

Presidential Task Force for Opportunity and Equity

Aug. 19, 2021

Minutes

Attendees: Olasubomi Akintola, Chacolby Burns-Johnson, Angela Cannon, Taffye Benson Clayton, Kevin Coonrod, George Flowers, Joffery Gaymon, Norman Godwin, Dustin Johnson, Bridgett King, Kimberly Mulligan-Guy, Lastella Paradise, Sedighe Zamani Roodsari, Ebony Robinson, Jared Russell, Melody Russell, Cheryl Seals, Joellen Sefton, Bruce Smith, Giovanna Summerfield, Rett Waggoner, Alan Wilson and Jennifer Adams.

Agenda:

- **Stakeholder Groups:**
 - Dr. Joffery Gaymon asked the task force members for suggestions for stakeholder groups, such as SGA, BSU, Graduate Students, Faculty Senate, etc., to whom committee members would give regular updates.
 - More discussion and assignments of members to stakeholder groups will take place at the Sept. 2 meeting.
- **Review Auburn University - DEI Anchor page**
 - Dr. Taffye Clayton introduced Elle Arlook, a Senior Associate Director for Equity & Justice and Brendan Ward Creative Director at [APCO](#), a worldwide advisory and advocacy communications consultancy firm.
 - APCO works with Clayton's office on DEI initiatives and communication.
- **Taskforce Progress Presentation - Dr. Taffye Benson Clayton & Dr. Joffery Gaymon**
 - Discussion of progress made to date for the following subcommittees:
 - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education
 - Black Faculty Recruitment & Retention
 - Black Student Recruitment & Retention (*Undergraduate*)
 - Black Staff Recruitment & Retention
 - *Notes:*
 - *Slides from the progress presentation start on page 2*
 - *Subcommittees did not meet on Aug. 19.*

The background of the slide is a photograph of Auburn University's campus. It features a large, multi-story red brick building with a prominent clock tower and several arched windows. In the foreground, there is a brick gate with a central stone plaque that reads "AUBURN UNIVERSITY" and "ESTABLISHED 1856". The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

AUBURN

UNIVERSITY

Task Force Progress

Presidential Task Force
for Opportunity and Equity

Task Force Timeline



Subcommittee:

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Education

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Education

Goal: Promote EEO/DEI* education across the campus and provide an opportunity for students, faculty and employees to complete a common learning module. Develop strategy to ensure access to EEO/DEI resources for foundational and continuing EEO/DEI education.

Progress Tracker



Takeaway: *The Taskforce has embraced a continuous learning pathway approach to DEI education for faculty, staff, administrator, and professional employees and students at Auburn. From learning modules, to in-person learning opportunities to micro-credentials, we are making DEI education resources available to meet individual learning needs across our campus.*

**Equal employment opportunity (EEO) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)*

Implementation Steps

Not Started In Progress Complete

Procured EverFi Title IX, EEO and DEI education modules.			✓
Developed institutional strategy for EEO/DEI foundational and continuing education.			✓
Developed and launched foundational Title IX education modules for all faculty, staff, administrator and professional employees.			✓
Develop and launch foundational EEO/DEI education module for faculty, staff, administrator and professional employees.		✓	
Develop and launch foundational EEO/DEI education module for students.		✓	
Develop and launch Auburn EEO/DEI micro-credential.		✓	
Conduct climate studies to determine current strengths and opportunities to improve campus experience for faculty, staff, and students. Student study was completed in Spring 2021.		✓	

Subcommittee:
**Black Faculty Recruitment &
Retention**

Black Faculty Recruitment & Retention

Goal: Utilize diversity and EEO-informed tools to increase the presence of faculty who identify as Black/African American.

Progress Tracker



Takeaway: *The Taskforce has endorsed the implementation of evidence-based promising practices like bias education, cultivating an inclusive excellence mindset towards hiring, vigorous outreach, SEC prospective faculty talent sharing, and greater college and school accountability for progress on the recruitment and retention of a more diverse and inclusive faculty with increased representation from Black and other historically underrepresented populations.*

Implementation Steps

Not Started In Progress Complete

Leverage SEC network through the SEC Emerging Scholars Career Preparation Workshop , initiating in Fall 2021, to recruit diverse graduate students and to identify new PhDs with diverse backgrounds for postdoctoral and Assistant Professor positions at Auburn University.			✓
Develop faculty position descriptions that clearly embed the values of diversity, equity and inclusion.		✓	
Develop guidelines to encourage the hiring of faculty who will enhance the diversity of each of its units. Colleges/schools will have the ability to track the diversity of the pool of candidates at various stages for all tenure-track faculty positions.		✓	
Assure that each member of a faculty search committee receives robust and intentional education relative to implicit or unconscious biases.			✓
Establish policies and procedures that hold search committees and departments accountable and responsible for their faculty hiring policies, procedures and outcomes.		✓	
Regularly conduct equity audit of all faculty searches to determine progress and impact; ensure diversity in hiring pools overall and diverse candidates among finalists.		✓	

Subcommittee:

**Black Student Recruitment &
Retention (*Undergraduate*)**

Black Student Recruitment & Retention (*Undergraduate*)

Goal: Increase Black student enrollment, increase aid allocated to Black students, improve racial climate, improve retention and graduation rates of Black students.

Progress Tracker



Takeaway: *The Taskforce will continue to advocate for long-term commitments to support need-based aid, utilizing collaborative partnerships, and removing enrollment barriers. Auburn’s commitment of \$3.5 million (compared to \$1.1 million) in institutional aid directly impacted students with demonstrated need and increased Ever to Conquer awards by 288%. While we expect a notable increase in new Black students, it’s clear there is more work to be done. Our long-term commitment to increasing diversity within the Auburn Family will remain an ongoing work in progress.*

Implementation Steps

	Not Started	In Progress	Complete
Pilot a flexible admissions model, expanded access by guaranteed admission to Alabama's valedictorian and salutatorian and launched the Common Application.			✓
Shifted at least 10% of scholarship funds towards need/non-merit aid and shifted oversight of PLUS Scholarship to Enrollment Management to ensure strategic deployment of funds.			✓
Document and celebrate the history of diversity at Auburn. Updated campus tour script. Develop hometown news, student showcases with clear messaging on Affordability, Ability and Fit. Leverage social proof opportunities <u>Why Auburn?</u>			✓
Establish full benchmarks with SEC, SREB and top-performing institutions for Black students. Leverage partnerships with GearUp Alabama and Black Belt Community Foundation. Increase enrollment of students participating in DiCE. Track and report annually on funds allocated towards diversity scholarships		✓	
Conduct a climate survey in the spring 2021. Division of Student Affairs commissioned a vendor to administrate the survey and analyze results during summer 2021.			✓
Identify new funds to increase need-based aid. Ensure students with the greatest need can experience the full Auburn experience. Increase the number of diversity scholarship.		✓	

Subcommittee:

Black Staff Recruitment & Retention

Black Staff Recruitment & Retention

Goal: Increase the number of full-time staff who identify as Black/African American.

Progress Tracker



Takeaway: *The Taskforce has endorsed the implementation of evidence-based promising practices like search education, vigorous outreach, inclusive hiring toolkits, exit interviews, and campus cultural affinity groups toward the recruitment and retention of a more diverse and inclusive staff workforce with increased representation of Black and other historically underrepresented staff.*

Implementation Steps

Not Started In Progress Complete

Add proactive and specific language encouraging diverse applications to all staff postings at Auburn University.			✓
Deploy inclusive hiring practices and develop and inclusive hiring toolkit. Increase search committee DEI education, evaluation rubrics and search documentation.		✓	
Expand and fully support university’s Onboarding Center to connect new faculty and staff with Auburn affinity groups and include culturally specific community and university resources.		✓	
Implement exit interview surveys that captures strengths and opportunities to improve experiences for all Auburn employees.		✓	
Conduct ongoing tracking and monitoring to improve advertising and outreach sources			✓
Audit all staff postings at multiple checkpoints to ensure diverse applicant pools are achieved. Additional outreach will occur if not achieved.			✓

Additional Task Force Subcommittee

Progress and Next Steps

In addition to updates from the previous subcommittees, the following subcommittees are continuing to work towards their goals and will report out on progress in the next quarterly update.

Institute Subcommittee

- Explore the feasibility of an Institute for African American and Black Studies to serve as an empowering space to promote scholarly research and academic excellence.

Black Student Retention Subcommittee

- Fully understand the Black student experience and recommended strategies and systems Auburn can employ to improve the satisfaction of our Black undergraduate students.
- In Spring 2021, Auburn built on its previous climate study to gain a better understanding of the lived experiences of current students. In Spring 2022, Auburn University will further this effort by administering a comprehensive climate survey to faculty, staff, and students.
- Student Advocacy Center Progress
- Bias Education and Response Team (BERT) Progress

Graduate Student Subcommittee

- Seek to identify and find solutions for specific issues of equity, diversity and inclusion impacting Auburn University graduate students.