



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force:
A Report and Recommendations to
Dean Bertolami and the Executive Group

May 5, 2021

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations

Table of Contents

***Task Force Members*.....2**

***Executive Summary* 2**

***Introduction*..... 3**

***Methodology*..... 3**

***Survey Summary*..... 3**

***Survey Results & Analysis* 4**

***Recommendations*..... 5**

***Future Work* 5**

***Conclusion* 5**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations

Task Force Members

Chair: John D. McIntosh, Associate Dean, Clinical Administration and Revenue Cycle Management

Co-chair: Eugenia Mejia, Assistant Dean, Admissions and Enrollment Management

Members:

Andre Ritter, Department Chair, Cariology, and Comprehensive Care

Angela Banegas, Director, Faculty Services

Angela De Bartolo, Group Practice Director, Cariology and Comprehensive Care

Angela Green, Clinic Manager, Cariology and Comprehensive Care

Deepak Saxena, Professor, Molecular Pathobiology

Dianne Sefo, Department Chair, Dental Hygiene and Dental Assisting

Erica Reifer, Director, Professional Development

Ginette Lamarre, Program Administrator, Outreach

Nigel Bunnnett, Department Chair, Molecular Pathobiology

Executive Summary

In June 2020, against a background of national events surrounding police brutality, Dean Charles Bertolami established a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force to ensure that the College continues to foster and/or build an environment that attracts the best talents and which values and embraces diversity.

John McIntosh and Eugenia Mejia were selected as chair and co-chair of the Task Force, respectively. They were charged with assembling a Task Force with a targeted focus on taking the temperature of the College relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion and suggesting recommendations that could help the College create an even stronger sense of belonging and equity.

The Task Force leadership solicited recommendations and self-nominations for Task Force membership. Nominations were reviewed by the chair and co-chair, in consultation with the Dean, and the decision was made to appoint the nine individuals listed above to serve as Task Force members.

As a first step, the Task Force members developed and distributed a climate survey to get accurate feedback on what the environment is truly like for people of color. The results of the survey enabled the Task Force to identify areas for improvement and develop recommendations to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion at the College.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations

Introduction

In summer 2020, the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor led to a rise in national protests to end police brutality, institutional racism, and White supremacy and compelled many people to acknowledge racism and other forms of discrimination within organizations. Higher education is not immune to these systemic forms of discriminatory practices, and some have begun to recognize that their policies, actions, and events have intentionally or unintentionally contributed to replicating prejudice, bias, and discrimination in our society.

NYU Dentistry made the decision to engage in a process of examining its own beliefs, policies, actions, and decisions which may either foster or inhibit a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment for all community members. To that end, the College conducted a climate surgery designed to identify and assess whether or not bias, prejudice, discrimination, stereotypes, and other negative predispositions exist within its walls.

Methodology

The process of identifying, assessing, and prioritizing recommendations was critical to ensure that all recommendations were evaluated based on the results of the survey analysis and input from the Task Force members. This process led to envisioning a paradigm shift at NYU Dentistry, one that genuinely reflects a diverse environment and aspires to create an equitable and inclusive space for all, particularly those from marginalized and underrepresented communities.

For the final report, the Task Force was divided into two groups. Group "A" focused on reviewing and analyzing the climate survey. Group "B" examined some of the possible contributive factors and potential barriers in society that may affect the College's ability to be a welcoming, diverse, inclusive, and equitable community. Each sub-group presented its recommendations to the entire Task Force. The Task Force then used several additional meetings to discuss and incorporate the recommendations into a single document to be submitted to the Dean and the Executive Group.

Survey Summary

The Task Force distributed the climate survey to all three thousand plus (3,053) NYU Dentistry community members on October 23, 2020, with a closing date of December 31, 2020. The distribution consisted of:

- 768 Faculty
- 515 Administrators/Staff/Researchers
- 1770 Students

To ensure that everyone had the opportunity to participate in the climate survey, the Task Force sent

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations

out five (5) reminders to the entire community via News & Notes and forty-three (43) reminders to DDS students through the Student Success Network Virtual calendar and Student Government and Class Council weekly newsletters. A cursory review of the responses at the end of December indicated a low response rate among the various constituents. This low response rate resulted in the Task Force's decision to extend the deadline to the end of January, which allowed for greater participation. The percentage of responses was as follows:

- 22.2% or 202 Faculty
- 17.7% or 161 Administrators/Staff/Researchers
- 43.3% or 394 Students
- 9.2% or 84 Prefer not to answer
- 7.6% or 69 Did not choose a selection

Overall, there was a 30% response rate or 910 respondents from the total population of 3,053.

Survey Results & Analysis

Survey results and analysis are provided in the attached PowerPoint. There were 18 questions that were ranked from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” on a Likert scale. The questions included topics on sense of belonging, diversity, and overall culture at NYU Dentistry. A large number of “neither agree nor disagree” responses were selected for a majority of the questions, which may require further investigation to determine rationale. The majority of the responses were favorable. However, there were responses that raised major concerns; specifically, to the following:

- There is transparent communication about important developments at NYU Dentistry.
- I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences.
- When I speak up, my opinion is valued.
- NYU Dentistry provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

After careful analysis of the responses, the following topics emerged as priorities:

- Communication/transparency/distrust
- Belonging/open expression
- Discrimination/bias
- Hiring/recruitment/evaluation/promotion
- Respect/professionalism
- Work life balance/scheduling

Responses to the survey were further analyzed to determine demographics, i. e., the roles performed at the College by the respondents.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force Recommendations

Recommendations

Based on the Task Force survey and subsequent discussions, the Task Force members developed a list of six recommendations. They are listed below in priority order, with one being the highest priority.

1. Create a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Office at NYU Dentistry to oversee Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies and implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives.
2. Enhance existing protocol to identify and report issues of bias and discrimination at the College.
3. Create an ongoing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to advise on issues related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
4. Review, revise, and enhance the existing DDS curriculum with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion as an integral part of the curriculum.
5. Enhance or create a sustainable, diverse student recruitment strategy to support the increase of minority and underrepresented student populations at NYU Dentistry.
6. Review and revise existing communications strategies to improve clarity and increase frequency, such as town hall meetings, focus groups, etc., with different constituents.

Future Work

Much work remains to be done, including identifying those systems, policies, and actions at the College that proactively support or inhibit diversity, equity, and inclusion and conducting focus groups with NYU Dentistry community members to understand their experiences of diversity and inclusion at the College. Future work also includes reviewing any documentation or historical information on how the College addressed these events or experiences that may have occurred at NYU Dentistry in past years. In short, it will be necessary to continue to review and strengthen all policies that support eliminating actions that are prejudicial, discriminatory, or biased related to race, gender, sexual identity, class status, and or level of ability.

Conclusion

While it is essential to identify and provide recommendations for increased diversity, equity, and inclusion at NYU Dentistry, the Task Force feels that it is equally important for NYU Dentistry to fully commit to a cultural shift that prioritizes and institutionalizes diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is within such a context that the College will be able to ensure that we continue to foster and/or build an environment in which students, faculty, administrators, and staff feel included, valued, and empowered.