Senate Committee on Student Admissions, Aid, and Affairs

Plenary Report on Systemic Racism, Inequity and Justice

Presented by Sybil Streeter, Marylou Gramm, Co-Chairs of the SAAA
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Contributors and Initiatives

- Racial Equity in Undergraduate Recruitment
  - Marc Harding, Vice Provost for Enrollment, Chief Enrollment Officer
  - Kellie Kane, Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment, Executive Director of Admissions

- Retention of Undergraduate and Graduate Students of Color
  - Joseph McCarthy, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies
  - Amanda Godley, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies

- Student Organizing and Advocacy for Racial Equity and Justice
  - Morgan Ottley, President of the Black Action Society
  - Destiny Mann, Vice-President of the Black Action Society
  - Faryaal Alam, SAAA Representative from the Graduate School of Public Health
  - Eric Macadandang, SAAA Rep and Student Government Board President
SAAA: Admissions

Undergrad & Grad Populations:

- Undergraduates 2020: (2.7% drop international)
  - 5.3%/7.8% African American or Black
  - 5.7% Hispanic or Latinx
  - 4.6% Two or More Races
  - 16.5% Minority increase
  - 13.4% African American increase

- Graduate students 2020 (20% international)
  - 55% white
  - 7% Asian
  - 5% Black
  - 5% Latinx
  - 3% two-or-more races

- Graduate students under-represented minorities
  - Increase from 8% to 14%
  - Behind peer institutions by about 5%

- Test optional
SAAA: Admissions

Undergrad Recruitment Needs:

• Strategies for forecasted 2026 drop in PA/national high school seniors. PA, expected 9% drop of Black students. Nationally, expected 8% drop in Black students.

Grad Recruitment Needs:

• Panels for undergrads interested in grad school about Pitt grad programs and Black faculty
• GRE optional to diversify student applicant pool
• Develop lists of URM students interested in grad school, e.g., McNair scholars list, to recruit or share info with prospective students
• Waiver of application fee to increase diversity and expand the applicants
• Continue to expand accelerated degree options (i.e., 4+1 programs) to increase accessibility of Master’s degrees
Undergraduate & Grads: Efforts Underway

• New Pitt Success Pell Match Program: 14.4% increase from Fall 2019 from 630 new first-year Pell recipients to 721
• Undergrad PittFund$Me
• Financial Literacy Initiatives
• Grad scholarships, fellowships and funding totaling $4.2 million per year through the Provost’s Office including Provost’s
• Development fund supporting 1 year of dissertations and Irvis Fellows (multi-year)

Undergrad & Graduate Students: Needs

• Scholarships to financially recruit, support, retain and graduate Black students.
• Permanent elimination of GPA requirement for most scholarships.
• Support and/or scholarships to support student activism.
SAAA: Undergraduate Affairs

- Undergraduate Retention: 93.5% return after first year with numbers same for students of color.
- How did we improve Retention and Persistence?
  - Pitt Pathways & Degree Planner Tool
  - Pitt Commons
  - Provost Academy
  - Student Diversity Dashboard
- Credit-bearing course about Black history, diaspora, and influence of Black culture in our society. 3 credits.
- Peoples’ Voice Committee Forum since August. Black faculty, staff, alumnae, and students at Pitt meet to address issues and hold the university accountable for demands.
- Office of Senior Vice Chancellor Engagement, (formerly) Kathy Humphrey, has been reaching out to Black students. Held a meet and greet for Black students, Black faculty, and introduced each other, played games, partook in fellowship.
- Counseling Center students of color support groups including about racial trauma.
- Black students and Pitt police policy meeting

WHAT WE NEED TO DO . . .

- Scholarships for retention of Black students
- ODI more accessible so students know where and how to report bias
- Black Pitt website
- Reduce systemic barriers in graduation policies
- Adviser certification and training
- Psycho-social academic and belonging arena
- LRDC [Learning Research and Development Center] study on mentoring programs impact
- Smooth pathways for community college students’ transition to Pitt and graduation
- Schools and units curriculum audits/changes regarding inclusivity
- Update OMET to ask about inclusivity
- Pipeline between local/regional high schools serving under-represented students and Pitt
SAAA: Graduate Affairs

**Persistence**
- Withdrawal rate 2008-2019: Under-represented minorities 12%, Non-URM 10%
- Left with Master’s: URM 4%, non-URM 7%
- Percentage of URM earn PhDs 37% (note, 47% still enrolled) vs. non-URM students earned PhDs 34%
- A&S departments are conducting climate surveys about mentoring

**Grad SERU 2019** (Student Experience in Research University Data)
- Value: Grad education was a good value: under-represented students slightly more positive than white students, but both lag behind our peers.
- Quality: under-represented students feel less positive about quality and whether they would choose the same program. We lag behind peers in these areas.
- Choose same university program again: disparity between white who say yes and under-represented students.
- Belonging: under-represented are 1% lower than white students, but we are higher than our peers.

**Grad Initiatives Underway**
- Black Doctoral Network
- Students of Color dinners
- New Ombudspersons Program re: discrimination
- School of Medicine MedFam students & faculty of color
- A&S Hot Metal Bridge Program helps under-represented students move into grad programs

**WHAT WE NEED TO DO . . .**
- Curriculum audits/changes regarding inclusivity
- Cross-school mentoring for students of color
- Help students apply for Ford Foundation Fellowships for grad students of color
- Creation of Black Action Society grad student representation at undergrad meetings
- More events for the LGBTQIA grad population
- Support reinvigorated PANAF – Graduate Pan Pitt Black Student group
Thank you to our members!

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