

## Ideas to improve race relations environment at UI

Nov 2020

### Charge of the GRC committee

- How can the University and City come together to create an environment of better support and confidence for students, faculty, and staff of color, as well as for additional people who are vulnerable and/or overlooked in our university communities?
- What kind of programming can be created in the Fall to support this endeavor? What can we do that is more tangible and supporting of real change?
- Could the GRC coordinate all this by meeting with the leaders of student organizations, university leadership, and city leaders to help forge a path forward?

### FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION (*submitted for Faculty Council Review on November 17, 2020*)

- a) **Recommendation:** Election Day made an official university holiday or a no-class day. Designating Election Day as a holiday or no-class day would allow for a day of self- and collective-reflection about the state, nation, and pertinent issues of the time. Note that the NCAA announced a campaign to encourage student-athletes to take the day off on Election Day to vote; professional sports teams like the Minnesota Timberwolves and Lynx have made Election Day a company holiday; and Election Day is a paid holiday for state employees in fourteen states.
- b) **Recommendation:** Faculty encouraged to have a DEI component in their courses, with central administration providing teaching resources, materials, or support to enable them to do so.
- c) **Recommendation:** Establish one focused DEI in-teaching or theme week each Fall. During this week, lectures, discussion, and activities throughout campus should be encouraged to have a strong DEI focus.

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**FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE (*to be submitted for Faculty Council Review in 2021-22*)**

**For Central Administrators/Deans/DEOs:**

- a) All required to do a self-assessment of implicit bias using a standard online UI tool (to be determined or developed in consultation with campus content experts, including members of HR and appropriate faculty). Self- assessment to be done at least one each year.
- b) Once every five years, all required to complete a DEI training program offered by the UI DEI office on overcoming implicit bias and having difficult conversations.

**For all tenure track, clinical and adjunct faculty:**

- a) All required to do a self-assessment of implicit bias using a standard online UI tool (to be determined or developed in consultation with campus content experts, including members of HR and appropriate faculty). Self- assessment to be done at least one each year.
- b) Once every five years, all required to complete a DEI training program offered by the UI DEI office on overcoming implicit bias and having difficult conversations.

**For students:**

- a) Working with collegiate leadership and faculty, develop an optional “Race Relations Readings” course or program for students. As an example, the course might encourage students to read two books in Summer/Fall/Winter from curated list and then write a reflection piece. A list of books could be developed for each college, and options could be considered for offering the course for free, on a pass/fail basis, and for no credit (with an indication of completion noted on student transcripts).
- b) Working with collegiate leadership and faculty, develop an optional “Race Relations Film” course or program for students. As an example, the course might encourage students to watch two documentaries/movies in Summer/Fall/Winter from a curated list and then write a reflection piece. A list of films could be developed for each college, and options could be considered for offering the course for free, on a pass/fail basis, and for no credit (with an indication of completion noted on student transcripts).
- c) Students encouraged (but not required) to do at least one internship with a non-profit that works with low-income or diverse populations in the city, state, or country. Students might be required to write a reflection piece focused on DEI themes at the end of the experience. Options should be considered to provide low-income students with funding support for the duration of the internship. Three possible challenges have been noted: a) Organizations that could provide suitable internships will need to be identified and vetted by appropriate UI units in central administration and within colleges; b) Students interested in doing such internships would need to be reviewed for

motivation; c) Some match-making (of non-profits and students) may be needed to ensure a good fit and positive experience for all parties.

- d) Working with collegiate leadership and faculty, consider combining proposals a, b and c above, along with other similar activities, to create a new “Social Justice” certification program for students. Students completing the certification program would have the achievement noted on their transcript.
- e) Student organizations to be given funding to do small projects on campus or beyond to address DEI issues. Representatives of these organizations to be invited to give brief presentations about what their experience in these projects taught them about DEI themes or issues. These talks might happen during the DEI-in-teaching week noted above. Also consider developing funding avenues to help student organizations 1) expand current activities that have a DEI component, or 2) fund new projects/events with DEI objectives.
- f) All required to do a self-assessment of implicit bias using a standard online UI tool (to be determined or developed in consultation with campus content experts, including members of HR and appropriate faculty). Self- assessment to be done at least twice during each student’s time at UI: once in the first semester and once in the last semester. This approach is meant to give students two structured opportunities to reflect on DEI issues, once when they start at UI and then again when they leave, in order to allow for self-assessment as to whether their awareness about DEI issues changed during their time in school.

**UI policy change:**

- a) Review the process of reporting or responding to perceived violations of DEI policies.