

EMPLOYEE ACCESS, SUCCESS & EQUITY (EASE) RECOMMENDATIONS

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Recommendation: Trauma Informed Care practices at PSU through an equity lens

Overview

This proposal focuses on elevating BIPOC voices and experiences on campus, with the knowledge that prioritizing the most marginalized employees on campus will benefit all marginalized employee groups in their experience at PSU.

A resource/training that recognizes that individuals have a background, have a history of trauma and acknowledge how trauma impacts an individual's life (e.g. racism, discrimination, microaggressions, systemic oppression), and to understand the potential paths for recovery. In addition to integrating trauma sensitivity, this initiative will promote opportunities for development of continuing-resilience (restorative/re-center healing and empowerment to BIPOC).

This taskforce would like to use the trauma informed care approach and practice to promote organizational culture change and prevent triggering and re-traumatizing individuals:

- Develop a common language about trauma informed care (e.g. widen understanding of what trauma is and different types of trauma)
- Feel knowledgeable to be able to apply trauma informed care (recognizing trauma)
- Reflect on the impact caused and/or witnessed individually, structural or systematically (reviewing and integrating trauma informed care into PSU policies and procedures)

*This is a starting point to train and make PSU more aware of trauma informed care practices by adding Trauma Informed Care resources to GDI's intentional work/workshop such as the GDI anti-bias training. As well as, working closely and collaborating with Trauma Informed Oregon (program housed at SSW/PSU). This is not a new office at PSU nor is it a program that stores all the resources (from EAP and SHAC). Sidenote: Yes, this taskforce strives to have all available resources in one location.

Motivating Rationale, Conditions And Concerns

*Trigger warning:

As justice and equity demonstrations (Black Lives Matter movement) called for police reforms and an end to systemic racism, the truth of systemic oppression appeared -the violence unfolded in the U.S. Capitol and witnessed an attack on America's democracy. These recent events may be traumatic and/or a form of trauma (experiencing or witnessing violence in the community). The toll on society in death and illness is more than the numbers can say and now, with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic/wildfires & snow-storms in Oregon only adds to this crisis. Unfortunately, those mostly impacted are the marginalized individuals. (Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#))

Research (relationship between trauma symptoms and [race-based traumatic stress](#)) demonstrates that trauma has immediate and lasting effects. Trauma may manifest itself in many ways from psychological to emotional and physical, and unaddressed trauma leads to employee burnout, turnover and stress. (e.g researchers have connected racism to trauma and how racism can lead to symptoms like those experienced with PTSD (physical danger and pathology).

Other Resources:

- [Does racism make us sick? Amid a national reckoning, the question gains new importance](#)
- [Racism at My job literally gave me PTSD](#)
- research on the implications of racism in higher education (Video:Kenjus Watson/<https://vimeo.com/469867415> and <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7sq9t3pw>)

Many BIPoC colleagues have been experiencing secondary traumatic stress (emotional detachment and exhaustion, toxic stress, burnout, fatigue) that may have contributed to some BIPoC staff/faculty turnover. While there are many factors that can contribute to stress, staff/faculty and student leaders from underrepresented groups experience cultural taxation and heavy workloads. For example, If there is only one person that may represent that group in the department, students that may feel like they can relate/gravitate to similar race/ethnicity and tend to seek them out. BIPoc employees may feel and take on the extra responsibility because they understand that no one else may understand or help that student.

The turnover of employees can create a negative feedback loop that intensifies similar feelings in the remaining BIPoC employees. Therefore, this taskforce would like to prevent secondary traumatic stress and avoid/reduce re-traumatization in all levels (individuals, and system/organizations) and promote healing for BIPoC to increase retention and workforce satisfaction.

- Would like employees to feel empowered, valued and cared for
- Would like employees to feel respected and to be kind to oneself/ attitude of cultural humility

Primary Activities, Efforts Or Strategies Anticipated

With a budget of \$25,000 and a three year timeframe

Part 1:

The potential initial budget will be the bridge to implement and collaborate with Trauma Informed Oregon and other departments that are providing TIC trainings (such as SHAC-Mental Health Promotion that create customized training focused on the mental health needs of students, staff, and faculty within their program)

- this will develop trauma-informed cross-sector collaboration and provide support

Trauma Informed Oregon provides free online self-directed training modules, tools to guide implementation efforts, and is located in Portland State University. This can be easily implemented into GDI website and encourages all PSU personnel to take the training modules. (Ex: Such as how the anti-bias training for any one participating in a hiring committee was implemented at PSU and/or add the training to the new hire orientation.)

- this will raise awareness and develop common terminology
- funds would be allocated to the department implementing the free training modules (the administrative cost, communication cost, and consultant fee)

Part 2: (Needs more collaborative communication/discussions)

As this would be an ongoing-training with a reparations/healing justice component for BIPoC employees, funding for personnel will be needed to research, support, and manage the training. As well as administrative support to develop positions for this workforce (a leader to generate revenue streams, researcher, technical and admin support).

The healing justice framework created by Cara Page and the Kindred Healing Justice Collective -- believes in a reparations framework where BIPoC and historically oppressed people should not have to pay for their healing from oppression, mostly when systemic racism created the health and wealth gap making healing practices inaccessible to BIPoC.

Primary Objectives or Goals

- Provide Trauma-informed training to managers/faculty/staff and students
 - Raise awareness of how trauma affects us and to prevent secondary traumatic stress
 - Share an understanding of how trauma impacts learning (and students)
- Generate trauma-informed interactions and dispute-resolution
 - Offering opportunities for staff/faculty to explore their own trauma histories
 - Elevate inclusiveness and mitigate white supremacy culture
 - Normalize and validate feelings which come from trauma and lived experiences
- Provide support to BIPOC and BIPOC communities
 - Encouraging and incentivizing healing resources (whatever that looks like to the BIPOC)
 - Example: Meditation, yoga, recovery day, workshops, preventive mental health programs

Resources Likely Needed To Undertake This Work

- Full and steady commitment from leadership and administration
- Integrate/add the free Introduction to Trauma Informed Care (TIC) online Training Modules from Trauma Informed Oregon into the PSU-GDI's intentional work webpage
- Hiring a trauma-informed workforce (personnel mentioned above)
 - Leading and communicating about the transformation process
 - Overseeing the change process
 - Full representation of each stakeholder
 - Organizing and creating strategies for implementation and reviewing policies and procedures
 - Identifying appropriate metrics, best practices

- Connecting the professionals on campus who have the expertise to help support the trauma informed care initiative and longevity
 - (Psychology, School of Social Work, School of Public Health, Conflict Resolution, PSU-Regional Research Institution housed in the School of Social Work runs the Trauma Informed Oregon program)
 - Mandy Davis, director of Trauma Informed Oregon, a program primarily funded by the Oregon Health Authority, to advance trauma informed care throughout organizations
 - Tori Lopez works at CCF/SSW and is certified as a trauma informed trainer and a justice healer consultant)
 - Amy Ruff, Mental Health Promotion Specialist/SHAC, create customized training focused on the mental health needs (such as trauma informed care)
- Train employees as trainers and campus partners
 - Create PD for a trauma informed trainer
 - Compensation analysis and reporting structure for this/these duties/individuals
 - Initial employee trainings about trauma informed communication styles and dispute resolution
 - Hire a consultant: (EX: Ray Shellmire is a therapist and trauma-informed strategic planner)
 - Hire an organization:
<https://www.aacu.org/trht-institute-rx-racial-healing-circles>
- Continued supervisor training about trauma informed management practices and dispute resolution
- Funding - to continuously train employees, hire consultants, make modifications

Suggested Home Base For This Initiative

There were several discussions about the initiative to be managed by HR, and/or, GDI, or a representative from both offices. As well as, partnering and/or having a representative from the Trauma Informed Oregon organization.

Recommendation: Targeted Talent Development and Mentorship Program/Initiative

Overview

This proposal focuses on elevating BIPOC voices and experiences on campus, with the knowledge that prioritizing the most marginalized employees on campus will benefit all marginalized employee groups in their experience at PSU.

Utilize an equity lens to assess and make recommended changes regarding current policies, practices, and institutional barriers specifically related to professional development; including but not limited to 'direct appointments', hiring practices, lateral transfers, and access to advancement for BIPOC employees and prospective employees.

- Promotional opportunities should be developed for areas on campus where few advancement opportunities exist for BIPOC staff (e.g. Cultural Centers).
- Track and share information on who gets hired, promoted, achieves tenure and advancement opportunities internally specifically BIPOC staff, faculty and leaders; use equity lens to examine and use the data to improve these processes for BIPOC faculty and staff
- Expansions to direct appointments should be made to include an openness to lateral appointments or leadership transfers.
- A goal with this proposal is to support retention of BIPOC employees and lay a foundation for addressing pay inequities for BIPOC staff across campus.

We also propose a structured mentorship program to support retention and professional advancement for BIPOC employees at PSU.

- It is integral that BIPOC employees who want to serve as mentors be compensated for this work through stipends and/or workload reduction based on the employee's choice.
- An example of how the resources that would flow through such a professional employee mentorship program could be modeled after how the Multicultural Retention Services supports students at PSU.
- Strengthen connections and community across campus units, especially for new employees

- Identify barriers for the University to address to improve employee experience at PSU
- Develop a space where BIPOC employees can identify their needs and have them met.

Motivating Rationale, Conditions And Concerns

During the Equity Summit and our daily work, we heard anecdotal feedback that many BIPOC staff and faculty have left the University because the promotional process at PSU is inequitable and problematic. Lack of promotion at PSU often means pay stagnation. Furthermore, the feedback we heard highlighted that many BIPOC staff on campus are in lower-paid positions in which they do not have a promotional pathway. Other evidence points to a low number of BIPOC faculty, and continued departure of BIPOC faculty across campus. Many of these departures have happened in the School of Gender, Race, and Nations - which has been historically underfunded. An example of the conflicting messaging regarding values is that PSU continually publicly celebrates Black Studies as an iconic achievement yet after 35 years of existence it continues to be underfunded, sending a clear message of being undervalued to students, staff and faculty.

Feedback also highlights a theme that many BIPOC employees are not being compensated or recognized for important equity work that they contribute to outside of their role. Especially given current workload and stress related to COVID-19, this issue continues to show up across campus. There is concern that BIPOC employees will continue to leave due to these circumstances. A lack of BIPOC faculty and staff continues to fuel white supremacy culture, which creates long-term negative impacts and harms BIPOC employees and students.

As an example, direct appointments as they exist now are insular and lack transparency in who gets directly appointed to open positions and interim/temporary positions. The appointments are not targeted toward those who have the ability to elevate the campus in issues salient to historically marginalized groups. Insiders move up and the rest are left feeling ignored and disgruntled with little or no opportunity for advancement. Access to positions in other areas on campus are also often communicated inconsistently across campus.

Equitable policies and practices and mentorship are useful resources for employees to build community and grow into new roles. Often, these opportunities are not guaranteed to all employees, which disproportionately affects BIPOC staff.

This initiative reflects and uplifts PSU's stated value that "We promote access, inclusion and equity as pillars of excellence."

Primary Activities, Efforts Or Strategies Anticipated

- Development of promotional pathways where there are a high number of BIPOC employees
 - Development of new promotional pathways
 - Expanding PSU's current process for managers to "direct appoint" targeted talent to existing positions
 - Open up ability to promote outside of designated promotional pathways (lateral promotion).
 - Borrow from PCC's openness to lateral and/or leadership transfers
 - Develop an equitable process with specific criteria and consistency in implementation/use
 - Consider cross-training opportunities to support lateral transfers
- Development of mentorship strategies to support all BIPOC employees
- Have BIPOC voices drive the development, creation, and assessment of policies and practices
- Provide guidance and support to hiring committees when posting positions about how to attract a diverse applicant pool. Guidance could include: word choices in advertisements, design of job descriptions, places to post the position, make up of search committees, training provided to departmental managers, interview process training, etc.
 - Position descriptions should include equity work as a part of hiring practices for all leadership positions (all people supervising and hiring - including management, PI's, Directors, Department Chairs, and Administration)
 - Expand performance guidelines that Faculty Senate, Unions, OAA, and HR defines as important and necessary. HR to include cultural and linguistic fluency, lived experience in under-represented / targeted communities as a value-added skill set (not just academic degrees). This may mean a

look/revision at Rank definitions and old OARs that determined position descriptions.

- Tie tenure and promotional advancements to anti-racist work by noting service in CVs, within reference letters, HR annual review documents, etc.
- Developing 'stay interview' practices focused on retention and support of BIPOC
- Assess and revamp exit interview policies and practices with a specific lens to BIPOC issues

This requires an institutional commitment, collaboration between multiple groups on campus (Faculty Senate, OAA, HR, GDI, unions, etc) to address the inequity through a review of [PSU's current employee life cycle model](#) and identify areas of improvement. Promotional pathways, direct appointments, and mentorship/professional development across PSU are skewed away from the majority of BIPOC staff - especially in areas where there is a high number of BIPOC employees. The current strategy at PSU does not highlight or intentionally support BIPOC employees, and as a result BIPOC staff are disproportionately disserved at this time and have limited access to promotional opportunities, pay increases, and equitable compensation for their work.

Primary Goals or Objectives

- New opportunities and supports for BIPOC employees to be promoted
- Managers to be intentional and elevate BIPOC employees
- Hold employees accountable for doing anti-racist work
- Encourage BIPOC talent to stay with PSU, experience another leadership role (even if it is temporary) while offering job security.
- Prioritize the advancement of BIPOC employees because the current systems do not
- Honor and elevate the voices and work of BIPOC employees
- Better learning outcomes for our students as our campus becomes a more communicative and supportive network
- Developing a genuinely "good place to be" for BIPOC employees and students
- Outcomes

- Higher retention of BIPOC employees
 - Better for our employees and our students
 - Less turnover benefits University stability
- More advancement opportunities for BIPOC employees
- Increased recruitment, hiring, and enrollment of BIPOC community members

Resources Likely Needed To Undertake This Work

- Research and Development of professional mentorship initiative
 - Mentors
 - employees who want to serve as mentors are compensated for this work through stipends and/or workload reduction based on the employee's choice and the departments needs
- Audit of existing promotional pathways to identify gaps for BIPOC employees
- Development of a listserv or intranet to ping/communicate internally when job announcements are posted in an effort to recruit/retain/promote internally
 - Talent Management System- software system that automates all aspects of employee lifecycle including career development and performance.
- Any current EASE taskforce members to continue is expected to partner with RRDS (Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Staff Subcommittee)-DAC members
- Recruitment, retention, and compensation philosophy should be grounded in racial equity practices
- Development of lateral pathway promotion options
- Dean and Departments - pay attention the allocation of workload and celebrate service/ work/ student engagement of BIPOC staff and faculty as metrics for advancement/ promotion
- Engagement of HR/OAA/Faculty Senate and Unions for noting important anti-racist work as metric for advancement

- Performance reviews, Promotion, and Tenure reviews can support BIPOC advancement
- Potential development of new positions over time
- Training or Process Document development for managers once program is developed
- Develop ongoing feedback process with BIPOC employees regarding this initiative
- Union and Management collaborating on this initiative

Suggested Home Base For This Initiative

These guidelines should be integrated into our hiring and retention practices and policy, and can be primarily housed in HR, but requires intentional collaboration with units across campus including GDI/OEC, Faculty Senate, OAA, and unions

Additional Information

Potential follow-up info:

- Laura A. Belmonte, PhD, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and Professor of History, Virginia Tech, belmonte@vt.edu
- OSU search Advocate Program - <https://searchadvocate.oregonstate.edu/>