training/
participated in workshops, etc." requirement for ALL employees on campus
(INCLUDING FACULTY) for tenure and promotion would GREATLY help shift
the culture. As of now, this campus is largely concerned with research... as
that is what is valued... shift the value, shift the culture. Investing in those
programs that reach the largest amount of undergrads would help-- First Year
Writing, Integrated Studies, Math-- and focus on them as being part of the
SOLUTION (as they are already doing a lot of work towards equity and
inclusion), would be a good place for the university to put it's focus and
invest money. Looking at those curricula-- and reforming them-- so that they
can be innovative, responsive, national leaders on DEI (holistically, rather
than just a single course) would be a good place to invest time, resources,
and money. Many of the faculty, administrators of those programs ARE
Academic Specialists/ Fixed Term faculty. Academic Specialists work closely
and directly with the student population-- often more so that faculty.
Therefore, extending specific DEI training to JUST academic specialists
might be helpful in creating a culture of inclusion at MSU. Perhaps DEI
training based on appointment-types/ student involvement? Finally, DEI cuts
across identities AND positionality. In order to achieve EQUITY, academic
specialists need to be valued and compensated fairly for their work. Looking
at the academic specialist population-- we are some of the lowest paid
employees at MSU; and our ranks are majority women and minority-
identified. There needs to be more equity-- in terms of attitude and
compensation-- concerning academic specialists.

Continuing education for all MSU employees and students around diversity,
equity, and inclusion. Mandate reporting of bias incidents. Increase number
of faculty POC and support them while they are here.

Although I believe DEI is a priority, I don't have any ideas at this time.

I think required formal training for every academic specialist every two years
would help.

Conversations and education are always important places to start; where I
think MSU needs to lean more into is actionable steps.

Each College, unit, department should show in their websites, literature how it is promoting and advancing DEI. As an incentive and for the sake of accountability, depending on their work, funding and budget decisions could be determined based on the work done by the departments. Furthermore, all employees should go through training related to DEI at the University and the unit level. There should be ways - surveys, questionnaires - in which each department/unit is able to assess their level of DEI among peers and co-workers. University should train managers to have those conversations with staff. As for Academic Governance, from a very personal level, it is not very clear how members are chosen, who chooses them, or what happens when a person submits their name to the Pool of Faculty members. I've done that myself for three years already but so far I haven't received clear answers as to which Boards or Committees I am eligible for, nor if I have even been a candidate for any of them. I recommend an e-mail at least notifying employees that the voting process has ended and candidates have been chosen. Otherwise, I don't even know if it is worth continuing to send my name. Related to that, there are many committees in which representation from professionals all over the University could be beneficial. In many of these Boards or Advisory positions, for example, having Undergraduate and Graduate students in the committees does not mean the needs of the student body are being met necessarily. There are many professionals/staff who are not being included in Academic Governance - Specialists, Administrative Staff - who work closely with students and have valuable information but do not have the required degrees in order to belong to those committees. I would like to see a change in Governance in which professionals from Residential Services; Advising; CAPS; are present at the table - instead of mostly Faculty. Working with students face-to-face, everyday, is not the same as just teaching them once or twice a week in a 50 - 150 student classroom. As much as it is possible, hiring practices should be transparent in terms of DEI. If the available candidates, or person hired, belongs to the majority group, the University should be able to explain their decision openly, and the groups that promote diversity on campus should be able to have an amicable and productive conversation about it. In terms of the student body, all courses should include applicable examples of current events in which the material of the course can be used in a current context, including DEI. Many of our students are not planning to continue to graduate school, so courses that have no relation to their everyday experience could be more challenging, especially for students in the minority groups. Finally in terms of financial justice, there should be a cost limit per course in terms of the books/course materials - for example $150 - $200. Students should not be spending $300 - $500 per class for books they rarely use, especially if they are taking 5 classes. If the cost is more than $200, the professor needs to make it accessible on-line or through other means.

Mandatory social justice workshops for all faculty, regardless of department/School etc. The Ingham County Health Department required all of its staff to go through a 4 day dialogue series on social justice and health equity. I think something similar would be beneficial especially if it has a higher education lens.

I actually think this is being fairly well addressed by MSU's administrators.

The U may want to consider taking a stronger stance on holding faculty/staff/students accountable to language that undermines a culture that values DEI. We cannot always hide behind Freedom of Speech when it is counter-productive to the culture we hope to create.

Faculty and academic specialists need to have a genuine, intentional commitment to advancing diversity, inclusion, and equity. Equity, typically listed as the second term in the "DEI" acronym, cannot happen without diversity and inclusion first. One way the university can advance diversity and inclusion is by hiring and advancing more faculty and staff of minoritized identities through tenure and/or promotion and into senior-level roles (e.g., senior academic specialists, assistant directors, directors) or continuing--as opposed to fixed term--roles. Equity, however, also examines who is trying to get into these positions but cannot. Equity also asks what conditions--be is systems, processes, campus climate--have been created such that certain groups remain the majority with power to make decisions and continue to make others the minority with little power. Compositional diversity and surface-level inclusion means nothing when faculty/academic specialists and students, especially those from minoritized backgrounds, continue to learn and work in hostile campus climates, where they may be subjected to overt/covert instances of racism, not taken seriously when they raise concerns or comments, being passed over for promotions when they are qualified for one, and overall working in a system that was not made for people who look like them--instead for the advancement of (historically and presently) cisgender, heterosexual, Christian, White men. The university can also advance diversity, inclusion, and equity by working to disaggregate demographic data across all levels of the institution: student, faculty/academic specialists, and administration. How can we know who does and who does not have a seat at the table if we do not know who is at the table in the first place? How do we know what experiences don't make people feel safe when they isolated and separated from others like themselves if we don't know which particular racial and ethnic groups are experiencing such things? Disaggregating data is a particular issue for those Asian Pacific American descent, as the APA label represents 40+ ethnic groups who all have different educational needs that need to be addressed. Disaggregating data is also an issue for those of Middle Eastern/North African descent, who are often lumped with White students. In both cases, students and faculty/academic specialists within these communities get lumped together and get their specific needs and perhaps educational disparities erased in data.

Providing additional funding and resources to Office for Inclusion to hire diversity education coordinators to provide ongoing training for faculty and academic specialists. I also think there should be additional workshops for each area of specialists (advising, teaching, outreach, etc.) that focus on diversity and equity in our roles.

Completely overhaul systemic processes that reproduce white supremacist ideas, change university requirements and other curriculum, make commitments to DEI by advancing practices in evaluations for tenure and annual performance reviews, listen and respond to the recommended changes that groups of color have requested and demanded. We have a chance as a land grant institution to set an example as to what should be done. We should work together so all students will benefit.

We will be putting more focus on this topic in our special ed. program courses this coming year with more resources and materials for discussion and awareness for all of our students to be more mindful and to help support others on campus and in the outside school settings.

I would like mini courses that are available to employees to learn about history and culture over time in the U.S. significant historical moments that shape our history. But broken out by identities. Native, Latinx, Black, Asian, women, lgbt, poor people. Etc.

50% of all new hires in 2020-21 should be black and brown people.

hiring practices must allow for diverse, qualified pools of applicants mandatory and optional training related to DEI with opportunities for Units to build leadership skills in DEI through training work release time for employees to participate in training, awareness events, etc. the annual review process should include a DEI/professional development planning and goal setting process

When advertising positions, make real effort to reach diverse pools of candidates.

Internship and mentorship are important to any career advancement and diversification of people in any field. I think creating career pathways for younger BIPOC to gain experience and professional contacts throughout the university (not just with faculty) would help significantly. This could be accomplished by partnering with existing programs on campus and ensuring that there is support for Faculty and Academic specialists to build this into their practices and budgets and to provide training for the faculty and AS to improve their capacity to support these students/interns/mentees.

Appoint more folks of color who understand true diversity, equity, and inclusion and can bring change to higher administration.

salaries for academic specialists were already disproportionately lower than its peer, now with salary and benefit cuts, it makes the position even more untenable on a short-term and long-term basis.

I like the idea of removing unnecessary barriers. So the idea of having it be opt-in levels the playing field and does not require faculty to disclose family or personal reasons why they have to teach online. I think looking for policies that are barriers is important.

I think a DEI seminar should be included for incoming students similar to how international students are oriented to a new cultural setting. A lot of well meaning students come to the university with no contextual awareness to have conversations around DEI and race-related topics. I'd also love to see several virtual town hall meetings were students, staff and faculty may share their ideas about increasing DEI on- and off-campus in an open forum.

Within my unit, we continue to have very high level, conceptual discussions about society, history of oppression, and big picture concepts. This is a good start, but it's not very actionable. One wish I would have would be for small groups with similar work responsibilities to meet together and think through action steps. For example, in my teaching, I have diversified case studies and examples. I am working on changing my 2020-2021 reading lists to amplify women and BIPOC voices. But I am largely doing this on my own, b/c my unit is working on the let's raise awareness level of things (e.g., reading Braiding Sweetgrass). So, in essence, small groups working on the theory to practice of DEI would be helpful. Also, heading into this particular fall semester, it would be super helpful to understand trauma informed teaching & learning, since many of our campus community will have experienced trauma from covid sickness and deaths, from inflamed racial disparities. I have heard/seen nothing on our campus about being sensitive to where people are and how to support them as whole people.

We need to have better support for diverse students in the K-12 system that works to engage and retain this population through graduation and onto college with mentors, advocates and role models. We will not have better diversity if we cannot ensure that more diverse students complete their education. In the mean time a formal mentor program with newly minted diverse PhDs and other professionals especially in programs where there is little to no diversity. Changing the climate on campus where all feel welcomed, supported and heard.

According to the 2019/20 budget (https://opb.msu.edu/functions/budget/documents/2019-20Budgets.pdf), the police were allocated $7,081,282. Of that, $1,861,307 went to supplies and equipment. In comparison, OIII's total budget was $1,018,890. OCAT's budget was $726,848. Other resources like CAPS are woefully underfunded. If the university is in such a tight place financially, I think this is an optimal time to do some reprioritization of where we spend our money and what we value investing in, how we create a safe environment, and how we respond to those with needs.

Bring in speaker for faculty/academic specialists require training

Try to move beyond online trainings. Once COVID subsides, it would be great to have in person trainings required. People learn very differently in an active learning environment compared to a passive one like online. People also respond very differently to a computer screen compared to a person in the same room as them. The implicit bias training from OI3 is a great example of this. Also, it would be great to have some resources about how individuals in majority groups can become an ally/resource/support for minority groups. I feel like I have seen an overload of the problems but less about what I can do to help and enact meaningful change so I can be a part of the solution.

Understanding and valuing experience outside internships and/or other free forms of work in exchange for experience that many don't have the financial ability to take. Hiring must take into consideration that unpaid internships favor those who have financial privilege that excludes many people of color and first generation students.

None. My thinking is already taxed to the limit with preparing online versions of formerly F2F courses for the fall and preparing documents for my promotion application portfolio.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion discussions only help to exacerbate the very peace and love they are purported to be trying to solve. Diversity: We are who we are regardless of race, gender, etc. Forcing the issue divides people by grouping them as a certain race, gender, religion, etc. Equity: We all have the same equality of opportunity and I support these American liberties and freedoms; equality of outcome aligns with communism and socialism which I strenuously oppose Inclusion: All people should be included where appropriate but forcing other's beliefs onto others is not inclusion.

The University should support open discussion and dialog. You will never achieve DEI if faculty feel their job or career is threatened if they speak up or voice legitimate disagreement with philosophy or policy. The discussions should take place in an equitable way, if you bully and scare people you will create divisions, not inclusion and a facade of uniformity, not diversity. DEI should be founded in evidence based best practices and explicit actions, not social science ideologies like Critical Theory and boogiemen.

Educate all white people about racism and help them to understand their privilege and how it continues to oppress people of color.

Having the different and varied seminars or workshops has been very helpful. I think having strict policies with students not bullying other students when they feel others are different would be a help.

We need on going training and dedicated time set aside to work on our professional development around DEI.

It would be great to have statements of support that we can send to students with whom we work - or a way to quickly vet statements we'd like to send out broadly. I'd like more resources for my team - individuals/experts willing to lead/facilitate discussions and conversations around current events and associated topics. I'd like a list of easily-available resources that we can use as a team. It would be great to have Black Lives Matters stickers or signs so we can visibly show support in our space. I would love to see mandatory training given to all staff in faculty in the D&I space once a quarter.

Dialogue is critical. All voices need to be heard as our community runs the 'woke' spectrum and we need to provide opportunities for everyone to engage in order to move forward toward creating an inclusive community.

MSU needs to be inclusive of all appointment types and assignments (e.g., teaching, outreach, advising, Extension, etc.) in its decision-making. Research and big grants (and certain athletics) cannot have primacy. We need to step outside our comfort zone to reach audiences (esp. in outreach and Extension) and recruit students and hires from diverse populations.

I believe that there should be more conversations, training, and representation of diversity throughout the university.

Required training for everyone on campus, going further than what we have currently. I believe training should occur on an individual basis AND as departments/groups so meaningful conversations can be had and we can practice applying what we have learned individually.

Review policies and procedures in place with multiple stakeholders to provide input in revisions that make them more inclusive.

Required implicit bias training, required DEI training as will be implemented soon; additionally, some kind of interactive experience like MSU Dialogues. Building DEI into employee's on-/off-campus PD plan.

If we truly believe in equity and equality ... Not everyone is skilled in being an online student or have access to the technology necessary. Our international students need hybrid and face to face classes, yet we have so many online offerings and these students are worried about being able to physically study here. Are we really helping our first generation college students, our student of color, our low income students, our international students and our students who struggle academically by moving to a default of online teaching? Ultimately, as a university employee, we are in an elite category. We have the privilege of being able to remote work. We can say, "we want to stay safe and limit exposure to the student population." But in our endeavor to shelter ourselves and not being willing to enter a classroom with masks and social distancing, we need to ask ourselves if we are really trying to advance equity and inclusion.

Ensuring equity begins with policy review on a micro and macro level scale. Adjusting policy impacts practice. I propose more in depth-policy reviews and more language about DEI in manuals, handbooks, and any university wide communication, including representation in flyers. I also propose more intentional hiring of diverse candidates, creating more positions in support of DEI - cannot all be on the DEI steering committee.

encourage change and discourse as the norm, not the outlier. Continue to promote conversations across the academy without any one set agenda. Discontinue the gap strategy of "we'll hire someone to do it".

Advance DEI regarding teaching practices, generally as a whole at the university...? This question seems a bit vague and I'm unsure in what context an answer is expected... Considering the first question involved faculty/instructor choice to teach in person, being inclusive to those who teach courses and considering their input on how they want to operate their classes would be an idea that comes to mind to advance inclusion.

I would recommend that MSU evaluate the differences in diversity and equity when it comes to individuals on Fixed-Term versus Continuing Appointments. There are wide ranges of differences across units, colleges, and the two different appointments when it comes to hiring, orienting, evaluating, mentoring, and promotion opportunities.

I think there should be mandatory DEI training for all faculty and academic staff. This is something that should be added to their annual review and they should be evaluated on annually. The should also be recognition and compensation of faculty and staff of color for the additional work that is done outside of the jobs to support students of color and other DEI initiatives across campus.

University / departmental committees on diversity Required diversity training

No Comment

DEI must have established organization at the university, college, and program level. Hiring one person or establishing a committee at the executive level will not guarantee education, communication, and change at every level of MSU. the footprint of DEI must be as expansive as the advising footprint is.

It would be awesome if academic specialists had the opportunity to have union membership. I also think that faculty pay cuts in this time, especially for less well-protected faculty, shouldn't be on the table.

Hire a VP CDO that reports directly to President Stanley. This person needs to be given a large budget and support from the top to implement DEI initiatives throughout the university and the metrics to hold programs and departments (including faculty/staff/students) accountable to meeting our agreed upon DEI policies. DEI training must be implemented and revisited every few years to update and make relevant to the times and this training should not be check a few boxes, watch a couple videos training modules. We need people pushed out of their comfort zones. To me - you won't get buy in from those who could care less about DEI (which is many more than will openly admit or we would've been doing something about our culture and climate at MSU well before now if people truly cared) unless there are bonuses, promotions, tenure etc that are tied to DEI. I know that rubs people, especially faculty the wrong way, but they will wiggle their way out of any serious commitment to DEI if they are allowed to do so through loop holes etc. Communities that are underserved within our minority populations like Native and LGTBQ and RCPD may require Assist VP positions that report to the new VP CDO to help that person navigate and bring those communities into the MSU fold. The DEI steering committee should be the one leading the University Strategic Planning Committee as you have to have DEI as the driving force for it to be incorporated from top to bottom in the university otherwise it becomes a secondary thought in our planning. Also, CoREM needs to be included in these conversations and as an advocacy group for our Asian, Latin, Black, and Native American communities should be at the table regarding university plans and initiatives so that all new policies can be assessed as to how they may positively or negatively impact our communities.

Ensure that Academic Specialists are represented on all University Committees.

MSU needs to have a visible/demonstrable/long term commitment and presence to applying our scholarship to the people and places that are diverse and poor. Our actions will speak much louder than our words. While some academic units and individual faculty members have embraced a scholarship of engagement addressing the issues of race and inequality in general the campus community is very "distant" from these challenges. Institutions of higher education that have a more diverse student body and faculty are often embedded in those communities. MSU is largely a suburban campus (with a couple of outreach posts in diverse communities). Most of our scholarship is irrelevant to poor people and places at best and in many cases our work exacerbates inequality. To overcome this image we need to demonstrate that "we care". It is a true adage particularly with vulnerable people and places that "no one will care how much you know, until they know how much you care". We need to show we care by applying our talents to the problems of diverse peoples and disadvantaged places. Academic specialist need to ask themselves...how am "I" making a difference.

Make a DEI gen ed requirement. Hire a provost who is a BIPOC. Provide highly subsidized childcare for all members of the campus community.

Take more concrete actions about raising awareness of DEI. Keep encouraging President Stanley to make statements of support, but include links to websites where people can easily go to learn more - for example, if there is a statement locally, in Lansing (as the State Capital), nationally/Washington D.C. and Black Lives Matter (BLM) is called a "terrorist organization", include a link to the BLM website so people can learn more about the organization themselves. Make it easy to raise awareness and to provide facts and proper context.

Get rid of standardized testing as an admissions criterion and provide additional training on the DEI implications of common grading practices

So much of what is going on here reflects the desire by a few characters at the university who are constantly vying for power to push their own agendas. ASAC that has an over abundance of future PHD's whose main concern is their own nests. ASAC was created for ALL Academic Specialists not a few self seekers. The minute there is a problem, the unions jump in to provide absolutely nothing but avenues for a few at the top who will gain large union salaries. As to equity, diversity, and inclusion I find this always a bit laughable. Instead of discussing how the system can help to make changes, how more people might be convinced to pursue paths to improve the above issues, we are simply told that the whole system is rotten and immediate changes have to take place, without any form of thought involved. Diversity and the like does not come from quick fix plans, they come from careful planning to find those paths that will improve the entire system. Does simply putting an army veteran in a position of power cure everything? Not likely! Start thinking and stop just throwing things out with those thoughts lacking.

The University needs to recognize that the "default" career path is extraordinarily limiting. The current approach to DEI is to nibble at the edges of this problem by expanding defined leaves or changing the way promotion clocks run. And these are absolutely improvements. But they still leave out too much. Most people struggle with situations that don't quite fit the limited imagined scenarios those leaves recognize. We absolutely should continue looking for ways to improve peoples' lives. But we should ask those people what that is, for them, and not force them to choose from inside of a narrow predefined default career track.

Increase in professional development leadership and mentoring by professionals who specialize in working with faculty and students of color. Increase commitment to recruit, hire, support, and retain faculty and students of color.

Actively recruit, hire, and retain people of color. Be proactive to help people of color feel safe and valuable at MSU.

Truly implement inclusive hiring practices. Carefully look at the percentage of women in deans' positions. Communicate nimbly and respond quickly with action plans following incidents that challenge DEI principles.

Implicit bias and related workshops

DEI training should be mandatory for faculty/academic specialists, staff and students. There also need to be plenty of opportunities to continue our journey's toward anti-racism on an ongoing basis.

Have mandatory and INTENSIVE DEI training for all incoming white faculty members. Have meetings for incoming faculty who identify as coming from an historically marginalized group such as Black faculty, LatinX faculty, Muslim faculty, women of color faculty, LGBTQ faculty, and women that provide resources and workshops on what MSU offers for them specifically to ensure their safety and to protect them from racism, sexism, homophobia and bigotry.

I would really like to see the university utilize some kind of independent 3rd-party to evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of each department in these areas on a regular basis. In my first year as a AS, I have been privy to multiple violations of existing university policy in these areas, particularly regarding sexism and inappropriate grad student-advisor interaction (and reported it up the chain), only to have the issues handled inappropriately (ex: not handled, not kept confidential, etc.). A 3rd-party (from outside the department particularly), would not be so mired in faculty politics and would take this task more seriously. Alternately, those is supervisory/chair/etc positions could be given additional training in these areas, especially when it comes to the actual law and policies of msu (which seem to be often disregarded). We can't advance anything until the university makes it clear-- to all departments and employees-- that they are fully invested in making change. This involves putting money towards **university-wide** efforts in this regard

Stop having a bunch of older white men make all of the decisions.

This should be important and I appreciate the public statements, but required online "training" really only does surface work, but I guess a start. MSU needs to look at recruitment of diverse students, faculty and staff, but just as importantly what we do to support people once here at MSU. I think there have always been ongoing efforts, but feel much of this took a backseat to the Nassar crisis. Feels like with many efforts we have taken steps backward, rather than forward. I am optimistic with new President and Provost though, that things may begin to make progress (and be progessive) again.

DEI training. Sharing stories of MSU community members that are doing great work in the area of DEI. Supporting and recognizing exceptional DEI efforts.

To increase DEI, faculty need to be provided with more robust training and policy requirements to ensure that every single class on campus is taught with these principles in mind.

Inclusion is an ongoing process. People need to have access. When folks continue to hire the same kinds of people, diversity isn't present. Have diverse folks in leadership and stop creating hostile work spaces. Microaggressions are exhausting. This is an academic place, read a book. Do some research. Be a better human. Make some diverse friends outside of work. Teach your children to be better humans. Stop being afraid of learning. Stop being afraid of exposing your ancestors taught you lies that you continue to spread. Stop mistreating students who don't look like you. Show care and concern for everyone. Stop hiring tokens who you can control and don't respect or challenge wrongdoings.

Improve the positions of professors of practice. While it is important that a research university supports research, professors of practice often have a much more varied pool to pull from with regard to diversity and inclusion and valuable "real world" experience. However they are stigmatized by "PhD" holders as not being "as qualified"… not qualified for what I wonder? How many of your students do you think will pursue a PhD? Many more will pursue a career over research.

End of Report