



January 30, 2017

Dear President Paxson and Provost Locke:

The Diversity and Inclusion Oversight Board (DIOB) is charged to review of the progress of departments, schools, and non-academic units on their localized diversity and inclusion action plans (DDIAPs), to review survey data and studies on diversity and inclusion at Brown, to make recommendations to the Provost on changes or additions to data collection efforts, to help to prepare the annual report on the DIAP in consultation with relevant bodies, and to share news of progress on the larger university-wide plan (DIAP).

The conclusion of the Board's regular cycle of work coincides with the submission of OIDI's Annual Report on Diversity and Inclusion. As that cycle comes to a close, the appointed members of this board would like to offer some recommendations for the future.

A few thoughts about the actual workings of the board, first. Reflecting on this year's efforts and acknowledging that the appointed members of the DIOB are charged with issuing a set of recommendations about process and progress, we'd like to encourage you to ensure that there is appropriate diversity on the board among the appointed members, and that the full span of student, faculty, and staff experiences are adequately represented. In the end (when all of the ex-officio members got up and left the room so that we could draft this memo) we realized the important of this sort of adequate representation.

A word or two, as well, on process: gathering notes from a semester's worth of meetings, a draft of this memo was posted online before the winter break, read aloud at a meeting of appointed members on January 23rd, and subsequently edited (at that meeting and afterwards) to include comments and suggestions from the group. In the future, we believe, this board should give itself more time to draft and deliberate over these recommendations.

Beyond what we list below, we would also like to endorse the recommendations of the Dean of the College's committee related to diversity, inclusion, and the undergraduate curriculum, which are included in the Annual Report.

Our recommendations:

1. The sections on “process” in the academic, center, and non-academic unit plans reveal a great deal of inconsistency. Concerned that such variation will impact results, we recommend that at every step—from conception to completion—all relevant constituencies (faculty, students, and staff) should be intimately, meaningfully, and equitably involved in all subsequent revisions. This would allow for each unit to come to its own conclusions about a best path forward, but would also ensure that all constituents were involved in the decision-making process. Likewise, some of the better (more generative) ambitions of the departmental/center DDIAPs on subjects like teaching, research, and community engagement could be highlighted for the campus community, and identified as a “best practices.” Definitions of HUGs could be clearer and more consistent. Best practices for the internal review process could be outlined by the administration and all units could be strongly encouraged to adopt them.
2. Going forward, the review process would benefit from more qualitative data (either through surveys or interviews with a random sampling). Perhaps especially on efforts to mentor, retain, and promote HUGs untenured faculty, on the mentorship and inclusion of graduate student HUGs, on the expansion of CAPS and on department climate concerns. Quantitatively, there is room for improvement as well. We might also, for instance, document the number of HUG prospective faculty (and graduate students) brought to campus every year; or survey recently tenured faculty for a candid snapshot of the process; or sample graduate students before and after graduation to see how HUG students are trained for their careers and prepared for life after Brown. In this, the OIDI can benefit more from the expertise of Brown faculty and graduate students in producing rigorous and analytically significant results.
3. Disability is a major blind spot. We recommend, as a basic start, a campus-wide survey of the built environment of Brown, with a focus on accessibility for the wide range of disabled persons in our community, along with the full range of qualitative assessments described above.
4. The comprehensive review of campus efforts would be easier if we had the same sorts of demographic data—and with the same degree of granularity—from all of the units on campus. Right now, though, we have a lot of asymmetry in the data—we have different details from the Dean of the Faculty, the School of Public Health, and Human Resources on hiring, recruitment, etc. Ideally, the most granular form of data should be the gold standard moving forward, and all data should be disaggregated, up-to-date,

and transparent. We believe this would be useful for the DIOB - and useful for you, too.

5. The DIAP rightfully emphasizes accountability, but our conversations revealed some confusion about how this plays out on the ground. We should work to clarify the mechanisms for this when it comes to issues of climate, inclusion, harassment, and discrimination. Are there, members of the board wondered, Title VI protocols to match what we've recently set up in Title VI? Is there an OIDI confidential dropbox? How do we handle complaints? Both the timeline and the process, we suggest, should be perfectly clear to all constituents. Likewise, we also wondered whether there should not also be clarity on the timeline and the process for departments and units where, after qualitative survey results are revealed, structures and cultures continue to be marked as problematic.
6. The scope of the DIAP is broad. We had some thoughts about what might still be on the drawing board. Within our commitment to enabling staff development, might we make it easier for staff to take classes at Brown? We should continue to pay attention to advancement at every level for staff, and make sure that there are meaningful opportunities. We might also make it possible for Brown to provide funding for promising HUG undergraduates to continue on for graduate training, perhaps in 5th year MA programs or PhD programs. These possibilities came up several times in our meetings.
7. What comes next is unclear. If Phase One (or Year One) of the DIAP was about capacity building, next year's incoming board is responsible for assessing Phase Two and should have a clear sense of its aims and ambitions. Likewise, under the larger umbrella of the university's DIAP, it might be good to plot out what "next generation" diversity and inclusion actions plans (DDIAPS) might look like for the humanities, the social sciences, or the physical sciences. Is it possible, for instance, to conceptualize what a unit plan might look like for all of the social sciences? Or all of the humanities?
8. Recognizing that not everyone can know everything, it would still be useful for the DIOB to know more about the budget process, so that we can assess whether we have enough funding to cover all of the aspects of the university-wide DIAP. We very much appreciated the budgetary briefing from the Provost, but it remains unclear (to the DIOB) whether the budget is big enough or robust enough to match the ambitious spirit of the larger plan. Is the DIAP, we wondered, budgeted in a way that will allow for it to succeed on time? This might not be an issue for the DIOB, we admit, but there should still be a mechanism to review the long-term budget.

9. We learned much, once more, from our meeting with the DOF and the Provost, and we are grateful for their time. The larger Brown community needs also to see and understand the process —perhaps especially the process of the DIOB—and not just receive a summary, such as the one the annual report offers, to have more faith in the significance of these accomplishments. Every effort, we suggest, should be made to establish greater transparency into the process of implementation (as far as the DIAP is concerned) and review (as far as the DIOB is concerned).
10. Finally, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are lingering concerns about staffing and capacity at CAPS. Members of the board, reaching out to students (undergraduate and graduate) over the fall and through the winter break, continued to hear that some had difficulty making timely appointments or finding a culturally competent counselor, a challenge exacerbated by our dramatic socio-political context. Beyond the need for serious qualitative data about the long-term impact of changes we've already made, we recommend that the university investigate this in short order and amplify its mental health resources as required to meet to existing and immediate student demand.

We offer these recommendations as constructive additions. We acknowledge that the campus has worked incredibly hard to enable diversity and inclusion on the original terms of the DIAP. We hope these recommendations make it easier for future iterations of this board to conduct an even better assessment of our progress, and that such assessments might helpfully enable the campus to meet the ambitious goals of the DIAP.

Yours very sincerely,

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Caitlin Murphy (CSREA)
Carleia Lighty (Transportation and Card Services)
Anthony Mam (Brown Center for Students of Color/Staff Advisory Council)
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