



B R O W N U N I V E R S I T Y

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Christina H. Paxson

September 11, 2019

Dear Members of the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board,

Thank you for your service on the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board (DIOB) during the 2018-19 academic year. The DIOB performs an important function in ensuring that there is clear and transparent oversight of Brown's efforts to create and sustain a more diverse and inclusive community.

We are writing in response to your May 20, 2019 annual memo. It is our hope that our response helps inform the work of the DIOB in the coming academic year.

I. Faculty Hiring and Graduate School Diversification

We are pleased that the DIOB recognized the success we have had in faculty hiring and graduate student recruitment. Thanks to the work of our colleagues in the offices of the Dean of the Faculty, Dean of Biology and Medicine, Dean of the School of Public Health, Dean of the School of Engineering and the Graduate School, we are on track to meet our ambitious goals in both areas, including doubling the percentage of faculty from historically underrepresented groups.

In regard to your recommendation on cluster hires, it is important to note that the successful cluster hires you referenced stemmed from faculty interest and departmental-level planning, not administrative decisions. Moving forward, we will continue to support faculty and academic units that pursue efforts to launch cluster hires or develop research clusters. We welcome additional suggestions from individual faculty members and academic departments for potential cluster hires.

We also acknowledge that we have to focus on certain disciplinary areas, as you mention in your second recommendation; but overall, we are pleased by the steady progress in all divisions. It is important to note that the physical and biological sciences started from a lower baseline, which masks important faculty growth in these departments. Over the course of the academic year, the

Provost chairs a monthly meeting of the Dean's Faculty Diversity Hiring Team. This group, composed of the VP for Institutional Equity and Diversity and key representatives from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, meets once a month to review each and every academic search and to ensure that both search pools and hiring outcomes are as diverse as possible. We will continue to monitor faculty recruitment and hiring efforts to ensure that we are making progress in all of the academic disciplines.

You also mention that you received no data on faculty hiring from the School of Engineering. This past year was the first year that the School of Engineering was responsible for its own hiring. We encourage you to invite Dean of Engineering Larry Larson to a meeting of the DIOB in the coming year to discuss the progress made on faculty hiring and graduate student support.

II. University Human Resources

Under the new leadership of Amanda Bailey, we have made progress on improving workplace culture. An overarching goal is to make Brown a more agile, effective organization that fosters a positive climate throughout the University, and that attracts and retains talented staff employees.

In response to your first recommendation that we more closely examine the dynamics between faculty and staff, we encourage you to review the results of the most recent campus climate survey. Over the last academic year, we surveyed all faculty, staff, and students. The staff survey asked whether employees feel that they are respected, their ideas are valued, and standards for promotion are clear, in addition to probing about incidents of bias and their understanding of the impact of diversity initiatives since the launch of the DIAP. While this survey is not identical to the campus climate survey administered three years ago, several questions remained the same, including the one that inquired about faculty and staff relations. We are pleased to share that the survey showed modest improvements from the initial survey in the percentage of staff who reported that they felt respected by their faculty colleagues. We recognize that there is more work to be done in this area, and look forward to partnering with our colleagues in University Human Resources (UHR) and academic leaders across the University. We would also like to note that we are committed to conducting a University-wide climate survey on a regular basis.

Furthermore, we are in full agreement that there should be more professional development opportunities for staff. In the last year alone, UHR developed a significantly more robust slate of programming for the annual Staff Development Day, and Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration Barbara Chernow established the Academic and Administrative Information Meeting to provide an opportunity for academic and business department managers to build strong professional networks and learn more about the University.

Professional development will be a major area of focus for both of us in the coming year. University Human Resources, with the support of the Office of the President, will develop a new professional development program for mid- and upper-level managers, with a focus on how to effectively motivate teams and manage personnel. We look forward to updating you on progress in this area, and encourage you to ask Amanda Bailey to present at one of the DIOB meetings this academic year. In addition to this, the Provost collaborated with the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity to host a half-day retreat with academic department chairs and center and institute directors. The retreat offered opportunities to understand the experience of students and scholars from historically underrepresented groups in the academy, as well as mining the climate survey results. Nearly 100 academic leaders participated in the retreat, and follow-up sessions are planned.

III. Data Collection

We agree that it is important to be transparent, indeed, we are proud of the degree of transparency we have managed to achieve across the University. For example, through the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) we make accessible to the public results of the climate survey by key demographics like gender, race, and first-generation status, among other areas. We also work with OIR to provide more granular data to departments, including department-level climate survey results and other key demographic data to help track progress against departmental diversity and inclusion goals. In addition, the University Registrar provides departments with demographic data for concentrators.

However, we disagree with some of your characterizations of the University and members of the senior administration adopting a “closed-door” approach. There are real challenges in both the collection and analysis of data — for example, we are unable to share data when the population within a department is smaller than five. This limitation is required to protect the privacy of the individuals in question, but places limits on the data we are able to share with the DIOB as well as the community more broadly.

In the year ahead, Vice President Delalue and the Office of Institutional Research will continue to refine the collection of data we display publicly. And while we support the spirit of your recommendation to create a comprehensive diversity dashboard, we must also take this occasion to remind you that some data must remain confidential due to regulatory reasons.

In addition, we want to acknowledge the role of the Committee on Faculty Equity and Diversity in regard to some of the issues you raise around faculty data. It is important to clearly differentiate what sorts of issues should be taken up by the DIOB versus CFED. We encourage

you to consult with VP Delalue on how to ensure the DIOB is focused on accountability as it pertains to the DIAP.

IV. Admissions

Brown is committed to accepting and matriculating exceptionally talented and academically excellent students. In order to do so, we recognize the importance of building a strong pool of applicants from a diverse set of backgrounds and geographic locations.

This past summer, we were proud to host College Horizons, a non-profit dedicated to increasing the number of Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students succeeding in college and graduate programs. We also debuted a rural fly-in program where we brought 20 prospective students from various rural areas across the country to learn about Brown and the college admissions process.

In the coming year, we recommend that Dean of Admission Logan Powell meet with the DIOB to share the current recruitment strategy and future plans for the Office of College Admission. Dean Powell and his staff are attentive to the continued demographic shifts happening across the country and are refocusing recruitment efforts to ensure that Brown continues to attract excellent students, regardless of where they come from.

Another challenge we would like to bring to your attention is matriculation. We face stiff competition from many of our peer institutions and our goal is to increase our yield, the percentage of students that accept once admitted. We have undertaken several efforts to better position Brown for admitted students, which include, but are not limited to, expanding the ADOCH program (A Day on College Hill) from one to two and a half days, and doubling travel grants to enable all newly admitted students to visit campus during the recruiting season. In addition, we are confident that the steps we have taken to make Brown more affordable to students from diverse income backgrounds — including The Brown Promise; increased scholarships and aid to transfer, RUE and international students; and the textbook and course material program — continue to make Brown increasingly attractive to applicants.

V. Other recommendations

We are committed to ensuring that departments engage in a participatory process for the departmental diversity and inclusion action plans (DDIAPs). Each summer, two working groups comprising the University's senior leadership, including the Provost and EVP for Finance and Administration, carefully read the DDIAPs of all academic and administrative departments who submit these plans. As part of this review, the committees send response letters to departments that highlight progress over the past academic year, as well as opportunities for growth and

increased attention. Hiring plans for academic departments will not be approved until these plans have been reviewed and approved by the committee.

We also recognize that there are new academic units that have not yet developed a DDIAP, and the review committee invites these departments to develop a plan when we believe that they are ready to engage in this work. While the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative is not yet at a point to complete a DDIAP, we accept the DIOB's suggestion to request that the Brown Arts Initiative produce a DDIAP this coming year.

To conclude, we want to thank you again for your service and commitment to diversity and inclusion at Brown. Your contributions to the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board are essential to helping us achieve our ambitious diversity and inclusion goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'CPaxson', written over a printed name and title.

Christina Paxson
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Locke', written over a printed name and title.

Richard Locke
Provost