



Presidential Task Force for Opportunity *and* Equity

Nov. 18, 2021

Minutes

Attendees: Cori Akins, Michael Brown, Ron Burgess, Chacolby Burns-Johnson, Astin Cole, Kevin Coonrod, George Flowers, Joffery Gaymon, Bridgett King, Robin Jaffe, Ebony Robinson, Jared Russell, Melody Russell, Cheryl Seals, JoEllen Sefton, Bruce Smith, Alan Wilson, Jennifer Adams and Amy Weaver

- **Quarterly Taskforce Update – Dr. Joffery Gaymon**
 - Dr. Gaymon led the taskforce through a presentation of the status of each of the subcommittees.
 - See the end of the minutes for the presentation slides.
- **Diversity Statement – Gen. Burgess**
 - Gen. Burgess reported that the President’s cabinet thought the diversity statement should not have a land acknowledgment in the same statement.
 - Cori Akins stated that the communication firm’s statement is not specific and it is passive in its language.
 - Chacolby Burns-Johnson stated the task force statement says how diversity, equity and inclusion efforts will be measured and what Auburn will do.
 - Melody Russell suggested that the task force should maybe remove the land statement and use the task force statement?
 - Joffery Gaymon said she will take what was discussed at the this meeting and send around an edited version of the diversity statement.
 - Astin Cole also stated that the communication firm’s recommendation is too passive. He said it doesn’t feel like it is something he can use to feel welcomed, safe and supported at this university. Cole also added for context that the language used in the firm’s statement is already used in many syllabi. Students may not even perceive this as progress.
- **Announced the Dec. 9 meeting is cancelled**
- **Chacolby Burns-Johnson thanked everyone who participated in Black Alumni Weekend.**
 - She said the weekend was very successful.

The subcommittees did not meet on Nov. 18.

AUBURN

UNIVERSITY

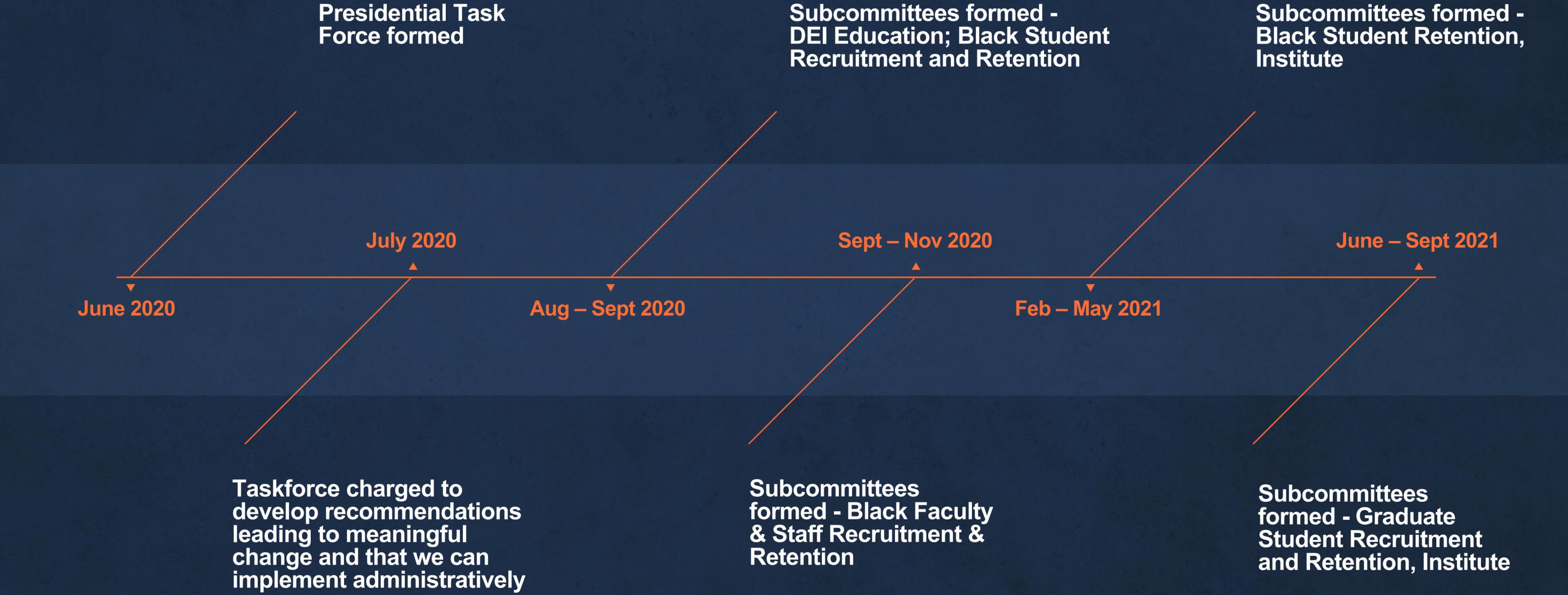
Task Force Progress

AUBURN
UNIVERSITY

ESTABLISHED 1856

Presidential Task Force
for Opportunity and Equity

Task Force Timeline



**DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION FALL
2021 HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS**



HERITAGE MONTHS
at Auburn



August

October

November

**POSITIVE IMPACT ON FALL 2021
ENROLLMENT**

- +20% increase in new Black Freshmen & Transfer
- \$3.5M awarded in need-based Aid.
- Avg. Amount Awarded \$8,000

**LAUNCHED INCLUSION
ANCHOR PAGE**

<http://www.auburn.edu/inclusion/>

- 4,480 Pageviews
- 1,064 Unique Users

**EXPANDED AUBURN FIRST &
DEVELOPED THE AUBURN
FIRST TUITION WAIVER**

- EVER AUBURN SCHOLARSHIPS**
- Match will provide more than \$9 million for deserving students.

**INCREASED MINIMUM
HIRING RATE**

- Doubles the federal minimum wage

**ENHANCED THE HAROLD
FRANKLIN DESEGREGATION
MARKER**

**NPHC LEGACY PLAZA
GROUNDBREAKING**

Diversity Statement

Diversity Statement

PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE STATEMENT

Auburn University is situated on the ancestral land of the Creek Indians, and endeavors to serve as a good-faith steward of this land by honoring and building relationships with protectors, – past, present, and future. We acknowledge the injustices and resulting inequities associated with specific histories at this institution, in this community and in this country and are committed to addressing these matters with intentional actions that create a more inclusive, just and equitable environment for all stakeholders and constituents. Diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice are important values at Auburn University.

Auburn University will proactively work to eliminate barriers facing underrepresented community members and commit to sustaining and supporting diversity in all its forms including those based on life experience, gender, sex, nationality, race, identity, ethnicity, age, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, disability, neurodiversity, and religion. Auburn will actively cultivate a community where all members feel valued, respected and can thrive personally and professionally. Auburn will invest substantial resources to increase the number of underrepresented groups in all facets of the University to include staff, students, faculty, vendors, partners and those who offer voluntary service.

Auburn will measure its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice through ongoing assessment and evaluation of activities and individual and collective actions as reflected in practices, procedures, programs, relationships, behaviors and campus culture.

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

DIVERSITY STATEMENT RECOMMENDED BY DEI COMMUNICATION FIRM

Auburn University seeks to better reflect the diversity in the world beyond our campus. Better decisions are made when alternative perspectives are heard. Accordingly, diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to our success. Diversity at Auburn University is broadly defined as encompassing the whole of human experience and includes such visible qualities as race, gender, gender expression, ethnicity, physical ability, nationality, age, religion, and less visible qualities of neurodiversity, sexual orientation, economic status, lived experience, and veteran status. These and other socially, culturally, and historically important attributes reflect the complexity of our increasingly diverse state and national population. Equity means building and adapting practices and policies that mitigate disparities in opportunity and outcomes. This requires us to be responsive to the needs of students, faculty and staff so all have the support and tools that they need to succeed. Inclusion, or creating an environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging, is essential to achieving and maintaining diversity and ensuring every member of our community has the opportunity to reach their full potential. A diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment is essential to attracting and retaining outstanding and diverse students, staff, and faculty.

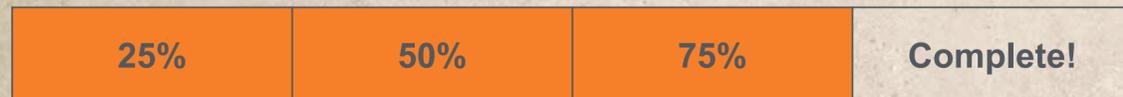
Subcommittee:

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 Office of the Provost and the Office of Inclusion and Diversity have begun 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.*

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

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 training 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.		✓	

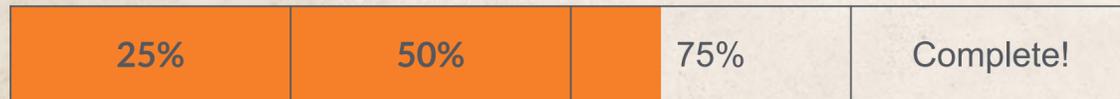
Subcommittee:

**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. 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 salutation and launched the Common Application. Year 1 Complete, Year 2, In Progress		✓	
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. Year 1 Complete, Year 2, In Progress			✓
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 Why Auburn? Year 1 Complete, Year 2, In Progress		✓	
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. Year 1 Complete, Year 2- Ever Auburn Scholarships Established Fall 2021		✓	

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

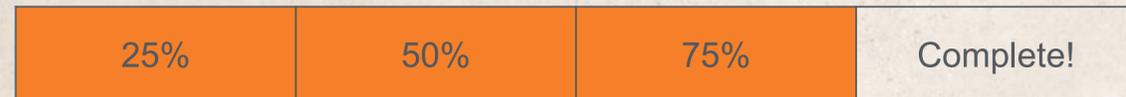
Subcommittee:

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.			✓
Auburn University establishes new minimum full-time hiring rate at \$14.50 per hour. The minimum hiring rate, which doubles the federal minimum wage of \$7.25, ensures that all eligible full-time employees will earn at or above the 2021 generally accepted living wage for Lee County. Eligible part-time employees will also see a rate increase to \$14.50.			✓

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

Subcommittee:

**Institute for African American and Black
Studies Subcommittee**

Institute for African American and Black Studies Subcommittee

Goal: 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.

Progress Tracker



Takeaway: *The institute subcommittee has received excellent feedback from faculty, staff, and administrators from the listening sessions to help better define the institute structure and expected outcomes. Listening session participants discussed what they envisioned for the research focus, challenges, and organizational structure for the institute.*

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

Implementation Steps

Not Started In Progress Complete

Phase I Listening sessions			✓
Proposal Development		✓	
Phase II Listening Sessions			✓
Development of Business Plan for Institute	✓		

Subcommittee:

Black Graduate Students

Black Graduate Students

Goal: Seeks to identify and find solutions for specific issues of equity, diversity and inclusion impacting Auburn University graduate students.

Progress Tracker



Takeaway: *The graduate student subcommittee has received excellent feedback from Black/African American graduate students from across campus. This feedback is helping us to identify issues of concern and practical steps that can be taken to address them. This includes both immediate/near-term efforts and long-term commitments that are needed.*

Implementation Steps

Not Started In Progress Complete

Conduct listening sessions with graduate students across all of Auburn University’s colleges and schools with the objective of assessing the climate for Black/African American graduate students.			✓
Develop and conduct detailed surveys to identify key issues of concern for Black/African American graduate students			✓
Compile data and conduct thematic analysis.		✓	
Refine themes using student focus groups and individual interviews with Black/African American graduate students		✓	
Develop recommendations.		✓	

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

Subcommittee:
Black Student Retention
(Undergraduate)

Black Student Retention (Undergraduate)

Goal: Understand the Black student experience and recommended strategies and systems Auburn can employ to improve the satisfaction of our Black undergraduate 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. 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

Formalize the role and importance of student advocacy. Black Student Advocacy will remain at the core. Student Advocacy to serve marginalized student populations. Black Student Advocacy will remain at the core. Division of Student Affairs has established an Office and hiring a Student Advocacy position. Student Advocacy to serve marginalized student populations.		✓	
Establish Community Standards and Communicate Polices. Develop a strategic communication plan to promote BERT. Enhance BERT website.		✓	
Perform and release a new Climate Study. Due to low response rate, larger survey to take place in Spring 2021.		✓	
Presented recommendations, “Successful Models at Auburn” to Senate Retention Committee.		✓	

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