

**2018 Report Council on Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice**

**January 2019**

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## 1. Summary of Recommendations

- Create Twenty Scholarships to Support Research/Creative Opportunities
  - Scholarships will support research/creative activity with individual faculty
  - Target first-generation students with demonstrated financial need
  - Scholarships will be allocated to colleges, each of which will determine procedures for awarding scholarships
- Expand Pilot Freshmen Interest Group (FIG)
  - Ten additional FIG sections serving approximately 200 more students
  - Target low-income and first-generation students with automatic enrollment
- Appoint Work Group to Initiate Planning for Ethnic Studies Program
  - Program should have new tenure track faculty lines
  - Planning should focus on scope and location of program
- Create Ten Equity and Inclusion Start-up Packages for New Faculty
  - Departments will compete for packages
  - Departments must include retention planning to reflect service to under-represented students

## 2. Introduction

In November of 2017, President Randhawa established the President's Council on Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice (EISJ) at Western Washington University. He charged the Council to identify barriers to a fully inclusive and just campus, and to make recommendations that would diminish or remove them, including:

Assessing current policies and practices, and recommending policies and practices that enable the institution to create and sustain a more just and inclusive community; identifying structural issues that are a barrier to equity, inclusion and social justice; working to actively address dynamics of bias, oppression, and privilege; identifying and helping implement cultural competency training for administrators, faculty, staff and students; and examining campus climate issues and recommending changes that enable the success of a diverse university community.

Inaugural members of the EISJ are Marco Hatch (Environmental Science), Vicki Hsueh (Political Science, Women Gender and Sexuality Studies), Cezar Mesquita (Admissions), Lea Aune (Human Resources), Viva Barnes (Anthropology), Erick Yanzon (replaced by Camilla Mejia during fall 2018, Associated Students of WWU), Chris Vargas (Art), Jackie Caplan-Auerbach (Geology), Craig Tyran (Decision Sciences), Elaine Mehary (Secondary Education). Co-chairs are Debra Salazar (Political Science) and Melynda Huskey (Enrollment and Student Services).

The Council defined the scope of its work with care, recognizing the range of possible approaches to the charge. We chose to focus on several ways the university is failing to meet its commitments to inclusion and justice and to propose programs that will generate measurable, near-term outcomes. In the invitation to our first meeting, the co-chairs wrote, "We know that injustice resulting from deep structural and historical inequity cannot be halted or even remedied by a dozen people reporting to a university president. But we are committed to constructive action that will make a measurable, genuine difference in the lives of our students and other members of the university community, especially those who are most vulnerable."

The Council divided into two sub-committees, one focused on students and one on faculty and staff, and created a shared workspace in Canvas where we archived the reports, reference materials, and information that informed our conversations. Within the sub-committees, we engaged in research on and discussion of the systemic and structural issues that impede the full inclusion and success of students of color, first-generation students, and Pell-eligible students, as well as of faculty and staff of under-represented groups. These conversations informed the process of narrowing our scope to a smaller list of key action items.

This report, which includes discussion, analysis, and recommendations for action, is the culmination of the Council's work.

### 3. Student Subcommittee Report

The Student Subcommittee focused on structural barriers to equity and inclusion. More specifically our proposals are directed toward creating a better learning environment for students from under-represented groups. These include students of color, students from low-income families, and first-generation students. Review of educational research literature, analysis performed by WWU Institutional Research, and numerous surveys shows that among the most important barriers these students encounter are those related to financial costs, social/cultural contexts, and academic preparation.

The Council began its analysis by relaying several observations indicative of general barriers to equity and inclusion. These observations were generated from council members' own experience at WWU, conversations with students, and WWU institutional data.

- Enrollment of students of color at WWU is low relative to the proportion of people of color in the state.
- Many students of color find a hostile climate at WWU. Further, many students find institutional structures and practices opaque and confusing, impeding their efforts to make the changes they need.
- Gatekeeper courses may impede access to STEM majors for students of color and first-generation students.
- Several WWU institutional analyses find preparation, retention and performance gaps among students related to race/ethnicity, first-generation status, and family income.<sup>1</sup>

Some of these observations are not unique to WWU. Rather they characterize four-year higher education institutions in general. Consistent with the Council's charge, the subcommittee does not attempt to address every problem identified. Rather with three specific recommendations—expansion and targeting of the FIG Program, scholarships to support research/creative activities, and the creation of an Ethnic Studies Program—we propose to partially address retention and performance gaps, cost barriers, and cultural climate. Selection of these particular combinations of barriers/solutions does not indicate that others are less important. The challenges are deep and wide. We must start somewhere and we trust that future Councils will offer proposals to address other important barriers. Also consistent with our charge, the Council suggests metrics that could be used to assess the success of recommended programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Ming Zhang, Sharon Schmitz, and Dana Weigel, *Retention Rates for Students of Color*. Office of Institutional Research, Western Washington University (2016). *New Freshmen Preparedness*, Data analysis prepared for Council by Office of Institutional Research (2018).

Finally, members of the Council share a deep awareness of how race structures nearly every aspect of U.S. society. Higher education is no exception. Whether stemming from ignorance, unconscious or very conscious bias at the individual level, or from a nearly impenetrable web of public and private policies, racial hierarchy remains an inescapable fact of American life.<sup>2</sup> Whether measured by income, wealth, education, or job status, there are substantial gaps separating whites and some Asian Americans from Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, and other Asian Americans.<sup>3</sup> People of color and indigenous people in this country have never had easy access to the American Dream.<sup>4</sup>

That said, most of our analysis and recommendations are organized by students' family income and first-generation status. Washington State Law prohibits the university from targeting resources by race or ethnicity (RCW [49.60.400](#)). Further, multivariate analysis conducted by Institutional Research at WWU finds that family income and first-generation status are better predictors of retention than is race or ethnicity.<sup>5</sup> That is, when the analyst controls for family income and first-generation status (along with measures of academic preparation), differences in retention by race and ethnicity largely disappear; they are no longer statistically significant. These findings are specific to WWU between 2010 and 2014, and should not be taken as conclusive or general. While the Council's recommendations will target low-income,<sup>6</sup> first-generation students, WWU should continue to monitor how race and ethnicity relate to educational opportunity on this campus.

### Barriers at WWU

#### Cost

Affordability is a major barrier to low-income students nationwide and within Washington State.<sup>7</sup> Analysts at the National College Access Network have found Western Washington University unaffordable to the average Pell Grant recipient who works full time during summers and applies all of her/his/their earnings toward educational expenses. Cost is even more of a barrier to many students of color.<sup>8</sup> Notably even as most low-income students are non-Hispanic whites, Black and Hispanic students disproportionately come from low-income

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Rothstein. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. New York: W.W. Norton (2017).

<sup>3</sup> *State of the Union 2017, Annual Report of the Center on Poverty and Inequality*. [https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways\\_SOTU\\_2017.pdf](https://inequality.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Pathways_SOTU_2017.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Rodney E. Hero and Morris E. Levy, "The Racial Structure of Economic Inequality in the United States: Understanding Change and Continuity in the Era of the "Great Divergence"." *Social Science Quarterly* 97(3): 491-505, September, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Ming Zhang, Sharon Schmitz, and Dana Weigel, *Retention Rates for Students of Color*, Office of Institutional Research, Western Washington University (2016).

<sup>6</sup> The university does not collect income data from students. Thus eligibility for Pell Grants is typically used as a proxy measure of family income.

<sup>7</sup> *Shutting Low-Income Students Out of Public Four-Year Higher Education*. 2018. [www.collegeaccess.org/affordability](http://www.collegeaccess.org/affordability)

<sup>8</sup> *Invisible Financial Barriers to College Access for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders* (2016). [www.apiasf.org](http://www.apiasf.org)

families.<sup>9</sup> Though many Asian American students come from affluent families, certain Asian American and Pacific Island ethnic groups face substantial cost barriers.<sup>10</sup> Sadly the low numbers of Native American students in four-year institutions limit quantitative analysis of their situation. But we do know that Native Americans have among the lowest median household incomes in the country.<sup>11</sup> According to the 2017 HERI survey, respondents of color at WWU were more likely than white respondents to feel financially responsible for their families and to be concerned about their ability to finance their education.<sup>12</sup> Any steps that WWU can take to reduce the cost barriers encountered by first-generation students and students of color will enhance the educational experience of these students.

The Council does not offer a comprehensive solution to the problem of cost but does address a corollary. Students from low-income families, faced with the need to finance their education and support their families, may be more likely to work while attending college. Hence, these students encounter serious constraints with regard to opportunities to collaborate with Western faculty members on extracurricular research/creative projects. Offering students paid research/creative activities opportunities can help to improve equity in this regard.

### First-Generation Students

Americans are earning bachelor's degrees at greater rates than in the past.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence fewer high school and college students have parents who did not attend college. But at the beginning of this decade, about a third of students enrolled in post-secondary institutions were first-generation college students.<sup>14</sup> These students encounter substantial barriers to enrollment in college and to success once enrolled. Among the factors constituting these barriers are lack of cultural capital, inadequate academic preparation, and financial constraints.

First-generation students are less likely than peers whose parents have attended college to enroll in four-year post-secondary institutions.<sup>15</sup> Once enrolled, these students are less likely to complete degree programs. No significant differences emerge in employment rates or annual salaries for first- and continuing-generation graduates. Thus, even as economic inequality in the United States has reached levels not seen in a century,<sup>16</sup> college education continues to function as an engine of social/economic mobility. First-generation students,

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<sup>9</sup> Jennifer L. Hochschild, "Race, Ethnicity, and Education Policy," In *Oxford Handbook of Racial and Ethnic Politics in America*. New York: Oxford University Press (2014).

<sup>10</sup> *Invisible Financial Barriers to College Access for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders* (2016). [www.apiasf.org](http://www.apiasf.org)

<sup>11</sup> Valerie Wilson, *Digging into the 2017 ACS: Improved Income Growth for Native Americans, But Lots of Variation in the Pace of Recovery for Different Asian Ethnic Groups*. Economic Policy Institute (September 14, 2018). <https://www.epi.org/blog/digging-into-2017-acs-income-native-americans-asians/>

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Eagan, *2017 HERI Summary Report*. <http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/docs/2017HERISummaryReport.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> *First-Generation Students: College Access, Persistence, and Postbachelor's Outcomes* (2018).

<sup>14</sup> *First-Generation Students: College Access, Persistence, and Postbachelor's Outcomes* (2018). Refers to students who do not have a parent who enrolled in college.

<sup>15</sup> *First-Generation Students: College Access, Persistence, and Postbachelor's Outcomes* (2018).

<sup>16</sup> *Striking it Richer: The Evolution of Top Incomes in the United States*. Emmanuel Saez (2016). <https://eml.berkeley.edu/~saez/saez-UStopincomes-2015.pdf>

many of whom come from low-income families, who are able to surmount the barriers to entry and success in college do well once they graduate. Therefore, any programs that can aid first-generation students in overcoming barriers to graduation should have substantial, long-term effects on their lives.

The inequities experienced by first-generation students begin early in their lives. Neither WWU nor any institution of higher education is positioned to address all of them. But relevant to WWU curricular planning are the findings that first-generation students are less likely to take high school classes that prepare them for college.<sup>17</sup> For example, students whose parents earned a bachelor's degree were three times more likely to have taken calculus in high school.

Though Western cannot reverse economic inequality, it can recognize inequality in academic preparation and attempt to mitigate it early in students' academic careers. One approach is to provide first-generation students with small classes and faculty focused on these students' educational challenges. Expanding access to Western's FIG Program offers an important mechanism.

### Climate

Students of color have, for years, voiced their dissatisfaction with Western Washington University. Their concerns have been evident in their organizing to address such concerns as the inadequacy of facilities for the Ethnic Students Center, the administration's inadequate response to race-based threats to students of color, lack of appropriate counseling services, and the lack of an ethnic studies program. Responses to the 2017 HERI Survey highlight these and other issues.<sup>18</sup> Though the survey respondents do not comprise a demographically representative sample of WWU students, the total sample size of 970 students (including 287 students of color) is sufficiently large to warrant attention. That is, though we cannot generalize from the sample to the student body, we should be attentive to the responses of nearly one thousand students.

The HERI survey respondents show important differences in experience at WWU across race and ethnicity.<sup>19</sup> Respondents of color were more likely than white respondents to: doubt the university's commitment to diversity, witness and experience discrimination/racial harassment, and feel unsafe on campus. Respondents of color also were more likely than white respondents to have had negative interactions with students of other races/ethnicities. Interactions with faculty also shape students' experience of WWU. Respondents of color were less likely than their white classmates to perceive faculty as inviting or validating their contributions to class and more likely to have heard racially insensitive or disparaging remarks from faculty or staff. These students also were more likely to rate their academic ability as average or below average. Finally, students of color were less likely to feel a sense of belonging at WWU. The differences across some of these categories were substantial and

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<sup>17</sup> *First-Generation Students: College Access, Persistence, and Postbachelor's Outcomes* (2018).

<sup>18</sup> Kevin Eagan, *2017 HERI Summary Report*. <http://www.wvu.edu/eoo/docs/2017HERISummaryReport.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Kevin Eagan, *2017 HERI Summary Report*. <http://www.wvu.edu/eoo/docs/2017HERISummaryReport.pdf>

indicate that students of color who responded to the survey have a much less positive experience at WWU than do white respondents.

Recent events at WWU have brought renewed attention to the environment encountered by students of color.<sup>20</sup> These events are not isolated in time. Many current WWU students recall the events of 2015 when a student threatened then-AS President Belina Seare, calling for her to be lynched. Nor are such assaults unique to Western. They occur at many colleges and universities.<sup>21</sup> Though it is not possible to prevent every ignorant, mal-intentioned person from unleashing their ignorance and hatred on the walls of the campus, it is possible to *change* the environment of the campus to reduce the damage such individuals create. Development of a comprehensive strategy is beyond the scope of this report. But expanding the academic examination of the role of people of color in the United States would enhance the education of students by broadening their perspectives and reducing the level of ignorance on this campus.<sup>22</sup> Potential contributions of an Ethnic Studies program at Western would be to reduce such ignorance and improve the campus environment.

#### 4. Faculty/Staff Subcommittee Report

During the last decade the university has supported the collection of considerable data regarding the climate for faculty and staff of color.<sup>23</sup> Common findings of these studies are that many colleagues of color experience subtle discrimination, believe their contributions are not fairly assessed, and face disproportionate and unrewarded demands on their time.<sup>24</sup> The Dozier report in particular offered a set of recommendations to address these problems. More recently the Provost's office has implemented hiring and mentoring initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity among the faculty.

The Faculty-Staff subcommittee deliberated carefully over recommendations that would leverage the greatest impact on employees, particularly with regard to attracting and supporting new faculty from under-represented identities. In the end, we felt that advancing a

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<sup>20</sup> Julia Berkman, "Hundreds of Students Gather at President's Office to Speak About Ending the Cycle of Systemic Racism, Violence," *Western Front*. <http://www.westernfrontonline.com/2018/12/05/hundreds-of-students-gather-at-presidents-office-to-speak-about-breaking-the-cycle-of-systemic-racism-violence/>

<sup>21</sup> For example, at the University of Missouri. Jack Stripling, "Thrust into a National Debate on Race, 2 Missouri Chiefs Resign," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (November 10, 2015). [https://www.chronicle.com/article/Thrust-Into-a-National-Debate/234131/#.XCQG\\_FywqhY.email](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Thrust-Into-a-National-Debate/234131/#.XCQG_FywqhY.email)

<sup>22</sup> Such ignorance is reflected in a paper authored by a student in a council member's class. This paper decried the increasing racial and ethnic diversity in the United States as it would result in the country being taken away from those who had built it. The context of the claim indicated that student believed white people have built the United States, a view of American history that is contrary to the facts.

<sup>23</sup> These reports are archived at: <http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/diversity-climate-survey-reports.shtml>

<sup>24</sup> Raine Dozier, *The Experiences of Faculty of Color at Western Washington University*, The President's Taskforce on Equity, Inclusion, & Diversity (2017). <http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/docs/ExperiencesofFacultyOfColorAtWWU.pdf>. *HERI Faculty Survey Data*. <http://www.wwu.edu/eoo/docs/2017HERIFacultyData.pdf>

single high-profile recommendation best reflected the committee's charge. We have included a number of items for future consideration, as well, but emphasize the importance of the single recommendation, which offers resources to new faculty in support of both recruitment and retention.

## 5. Recommendations

The Council offers four proposals to enhance equity and inclusion of students and faculty from under-represented groups. The recommendations involve additional resources to enhance academic programs. Implicit in these proposals is a recognition that university administration cannot order staff, faculty, or students to change their values or perspectives, even as many of us shudder at the behavior of some members of our community. But by providing resources to promote the success of students from under-represented groups and to increase the numbers of faculty from such groups, we anticipate that the climate will change.

These proposals focus on addressing gaps in academic preparedness, increasing access to high impact experiences, and promoting a more inclusive environment for students of color and those from other under-represented groups. Our proposals will also help to diversify the faculty, supporting recruitment and retention of faculty who will advance the university's goals of building a more just and inclusive community.

Finally, notably absent from the set of recommendations below are suggestions to address the challenges related to equity and inclusion of university staff. We strongly urge future Councils to address these challenges.

### *Create Scholarships to Support Research/Creative Opportunities*

Research and creative opportunities are widely recognized as high-value experiences for students. They allow students to explore career paths and to experience the excitement of discovery. Most internship opportunities are unpaid. Though external funding provides some paid research opportunities for students, these are limited. The need to earn income prevents many first-generation students from taking advantage of existing research/creative activities opportunities. To address this situation, the Council proposes a pilot program to offer research/creative scholarships for first-generation students.

Features of Proposal:

- Offer twenty research/creative scholarships for first-generation students with demonstrated financial need.
- Scholarships will provide students with the opportunity to work with individual faculty members.
- The amount of money attached to the scholarships should be sufficient to relieve students of the necessity of taking on paid employment.
- Scholarships should be allocated to the colleges based on enrollment. Each college would receive at least one scholarship.

- Scholarships should support student involvement in meaningful research/creative activity in direct collaboration with a faculty member.
- Each college would have the discretion to outline criteria and procedures for awarding scholarships. These procedures might be subject to approval by a future Council.
- Proposed Evaluation Metrics:
  - Six-year graduation rate for scholarship recipients
  - Student satisfaction assessed by a survey at graduation
  - Graduate school admissions

*Create Pilot Project to Expand Freshmen Interest Group (FIG) Program*

The Council proposes a pilot expansion of the FIG program. Participation in the FIG Program at WWU has consistently been associated with higher rates of retention to the second year and higher six-year graduation rates.<sup>25</sup> An expansion of the program to serve more low-income and first-generation students could provide a cohort experience for these students, ameliorating some of the culture shock<sup>26</sup> that accompanies enrollment in a predominantly white institution. Participation in the program would also afford students the opportunity to build relationships with supportive faculty who might function as mentors during the students' subsequent years at WWU. Further, a FIG program tailored to the needs of low-income and first-generation students could address gaps in academic preparedness at the beginning of students' time at WWU, allowing them to more fully exploit opportunities presented during the rest of their education.

An initial effort to pilot this approach was conducted this fall with History Professor Mart Stewart and Political Science Professor Debra Salazar in collaboration with Library Professor Sarah McDaniel and Student Outreach Services (SOS) counselor Emmanuel Camarillo. This FIG enrolled twelve students who affiliated with SOS. The FIG was designed to help students build writing and analytical skills, in tandem with those emphasized in the two GUR courses, and in addition provide a cohort experience. The FIG seminar (American Dreams, American Migrations) provided the typical two credits. Unique to this FIG was an associated two-credit writing workshop offered through the Western Library. Professor McDaniel used the workshop to focus on building students' skills in writing argumentative essays, using the papers assigned in the Political Science and History classes as the basis for skill-building exercises. Though it is too soon to evaluate the success of this FIG, faculty associated with it observed: serious deficiencies in students' writing and analytical skills at the beginning of the quarter, improvement in these skills for most of the students, and unusually high attendance at and attentiveness to the lecture classes during the quarter.

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<sup>25</sup> These results vary somewhat over time and by Academic Index, with less-well prepared students benefitting more from FIG participation. Gary R. McKinney, *Freshmen Interest Group (FIGs) Report Fall, 2010: Focus on Effectiveness*, Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. More recent, unpublished data provided by the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education reinforce this claim.

<sup>26</sup> Students of color relate experiences in which faculty and fellow students question their right to be at WWU, invade their personal space, and treat them as curiosities. Such experiences understandably interfere with these students' education.

Perhaps most important though were the challenges encountered in this effort. The first challenge was a reticence among SOS-affiliated students to enroll. Mr. Camarillo actively recruited students in the program to enroll in the FIG but many were unenthusiastic. These students cited the lack of GUR credits for the FIG seminar as among the major reasons for their disinterest in the FIG. A second challenge was the number of different classes associated with the FIG. Instead of the typical constellation (two lecture classes and one seminar), this FIG added the writing workshop, dividing the students' attention in four directions. One seminar, with a strong writing component, rather than a seminar and workshop might have generated less fragmentation in the students' experience. Third, several of the students were living with their families and lacked quiet space to study in the evenings. One of the participating faculty attempted to make such a space available to these students but this was an improvised arrangement that was not consistently accessible. Faculty participants in the pilot also recognized a fourth challenge—one quarter was not enough to support some of the students in making enough improvements in writing skills to improve the likelihood of future success at Western.

The elements of the FIG proposal outlined below reflect the experience in this pilot FIG, results of various analyses of the FIG program generally, and consultation with Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education Steven VanderStaay.

#### Features of Proposal:

- Ten additional FIG sections serving approximately 200 students. (Note: Currently the FIG program serves between 500 and 600 students each year.)
- Target Pell eligible and first-generation students.
- Automatically enroll SOS students in FIGs with opportunity to opt out.
- Offer priority enrollment in May to support faculty and student planning.
- Increase seminars from two to four credits.
- Classify these FIG seminars as a GUR (perhaps Communication) to make enrollment more attractive.
- Focus on under-served areas of the curriculum (e.g., business) that attract many first-generation students.
- Coordinate to ensure that these FIGS are supportive of and articulated with the ongoing HHMI grant-funded STEM initiative.
- Consider creating a faculty advisory group to support implementation of the expansion.
- Encourage participating faculty to collaborate with FIG partners. This is in contrast to current practice which asks only that participating faculty arrange three additional contact hours with FIG students over the quarter. Collaboration among GUR and seminar faculty during the quarter would seem necessary to support and track students' progress.
- Enhance incentives for faculty who work in the program. Additional compensation would recognize the effort that faculty will make both during and after the FIG as they build enduring relationships with participating students.

- Proposed Evaluation Metrics:
  - Retention to second year
  - First-year GPA
  - Second-year GPA
  - Six-year graduation rate

*Begin Planning for Ethnic Studies Program*

The Council recommends that the Provost immediately convene a work group to plan how, not if, an ethnic studies program will be created at WWU. Students of color have engaged in extraordinary effort to secure such a program. Research demonstrates the importance of ethnic studies courses in improving high school students' achievement.<sup>27</sup> These courses, and more specifically the pedagogy they employ, reveal the mechanisms underlying the racial hierarchy in which students live.<sup>28</sup> They also offer narratives of U.S. history and critical analyses of culture which expand the perspectives of both students of color and their white classmates.<sup>29</sup> An ethnic studies program would contribute to the education of all WWU students. It would also offer a curriculum that would be particularly valuable to students of color. Finally, an ethnic studies program would build a core of faculty of color, perhaps supporting recruitment of faculty of color in other units throughout the university. The time to move forward is now.

The ethnic studies work group should be representative of university constituencies and should report quickly. Delay will reinforce a perception that WWU does not support the educational needs of students of color. Provided below are proposed guidelines to support the activities of the work group.

Features of Proposal:

- The work group should be charged with designing a structure that supports and amplifies existing ethnic studies efforts on campus.
- An ethnic studies program should be built with tenured and tenure-track faculty and offer at least one major.
- The work group should address several issues:
  - Whether the unit will be a college or department.
  - Location of the unit in the university.
  - Scope of the unit (only ethnic studies or inclusive of related subject areas).
  - The number of faculty lines necessary to give the unit a robust beginning.

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<sup>27</sup> Much of the research on ethnic studies examines K-12 programs. Thomas S. Dee and Emily K. Penner, "The Causal Effects of Cultural Relevance: Evidence from an Ethnic Studies Curriculum," *American Educational Research Journal* 54(1): 127-166 (2017).

<sup>28</sup> A substantial body of scholarship addresses this question. Glenn Adams, Phia S. Salter, Tugce Kurtis, Pegah Naemi, and Sara Estrada-Villalta, "Subordinated Knowledge as a Tool for Creative Maladjustment and Resistance to Racial Oppression," *Journal of Social Issues* 74(2): 337-354.

<sup>29</sup> Christine Sleeter, *The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review*, National Education Association (2011). <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/NBI-2010-3-value-of-ethnic-studies.pdf>

- Steps necessary to ensure that the unit will not be seen as relieving other units of the imperative to be inclusive of faculty of color.
- Proposed Evaluation Metrics:
  - Number of faculty of color hired institution-wide during first three to five years of program
  - Number of faculty of color tenured institution-wide during first five to ten years of program
  - Increase in six-year graduation rates for students of color within first five years of program
  - Student satisfaction with program assessed by survey at graduation.

### Create Start-Up Packages for Faculty

This program would create ten start-up packages for new faculty who would advance institutional goals of inclusion and representation. The awards (\$20,000 to \$30,000 each) could be used to cover relocation expenses (broadly conceived) and lab/research seed money. The program would provide additional support for faculty of color. These start-up packages would be awarded competitively to departments. To be eligible, departments would be required to develop a faculty retention plan, based on analysis of department and institutional data, which could include revising unit evaluation plans to reflect the value of service to under-represented students. The requirement of departmental retention plans would address the view expressed by many faculty of color that their mentoring of students is not valued. Thus, the packages would serve both recruitment and retention. Additional features of the proposal are summarized below.

#### Features of Proposal:

- New faculty who lack the financial resources to support themselves and their families during the summer before they join the university might use part of their start-up funding for summer salary.
- Oversight of package awards and implementation could be assigned to an individual faculty member (with an appropriate buyout) or to future Councils.
- Proposed Evaluation Metrics:
  - Number of faculty of color hired institution-wide during first three to five years of program
  - Number of faculty of color tenured institution-wide during first five to ten years of program.
  - Changes in department unit evaluation plans to reflect importance of mentoring students from under-represented groups.

## **6. Issues for Future Councils**

The Council's analysis of barriers to equity, inclusion, and justice at WWU led us to construct four specific recommendations. Even as most of these proposals address educational barriers

confronting students of color, low-income students, and first-generation students, Council members fully recognize that much more work must be done to remove these barriers. Further, the Council's proposals barely begin to address the challenges that faculty and, especially staff, of color encounter at WWU. We trust that future Councils and the university will build on the work of the inaugural Council to make more progress in addressing equity, inclusion, and justice across all members of the university community. Toward that end we conclude with a list of issues that were identified but not comprehensively worked out during our deliberations.

- The limited value of SAT scores in predicting college performance is widely recognized<sup>30</sup>. There is also some evidence suggesting bias in the SAT. Future Councils might consider making the SAT optional.<sup>31</sup>
- Transfer students face unique barriers and these should be addressed.
- Future Councils should consider conducting a review of the university's first-year writing program with regard to how well it serves first-generation students.
- Introductory and remedial math instruction also should be assessed with respect to how well it serves first-generation students.
- Inclusive implementation of Dual Career Assistance (DCA). Though the data regarding this program are limited, the university could consider a policy to ensure that DCA is implemented in a way that supports the university's goal of expanding access to under-represented groups. That is, DCA implementation should be monitored to ensure no racial bias in the award of DCA packages. Further implementation should reflect awareness of the differential challenges faced by trailing spouses of color or of other under-represented groups.
- Recognition of additional mentoring responsibilities taken on by many faculty of color.
- Housing Affordability and Availability affects all employees, and leads to many challenges in attracting and retaining new and entry-level staff and faculty in particular; these challenges may exacerbate our ability to attract under-represented faculty and their families to Bellingham.
- Hiring a University Ombudsman, a neutral third-party to lead informal conflict resolution and problem-solving efforts, available to all university employees.
- Contract with a third-party child and family care organization (e.g., Bright Horizons) to provide on-site, back-up, sick child, and elder care on a contract basis; such a benefit would assist many employees who are impacted by the child- and elder-

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<sup>30</sup> There is a broad body of research in this area. Jana L. Higdem, Jack W. Kostal, Nathan R. Kuncel, Paul R. Sackett, Winny Shen, Adam S. Beatty, Thomas Kiger. "The Role of Socioeconomic Status in SAT-Freshman Grade Relationships Across Gender and Racial Subgroups," *Educational Measurement* (2016).

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/emip.12103>, Saul Geiser. "Norm-Referenced Test and Race-Blind Admissions," Center for Studies in Higher Education (2017). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED580807.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Steven T. Syverson, Valerie W. Franks, William C. Hiss. *Defining Access: How Test-Optional Works*. Hosted electronically by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (2018).

<https://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/publications/research/defining-access-report-2018.pdf>

care crisis in Bellingham and Whatcom County—particularly women, who disproportionately have responsibility for these family issues.

- Developing an inclusive, supportive, and equitable university requires change in our surrounding communities. A Bellingham-Western Joint Commission could help advance many of the issues noted in this report.