



BROWN

May 20, 2022

Dear President Paxson and Provost Locke:

As you know, the Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board (DIOB) is composed of a mix of faculty, staff, and students and is meant to represent the interests of the larger campus community in the successful implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). Each year, we meet with administrative leaders on the campus to discuss the progress their units have made on the DIAP. This year, we met monthly with Sylvia Carey-Butler, the new Vice President of the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity. We also met with: Eric Estes, Vice President for Campus Life, Rodney Chapman, Vice President for Campus Safety, Marie Williams, the Vice President for Human Resources, Sarah Latham, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration, and Leah Van Wey, the Dean of the School of Professional Studies. In addition to these meetings, we convened separately on a monthly basis to consider our own recommendations and to frame our own questions. We drafted this memo from our shared notes and collaborated on its articulation.

As was true last year, we have submitted a supplementary confidential memo.

There is much to report in this public memo.

We followed up on one matter from last summer. In responding to the recommendations of the Task Force on Anti-Black Racism, President Paxson indicated that: “When Vice President Carey-Butler joins the Brown administration in mid-August, she will consult with the DIOB and members of the Task Force to determine how the long-term objectives of the proposed Initiative for Black Advancement can be incorporated into the DIAP with oversight by her office and the DIOB.” Now at the end of her first year, Vice President Carey-Butler, has acknowledged that the Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity (OIED) recognizes the importance and need for oversight responsibility to ensure the advancement of Blacks at Brown, and is hiring a new Associate Vice President who will be charged with helping to advance Blacks at Brown. Starting next spring, OIED, Carey-Butler assures us, will provide an annual report on the status of Blacks at Brown to you, to the DIOB, and to other relevant committees on campus.

We met with Vice President Eric Estes, who shared an update on the dramatic changes to Campus Life - central to ongoing efforts to provide a diverse and inclusive infrastructure for students - over the past year. We were pleased to see the increase in identity center staffing (up almost 8 FTE) and identity center budgets, the creation of new spaces (like the establishment of a

stand-alone structure for the LGTBQ center), and the remarkable compositional transformation of Campus Life - from no appreciable diversity in 2015 to one in which 75% of all staff hires have been of color and 52% have been HUG, with a senior leadership team that is now 67% of color.

As a group, we were particularly focused on Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), which struggled to meet student needs in the fall of 2015. As Estes noted, wait times at CAPS have declined significantly since that year - from 14 days to 2-3 days - and the number of therapists of color (a student demand in 2015) now stands at an impressive 75% of the total. Additional structural changes (an end to session limits, the use of tele-health technologies, the embedding of counselors in the graduate school and the medical school) contribute to the overall improvement of CAPS and reflect a broadening campus commitment to wellness, diversification, and inclusion. Estes, who oversees the largest division on campus, has worked hard and it shows in the data.

In our conversations, we have often discussed the difficulties of measuring change that is “felt.” We noted, during Vice President Estes’s visit, the persistent, contradictory representation that students continue to struggle to make timely appointments at CAPS in moments of crisis, despite the reduced waiting times, in the midst of COVID-19, anti-Blackness, and other deleterious contexts. We encouraged Vice President Estes to perform what we described as a “stress test,” a deeper dive into the experience of HUG students at CAPS in moments of high demand or institutional strain. He is interested, we are glad to note, in understanding the disconnect between his internal metrics which show improvement and the lingering reputation of CAPS as a trouble spot. We are realists. We recognize that Brown cannot be ready to provide concierge-level psychological support to all students 24/7, but we also take these “felt” matters seriously, and look forward to receiving the results of his investigation next year, and appreciate the need for regular conversation about CAPs and Campus Life.

Conversations about staff have lagged for several years, in large part because of leadership transitions (from VP Amanda Bailey to VP Marie Williams, from EVP Barbara Chernow to EVP Sarah Latham), but also because of persistent concerns about confidentiality. These have now been addressed with the signing of non-disclosure agreements by the members of the DIOB. Given the delay, what we heard this year was preliminary - from Vice President Williams, who came twice, we saw a first attempt to visualize the spread of HUG staff (and women staff) across all ranks and divisions. And from Vice President Latham, who has bold ideas for diversity and inclusion efforts in her division, and who has asked for time and grace to consolidate those ideas into a plan. We look forward to regular conversations with both Vice President Williams and Vice President Latham, as they accelerate their own data-gathering efforts and consequent introspection.

Vice President Williams reminded us that data on staff at Brown is necessarily incomplete because, given the rules governing Affirmative Action employers, it is not mandatory for applicants to disclose their identities. The university presently employs 3,175 staff, most of whom (2,126 or 68%) are in the middle grades of 8-12. 60% of staff identify as women; 20%, roughly, as HUG. Interestingly, there is no statistical category of “did not disclose” on “Gender” (the Workday category), but 7% of staff refrained from sharing their racial or ethnic identity

when asked whether they were members of a historically underrepresented group. The category of “did not disclose,” then, is sizable and has no analogue when it comes to “Gender.” We recognize that people shield their identities for many reasons, but we also know that at institutions where Affirmative Action and diversification are taken seriously, whiteness is often perceived to be a disadvantage. “Did not disclose” likely contains multitudes. We are grateful to Williams (and to Latham) for a commitment to return to all staff and encourage - but never to require - fuller disclosure, so that we have the best possible data. We recognize the need to preserve employee privacy, but hope that staff will be willing to more fully self-identify in the service of the university’s commitments to the DIAP.

Some major takeaways from the presentations of Vice Presidents Williams and Latham are worth further discussion. Williams found that in all categories of jobs - from union positions to grades 1 through grades 12 - non-HUG staff generally were paid more than HUG-staff. Only in the ungraded, higher-level positions (13 or above) were HUG staff paid more than the university average and more than non-HUG staff specifically. Similarly, women staff were paid less across the board - with the exception of the lower grades of 1-7. These are numbers that read like a pattern, suggesting structures of unevenness, and, as such, they cry out for further investigation.

We are grateful to Vice Presidents Williams and Latham for their commitment to dig deeper and to share what they discover. We also look forward to the results of the forthcoming university-wide climate survey, to the deeper dive into staff salaries and climate, and to the receipt of an action plan from Vice President Latham. We are pleased, as well, at university-wide efforts, spearheaded by Vice President Williams, to work with Workday to ensure that non-binary categorizations for gender are possible in the future. And we are glad to see both Vice President Williams and Vice President Latham focused on outreach, recruitment, promotion from within, and onboarding as key instruments in their quests to diversify - and to do it well.

There is impressive good news on the faculty hiring front. While the final numbers aren't yet in, we appear to have very nearly managed to double the total number of HUG faculty on campus since the start of the DIAP. This year's recruitments, the Dean of Faculty assures, look likely to continue the trend of significantly diverse hiring of recent years. If HUG faculty made up 8.4% of the faculty in the 2013-2014 AY (the year that President Paxson first issued her challenge to double their ranks), by the end of 2022-2023 they will make up 16.7% of the faculty. This news, we suggest, should be an opportunity for congratulations - and a chance for reflection.

A central question to consider before the next academic year is whether that number - 16.7% - is either right or sustainable. That is, whether it is sufficient to create an inclusive sense of community for the new faculty we have sought to bring to Brown. And whether it is sufficient, in a different way, to upend the groupthink that has historically marked racially homogenous faculty communities at predominantly white universities. What, at this moment, is the “right-size” or “right shape” of a diverse faculty? It is not our job as an oversight board to make new goals. But certainly, if President Paxson deems it prudent, there is every reason to continue to push for advances beyond 16.7%. And, perhaps, there is every reason to worry that, were we to take our foot off the gas, these gains might be erased, despite the success of the DOF and the Provost in retaining our HUG faculty.

There is more to consider. One concern that has driven the DIOB since its inception is the relationship between generalized, increasing diversity of the faculty and the isolation of this diversification into a few and smaller departments. We can explain using data about hiring in recent years from the Dean of Faculty, including the last full year of faculty hiring (AY 2021-2022). By that measure, there are only seven departments with more than 35% HUG faculty, a threshold that roughly matches the demographics of people of color in the 2020 census. These mostly smaller departments include Africana Studies, American Studies, Education, Hispanic Studies, Modern Culture and Media, Theater Arts and Performance Studies, and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies. By contrast, there are fourteen departments with fewer than 10% HUG faculty. These sometimes larger departments include: Applied Math, Biology Education, Biostatistics, Classics, DEEPS, Egyptology and Assyriology, Engineering, Environment and Society, Math, Molecular Biology and the on campus biology departments, Music, and Physics.

Using the same basic strategy of measuring percentages of HUG effort on the faculty roster, we can say that the four most improved departments since 2015 are: Education, International and Public Affairs, Modern Culture and Media, and Visual Arts. These are very differently sized departments, we know, and gains this small and this recent can be ephemeral.

Other departments, we note in contrast, have shown a growth in the size of their *non-HUG* faculty, an indication that even where the raw number of HUG FTEs has increased, the diversity of the department has not improved. These departments include: Behavioral and Social Sciences, Economics, Environment and Society, History of Art and Architecture, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, and Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. Finally, there are a number of departments between these highs and lows where diversity is flatlined, with no appreciable increase or change of any kind.

Again, these numbers are suggestive of any number of things. Diversity, it is reasonable to note, is being siloed. Some departments, too, are growing despite their failure to diversify. There is much, though, that we do not understand. We share the numbers above in a very preliminary way, to encourage some very public conversation about how we measure success, how we identify troublespots, and how we discuss them as a campus community. These numbers don't, we know, take into account the number of available roster slots. They use percentages instead of raw numbers, which can have consequences for data utility. They don't show us where departments have tried to hire a diverse faculty and failed for reasons beyond their control. And they don't, once again, include all of this year's faculty hiring. They tell us something - but not everything. But *something* is important and consequential: the diversification of our faculty is happening in an uneven fashion. We don't yet know enough to say *why* this is happening, but we might charge chairs in low-performing departments to provide data-driven explanations about past recruitment efforts in their annual DIAP reports to OVPIED, and we should ask the incoming Dean of the Faculty and Vice President Carey-Butler to provide a report on those same departments, using the same step-by-step assessment and mixed methodology we have seen successfully applied elsewhere, most notably in Dean Zia's presentation about the concept of "fit" and hiring patterns in Engineering, and in the presentations of Dean Van Wey and Vice President Estes to the DIOB. We encourage the Deans of Engineering and Public Health to do the same.

As a starting point, and to facilitate a campus wide effort along the same lines, we encourage all units to use Interfolio for their faculty searches, so that we can see this same degree of data across the university. This would include Engineering, Biomed, and Public Health, which, Vice President Carey-Butler assures us, presently do not.

In the same vein, it would be good, we believe, to receive some comprehensive reporting on postdoctoral fellows, too - from their basic demographics, to the pipeline for HUG applicants into Brown and/or into the tenure stream, to the sense of welcome and inclusion and mentorship they feel here on campus. We recognize that this is a complicated request, because postdoctoral fellows can be found across the greater divisions of the university, and they are funded by a wide range of mechanisms. For these reasons, we submit that OVPIED might be the right body to take up this reporting.

When Dean Van Wey visited, we were pleased to see her breakdown MA data in the School of Professional Studies so that we could see, within each program, the numbers and percentages of HUGs who applied, were offered admission, and matriculated to our MA programs over the past few years. (Ethan Bernstein of the Graduate School, who did not appear before the DIOB, was able to show us the same data for doctoral admissions in a shared spreadsheet). As a consequence of her efforts, we were able to see a general commitment to diversity across campus, with modest upticks in offers of admission and matriculations in most every program. As Dean Van Wey explained, the takeaway from this information is that increasing the compositional diversity beyond a certain point requires a larger applicant pool. Dean Van Wey also broke down staff hiring in SPS for us, showcasing the importance of outreach to transcend narrow pipelines and of double-checking the usefulness of conventional wisdom.

We encourage Dean Van Wey, as the incoming Dean of the Faculty, to conduct post-mortem inquiries on faculty searches with departments that remain stuck, without any demographic change. Extrapolating from her presentation to us about SPS, it is important to take stock of every step of the process - from the site of advertisements to the number of HUG applications, HUG semi-finalists, HUG finalists, and successful appointments - and to identify problematic structures that are internal to Brown, over which we exercise some degree of control. We recognize that Dean Van Wey will be busy adjusting to her next position next year, and yet we still hope that she will be able to come to the DIOB in the spring to present on faculty hiring more generally in those aforementioned underperforming departments.

Much as was true with the growth of a more diverse faculty, undergraduate admissions is a true bright spot for the university. The number of HUG students admitted is up 10% since 2017. The number of African American or Black students admitted is up 5% over the same period. In real numbers, there are 206 Black students in the class of 2024 (12% of the enrolling class) and 245 in the class of 2025 (14%). Since the start of the DIAP, the number of Black students admitted - and their percentage of each class - have been the highest in university history, and the trendlines point up, with the last four years higher than the previous four. This is impressive.

The undergraduate admissions process takes advantage of the features of the Common Application, and specifically drop-down menus that disaggregate the category of Asian American and allow Dean Logan Powell's team to include Southeast Asian applicants from

Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, and Hmong populations) as prospective HUG students. Powell was kind enough to share a breakdown. 1470 Asian American students who match the HUG categorizations applied for admission to Brown; 130 were offered admission; and 87 matriculated. These students, however, are not a single, unified block. The Common Application allows for multiple racial, ethnic, and national identifications, and the result is the students who apply and who we recruit and matriculate reflect the diversity of diversity itself. Of the 87 HUG Asian American students matriculating into the class of 2026, 24 listed themselves as Vietnamese. The remaining 63 reflect 53 other possible combinations, with most combinations including just a single person. And, in some cases, the student's status as a HUG (for the purposes of the DIAP) reflects other aspects of their personal history - their status as Hispanic, for instance, or as Black, two categories that are just as fractured. This data suggests some dissonance between the clean and antiseptic categories of the DIAP and the lived experiences of the students (and by extension, faculty and staff) who inhabit them. In the future, this dissonance might be something we discuss as a campus, to ensure that the result of our efforts match our ambitions.

Another recommendation - following on what we have already said here regarding faculty and staff recruitment - would be for the Dean of Admissions to plot, for each step of the admissions process, the impact of those moments where the review of applications (in early and regular decision pools) is decisive.

We return, as we near the close, to the conceptual questions we raised earlier. Much of the DIAP was meant to provide "more" and "better" - more faculty and staff and students from historically underrepresented groups, and better efforts to include them in this campus community. This we have certainly provided. As the university moves deeper into DIAP II, and as we increasingly begin to imagine Brown as a *historically* white institution, we will benefit from finer-grained conversations about long term goals that wrestle with our own internal contradictions.

Consider, for instance, how we might assess the demographics of a department's undergraduate student population. We now have data that can show us how many HUG and non-HUG students are in each class, work with each professor, are in each concentration and in each of the larger divisions of the campus. We can see how many HUG (and non-HUG) students drop out of particular classes, move to S/NC in the middle of a semester, or switch concentrations. We can see where HUGS are over-represented - and where they are absent, down to the classroom, the instructor, the discussion section or lab. But student credit hours, concentration declarations, and any given semester's enrollments are all shaped by individual student taste and preference, by annual up-and-downs, by job market concerns and parental pressure. What, in this context, would count as satisfactory diversification? And how, more importantly, would we determine that? The campus undergraduate population was 22% HUG in 2020-2021, but using that as a simple over/under benchmark for each class, or each concentration, or each faculty member's enrollments, might be problematic, especially if our sense of how we "right size" diversity in departments isn't connected to a simple 22%. Let's say, as an example, that the Computer Science concentration has averaged (just roughing the numbers we received from the Office of Institutional Research) a HUG concentrator population of about 12% over the last three years. And let's assume that HUG student enrollment data for CS is about 11% over the same time period. Is that good or bad? We might say bad, because that is well below that 22% total

undergrad population number. And CS is a popular major with obvious, long-term material benefits, so maybe we would think that it should draw a more representative body of students, one that reflects the general student body. But this all seems a little impressionistic, because we allow for so much student choice. And because we don't understand the baseline - whether 22% is the right target for every concentration. If not, why not? Why, we wonder, shouldn't we expect concentrations and courses to mirror the larger student body's growing diversity?

We raise this issue - the distinction between "better" and "right" - here precisely because it is difficult. Because it requires thoughtful consideration and goal-setting by the university. Because there is a chance, as we adjust our cadence to DIAP II, to do something other than "more" and "better," to consider how the exploratory, risk-agreeable, market-based curriculum we offer to our students appears to draw HUGs to some corners and not to others. And in addition to understanding why and how that happens, we might also be wondering how to address it, to open all corners to everyone, and what standard we might use to assess improvement or success in those efforts.

Yours sincerely,

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