

Anti-Racism Task Force: Academic Curriculum & Program Review Subcommittee  
Executive Summary

Prepared by: Brea M. Heidelberg, PhD

Associated Document: [Committee Recommendations](#)

**Subcommittee Co-Chairs:**

Brea M. Heidelberg  
Associate Professor & Program Director  
Entertainment & Arts Management  
Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts & Design  
[bmh29@drexel.edu](mailto:bmh29@drexel.edu)

Scott Gabriel Knowles  
Professor & Department Head  
History  
College of Liberal Arts & Sciences  
[sgk23@drexel.edu](mailto:sgk23@drexel.edu)

Rosina O. Weber  
Associate Professor  
Information Science  
College of Computing & Informatics  
[rw37@drexel.edu](mailto:rw37@drexel.edu)

**Committee Members:**

Norma Bouchard  
Dean, College of Arts & Sciences  
Distinguished Professor, Global Studies

Darin Pfeifer  
Associate Vice President  
Office of the President

Miriam Giguere  
Professor & Department Head  
Performing Arts  
Westphal College of Media Arts & Design

Michael Yudell  
Professor & Chair  
School of Public Health - Community Health &  
Prevention

Jennifer Katz-Buonincontro  
Associate Professor  
Associate Dean of Research  
School of Education

Jerusalem Tamire  
Student Employee  
Perelman Center for Jewish Life

Jennifer Kebea  
Executive Director  
Lindy Center for Civic Engagement

Anas Qatanani  
Medical Student  
College of Medicine

**Committee Charge & Goals:**

The specific charge for this committee is:

To foster equity and create opportunities for Black students to participate in higher education by adopting curricula that reflect the history and culture of Black people.

To create, implement, and review anti-racist curricular standards across the entire University.

The ultimate goal of anti-racist education is to eliminate inequalities in academic success.

The ultimate goal of anti-racist strategies is to eliminate inequalities in society at multiple levels.

1. *Personal racism* (i.e., a person's concepts about others, such as biases and stereotypes)
2. *Interpersonal racism* (i.e., when an individual acts based on personal racism intentionally or unintentionally)
3. *Institutional Racism* (i.e., when specific groups face barriers to enter or advance within an institution)
4. *Cultural Racism* (i.e., tacit norms spread within societies that elevate groups to the detriment of others)

Our recommendations are designed to guide instructors to proactively embrace anti-racism, to consider anti-racism a matter of high priority and relevance at Drexel University, and to provide necessary guidance and resources to support Drexel instructors.

### **Process:**

When the committee first met in August, we determined the aforementioned committee charge and goals. In order to guide our work and process, each committee member contributed foundational premises of our work. Each committee member also committed themselves to keeping an updated list of anti-racism training opportunities that may be appropriate for various stakeholder groups throughout the university. While discussing and refining the foundational premises, we split our committee into three subcommittees - each led by one of the co-chairs:

- Academic Program Audit: a subcommittee tasked with determining the protocol, resources, proposed template, and responsibility chart for an audit designed to provide academic units with a holistic understanding of the environment they create and how it upholds or dismantles inequitable practices
- Core Curriculum: a subcommittee tasked with determining the appropriateness of a core curriculum or common curricular elements that can begin to address the need for anti-racist education across departments and programs
- Baseline Practices & Accountability Mechanisms: a subcommittee tasked with determining baseline practices to identify and dismantle racist practices in syllabi, teaching practices, and classroom assessment practices

As each of these subcommittees completed their work, they transitioned to one of two follow-up tasks:

- Determining feedback processes for students, faculty, staff, and administrators - primarily focused on the reporting, restorative justice, and administrative processes of reporting negative race-based incidents on campus
- Requirements for new programs and courses - primarily focused on determining protocol to ensure that new courses and programs do not conform to the problematic practices of the past

### **Executive Summary:**

## *Main Themes*

The primary focus of the group, both with regard to change we hope to see and frustration with change that we have yet to see, was **accountability**. There are currently no sufficient accountability mechanisms within the university for instances of racist behavior. Systems exist to protect those who perpetrate harm or prevent learning from those that do not have ill intent, but have caused harm. In order to begin addressing this issue, the committee developed the following recommendations: a process for reporting and addressing complaints of racist behavior that exists outside of OED (right now); DEI requirements in the review processes for all faculty, staff, and administrators (right now); transforming the PAR process into an equity audit - which will help programs and departments better identify problem areas and develop plans of action to address those areas (soon).

**Exploitation of labor.** While not completely race-based, Drexel's penchant for exploiting the labor of its faculty, staff, and students was a theme that continued to plague conversations. In order to begin addressing that issue, the committee developed the following recommendations: a university wide pay equity audit (right now); reimagining of the course credit structure and payment structure for faculty (right now); compensation structure for service associated with anti-racism work (right now); compensation for the expertise of faculty who have been doing this work in their research, classrooms, and in the community (right now).

**Pedagogical concerns** underpinned all of our work. There is a need for significant training that addresses the various levels of anti-racist pedagogy knowledge and expertise among faculty and staff in student-centered positions. While training for all staff and administrators is strongly encouraged, this committee focused its recommendations on tasks associated or closely related to the classroom experience. To address the need for anti-racism work throughout our programs and curricula, the committee developed the following recommendations - all of which should be implemented immediately: both university-wide and college/department/industry-specific anti-racism training; the addition of DEI related requirements to accompany math, science, and english general education requirements; the addition of a Drexel Student Learning Priority focused on anti-racism and cultural competence; the inclusion of DEI work across administrative structures within the university (Dean's Offices, Faculty Senate, Promotion & Tenure committees, and hiring committees among others); ongoing anti-racism pedagogy training; the revitalization of ethnic studies programs and the resources for them to be successful, not tokenized.

**The people in the room** making decisions about processes, resource allocation, communication and engagement strategies need to better reflect the students we serve and the general population. Upper-level administration and tenure-track faculty are two areas that need significant improvement with regard to DEI, but especially representation. Overarching goals to increase underrepresented minority representation likely overlap with the work and goals of other subcommittees. This committee wishes to echo that work and advocate for meaningful support that will allow those who are recruited or promoted as a result of these initiatives to thrive. This includes training and accountability mechanisms for those with the positional power to hire and assess the individuals in senior-level administrative roles - an immediate need within the university.