



# TASK FORCE ON RACE AND EQUITY

## Final Report

11/1/2020

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# Executive Summary

The SUNY College of Optometry has taken steadfast action to address the racial inequalities and disparities that impact communities of color, including in optometric education and eyecare, by establishing the Presidential Task Force on Race and Equity (TFRE). The charge of the task force was to 1) review the College's current efforts to advance and enhance diversity and inclusion, and evaluate their impact and effectiveness; 2) undertake a broad community conversation on race, ethnicity, and bias; and 3) for those areas requiring improvement, develop action-based short- and long-term recommendations that will result in sustainable and measurable outcomes.

The taskforce (TF), comprised of a diverse 12-member team of faculty, students, and staff, took this charge to heart and worked diligently since its inception to meet its goals. The group met weekly to set processes, discuss ideas, recommendations and to ensure we were on track and on schedule. The task force was divided into 4 subcommittees, each conducting their own meetings to assess the College's efforts in specific areas, interviewed stakeholders, and brainstormed recommendations. The recommendations of each subcommittee were discussed by all members of the task force, culminating in an interim report. Subsequently, the interim report was shared with the College's president and community at large for additional comment and input. The TFRE incorporated community input into its recommendations, resulting in this final report (see Appendix A for detailed process used by the TF).

The TF is confident that this final report, encompassing five parts, one for each subcommittee and a fifth part with broad organizational scope, offers the SUNY community history and context, recommendations, actions, and measures that will serve as a sustainable framework for the College to achieve its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

Specific recommendations endorsed by the TF include: continue to work toward increasing racial representation among students, residents, and faculty; create an organizational culture of inclusion and belonging among students, staff, faculty, and patients; facilitate student success and retention through targeted support services; expand opportunities for mentorship of students of color; expand academic and co-curricular programs covering issues of race, health care disparities, and cross-cultural communication; and promote cultural competence in patient care and teaching by developing the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that support caring for people across different cultures and world views.

The TF prioritized several recommendations that should be implemented immediately. In fact, the TF has taken concrete steps toward the implementation of key recommended projects, namely: 1) creation of a community-wide newsletter; 2) creation and implementation of a Community Book project with its inaugural event scheduled for November 19; 3) sourcing of a diversity specialist to deliver anti-racism training; and 4) creation of a job description for the proposed Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion position.

The recommendations presented here will only have their intended impact if a structure of accountability is set in place, appropriate human and financial resources are allocated towards the recommendations, and there is community-wide accountability towards specific recommendations and DEI goals.

We recognize that DEI work is never truly done, but we strive to take positive steps forward every day. We look forward to working with the College community to achieve a dynamic, vibrant community that is diverse, that celebrates differences, and that produces equitable health and educational outcomes for all involved.

Task Force on Race and Equity

# Task Force Members

Students	Staff	Faculty	Administrators
Ridwan Carim-Sanni	Guerda Fils, MS, PHR	Diane Calderon-Villanueva, OD, FAAO	Gui Albieri, PhD (Chair)
Amanda Fitzpatrick	Rochelle Kale	Shelby Leach, OD	Quy Nguyen, OD
Stephen Murray II	Susan Lee-Shareef	Steven Schwartz, OD, PhD	
Cori Robinson	Betsy Torres	Delaram Shirazian, OD, FAAO	

## Task Force Sub-Committees

1. Community Engagement (Faculty/Staff/Administration/Students): to analyze and recommend strategies related to community-building, professional development (diversity equity inclusion (DEI) training) opportunities, and diversity of faculty. Members: Shelby Leach, OD, FAAO (Chair), Guerda Fils, MS, PHR, Cori Robinson, Betsy Torres.
2. Student Diversity & Inclusion: to analyze and recommend strategies and initiatives to improve recruitment and retention of underrepresented minority (URM) students, orientation, faculty/student mentorship, and co-curricular activities. Members: Amanda Fitzpatrick (Chair); Quy H. Nguyen, OD; Diane Calderon-Villanueva, OD, FAAO; Stephen Murray II; Cori Robinson
3. Academic & Degree Programs (Curriculum): to analyze and recommend strategies that address issues of race, social determinants of health, health disparities, and communications in the curriculum; diversity of residency programs. Members: Betsy Torres (Chair); Diane Calderon, OD, FAAO; Cori Robinson; Steven Schwartz, OD, PhD.
4. Patient Care: to analyze current practices in patient communication; race, ethnicity, and cultural competency; healthcare disparities and population health. Members: Delaram Shirazian, OD, FAAO (Chair); Ridwan Carim-Sanni; Rochelle Kale; Susan Lee-Shareef.

## Key Findings

- The College has made significant strides toward increasing diversity of URM students; however, feelings of inclusion and belonging still require special attention
- Representation of URM faculty remains low and needs to be addressed
- Discussion of social determinants of health and culturally competent care, although addressed in the curriculum, is fragmented and not consistently measured
- Low number of Black and URM alumni limit opportunities for mentorship and representation on on-campus events
- Residency education, a critical step toward careers in academic optometry, lacks diversity of participants and needs further attention
- Community members often don't feel comfortable reporting incidents of bias and racism
- The UEC patient base is very diverse and faculty, residents and interns must be able to offer patient-centered, compassionate, culturally-sensitive patient care that is free of discrimination and bias

## Prioritized Recommendations

- Creation of and hiring for Director of Diversity and Inclusion position
- Foster enhanced cultural competency/awareness as an organization by instituting mandatory diversity training
- Increase representation of URM faculty
- Further increase URM student recruitment by instituting Summer Enrichment Program and URM-focused recruitment initiatives
- Facilitate student success and retention through targeted student support services (including academic preparation, mental health, etc.)
- Conduct a third-party evaluation of UEC operations to assess our strengths and weaknesses in providing patient-centered care
- Ensure that social determinants of health and culturally competent care are properly covered in the curriculum
- Provide continuing resources for DEI education (e.g., create a Race and Equity Monthly Newsletter for the internal community that promotes Black and other URM groups, leadership, culture and business).
- Conduct periodic climate survey of the entire community
- Allocate yearly budget to support the College's DEI goals
- Create an internal Diversity Council to foster accountability and ensure implementation of the recommendations in this report

## Short-term Actions

- Incorporate yearly mandatory anti-racism training for staff, faculty, and students
- Creation of the BLAACK Initiative: Because Learning Achieves Appreciation and Community Knowledge; including events that celebrate Black culture through art and dance, ending with anti-racism training and group discussion of the common book reading [mid-November 2020]
  - o Taste of NOSA (recipes), poetry slam, dancers/performers, and movie night
    - Organize events with NOSA leadership
  - o Common reading for fall 2020: Black Man in a White Coat

# Student Diversity & Inclusion Sub-Committee Report

## Mission

The Student Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee of the Task Force on Race and Equity strives to promote and cultivate a community that is equitable, diverse, and inclusive, by examining existing initiatives and climate at the College, and proposing continued work in areas that are impactful, and new initiatives to further our mission for current and future students.

## Introduction

In the United States, the population consists of 76.3% White, 18.5% Hispanic, 13.4% Black or African American, and 5.9 % Asian<sup>1</sup>. According to ASCO, the make-up of optometry schools in 2019 were 49.2% White, 10.4% URM (Hispanics and Blacks), and 30.1% Asian<sup>2</sup>. At SUNY-OPT currently, there are 36.6% White, 46% Asian, 6.5% Hispanic, 4.4% Black, and the rest are two or more races or international students.

SUNY College of Optometry (SUNY-OPT), is aware of the national data and commits to working on its diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. It is part of a forward-thinking 64-campus college and university system that puts diversity, inclusion, and equity at the forefront of its mission. In 2015, the SUNY System made a bold goal to become: “The most inclusive State university system in the country.”<sup>3</sup> In 2016, SUNY-OPT appointed a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), and with his committee, they released the Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan (DIMP; see Appendix B). Key findings reveal that although the African American and Hispanic population in New York State is 36.4%, they are highly underrepresented in optometry school (current representation is 10.9%). While 4.4% of the African American and 6.5% of the Hispanic populations are enrolled at SUNY-OPT, only 3.6% combined are licensed New York State optometrists. The main recommendation of the DIMP is to increase recruitment of minority students to the professional Doctor of Optometry and graduate programs and provide adequate support services for them to succeed. Although a lot has been done since the implementation of the recommendations on the DIMP, clearly more still needs to be done.

## Analysis and Desired Outcomes

Our subcommittee is tasked with focusing on Student Diversity and Inclusion, which includes 4 areas that we will explore and assess: **Recruitment, Orientation, Faculty/student Mentorship, and Co-curriculum (student life/support).**

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/statistics/demographics>

<sup>2</sup> <https://optometriceducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ASCO-Student-Data-Report-2019-2020.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy. [https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc\\_id=804](https://www.suny.edu/sunypp/documents.cfm?doc_id=804)

## Recruitment SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis:

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognized need for diversity, joined SUNY System in working towards DEI goals (Assigned CDO, implemented Hackathon, published DIMP) - first OD school to start many of these initiatives, and made impactful progress</li> <li>• College has increased enrollment of CSTEP students (pipeline program specific to NYS) into professional program by 300% (when comparing 2015 enrollment levels to 2019)</li> <li>• Existing support built in to help CSTEP students gain acceptance such as OAT prep (through workshops and OAT Destroyer books, 50% Kaplan preparation course), personal statement review, OAT exam fee waivers, and mock interviews</li> <li>• SUNY Optometry enrolled most diverse class in history of College, in class of 2024 (See appendix B)</li> </ul>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of Black and Hispanic OD students, especially, are still very much lower than country demographic</li> <li>• Initiatives like CSTEP are limited by scope (limited to only NYS college students, as program funded by NYS tax dollars)</li> <li>• Lack of dormitories on campus creates a barrier of finding housing for any on-campus program for students from out of the NYC-area</li> <li>• Admissions has not had success getting into and creating partnerships to market and recruit from HBCU's</li> <li>• There is unequal representation across STEM professions, with some wielding more resources than others, such as medicine</li> <li>• Admissions has difficulty measuring real impact of Vision Board Initiative<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some existing infrastructures (i.e., CSTEP, Vision Board Initiative) already in place at SUNY that can be built on</li> <li>• Currently, there are no ¾ agreements with HBCU's</li> <li>• Office of Admissions have plan to recruit from 6 HBCU's this year (Howard University, Spelman College, Xavier University (LA), Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Lincoln University (PA))</li> </ul>	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding and human capital very limited in a public-school system</li> <li>• Funding for programs are limited and often discontinued by sponsors</li> <li>• Difficult to involve other parties, like NOSA, to help recruiting on the road, due to inflexible and busy clinical and didactic schedules</li> <li>• Other health fields (like Medicine, PA, Dental, Pharmacy) have more resources and does compete with Optometry for</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> SUNY Optometry's Vision Board aims to expose and prepare all students to the profession of optometry and the College. The Vision Board is made up of several social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WordPress. Each of the boards involve key members of the campus community (current students, faculty, admissions reps, Student Affairs professionals, alumni, etc.) to provide helpful information toward academic and professional success, meeting undergraduate and prospective students where they are in their health professions journeys. The Vision Board is guided by the principle that all students are capable to succeed and *actualeyes* their goals by seeing and believing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to COVID-19 pandemic, many recruitment efforts will be virtual allowing Admissions to "visit" HBCU's/minority serving orgs, virtually this year, without the prohibitive costs associated</li> <li>• New CSTEP grant proposal is broader in scope, with proposal to hire additional team member, to increase reach and impact of pipeline</li> <li>• PRODIG proposal has started the work of increasing URM in academic roles, particularly for: 1) increasing URM and WSTEM in tenure-track and Vision Science faculty positions, 2) increasing URM and WSTEM enrollment in graduate programs in Vision Science, 3) increasing URM in academic optometry. This effort could include a strategy to recruit URM into the OD/MS and T-35 programs</li> </ul>	<p>high-quality pool of prospective health students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased competition amongst schools and colleges of optometry; dwindling applicant pool</li> <li>• There are many players doing this work, often times in isolation and fragmented. For example, there is the effort from Admissions at each school, NOSA/NOA as a private, non-profit, national entity, BEP as a grassroots effort, ASCO representing the schools and colleges, as well as various other pipeline programs, for example, CSTEP at SUNY</li> </ul>
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**Orientation SWOT Analysis:**

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some existing programs such as Valuing Differences (Black alumni comes in to talk to all first-year students about appreciating differences)</li> <li>• Admissions intentionally has a racially diverse panel for orientation segments like Success at SUNY</li> <li>• SUNY Eye Network, with over 700 alumni indicating their willingness to volunteer, is available for students to access a deep pool of relationship capital and build a strong support network of professionals who can assist them with professional, academic and social development. have significantly smaller professional networks available to them and it is critical that they are aware of and taught to utilize the alumni community for support</li> </ul>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historically, URM enrollment at SUNY has been lower than that of their make-up nationally. This leads to a lower number of Black OD's (and to a lesser extent, Hispanic ODs) to invite from in alumni pool</li> <li>• Alumni Affairs has not traditionally categorized alumni by race or ethnicity, so metrics for these are missing</li> <li>• Currently, no official SUNY-specific Black Alumni network</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities:</p>	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orientation for class of 2024 occurred during the process of writing this report</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with NOSA to form more creative ways to incorporate diversity awareness segments at future orientations</li> <li>• Alumni Affairs has already begun the process of identifying an estimated 70 Black ODs in alumni network through self-reported data and extensive research – this is an opportunity to engage Alumni Affairs more to invite future speakers/ODs of color</li> <li>• SUNY Eye Network, with over 700 alumni indicating their willingness to volunteer, is available for students to access a deep pool of relationship capital and build a strong support network of professionals who can assist them with professional, academic and social development</li> </ul>	<p>so it is difficult to incorporate diversity segments for this current cycle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We were not able to get Black alumni to speak at the 2024 Orientation</li> <li>• Very few URM NOSA members so many students may feel overwhelmed by so much involvement in orientation</li> </ul>
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**Faculty/Student Mentorship SWOT Analysis:**

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already have existing infrastructure in Family of Mentors program</li> <li>• Opportunities to work with Alumni Dept</li> <li>• NOA/NOSA will have two current NOSA members mentor students from two HBCU’s</li> </ul>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family of Mentors program is not specific to minority students, and only to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years</li> <li>• Family of Mentors program and the NOA do not offer mentorship to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students</li> <li>• Lack of SUNY minority faculty to serve as mentors</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a SUNY faculty/student mentorship program that includes only current in-house faculty and build it into FTE</li> <li>• NOA offers mentorship to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year NOSA students</li> <li>• NOSA can create a minority mentorship program with SUNY Black alumni as mentors to include 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students</li> </ul>	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many faculty and alumni have busy work schedules and may be unable to dedicate the time necessary to nurture mentor-mentee relationships</li> <li>• Many alumni are years out and may be out of touch with material and SUNY student life</li> <li>• Lack of pipeline for new URM faculty leaving a void of leaders and mentors “who look like me” for URM students</li> </ul>

**Co-Curriculum (Student Life/Support) SWOT Analysis:**

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already have existing infrastructure in Big Sibling program</li> <li>• Strong NOSA leadership could be leveraged for assistance</li> <li>• There have been initial efforts to support retention of URMs such as the SUNY Irises group created in 2017 to support minority students with conferences, board prep support, clinic resources, and study groups to name a few - we can build on this initial work. Also, there have already been private funding to help reinforce previous funding from SUNY System.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing program isn't specific to minority students, or Black students</li> <li>• Few URM SUNY students which would mean a single Big would have multiple Littles, especially as Black student enrollment is increasing</li> <li>• SUNY Irises funding discontinued by SUNY System in 2020 due to COVID and state budget shortfalls</li> <li>• Marion Wise, our current social worker at SUNY, is designated for patients only, not rest of community</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a question on the Big Sibling matching survey that allows URM's to select if they would like to be paired with a Big based on racial concordance</li> <li>• Opportunity to expand and deepen support for high-need and minority students through SUNY Irises</li> <li>• Partner with NOSA to form more creative ways to incorporate diversity awareness segments at future orientations and advertise NOSA events</li> <li>• Create newsletter for SUNY Optometry community that centers around diversity awareness</li> <li>• Wellness Committee had initially formed last year as a student-led Student Affairs group, and new student chapter of ProjectLETS, can offer new opportunities for SUNY community on "wellness" issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class of 2023 and prior do not have many URM students so Bigs may have to have multiple Littles</li> <li>• Possibility of offending students or exclusive wording</li> <li>• Current fiscal situation in NYS, therefore SUNY, does not allow for flexibility in hiring social workers to expand services</li> <li>• Continued silos in addressing broad support for students and student life</li> </ul>

**Overall analysis:**

In the areas of recruitment, we can see that a lot of progress has been made by the college as compared to where we were over a decade ago. For example, the class of 2009 had 0% Hispanic, and 1.3% Black. Our incoming Class of 2024 has 9.2% Hispanic and 8.2% Black. This shows that while we are diverse, and that we acknowledge the good work that has been done by the College and Student Affairs, there is a lot of work that still needs to be done to increase representation, particularly in our Hispanic and Black student populations. One area of opportunity is to create a "Summer Enrichment Program" to reach more URMs and help them level the playing field.

For orientation, we found an opportunity for the Office of Admissions to include more alumni of color at the event. Our analysis shows a low number of Black ODs (and to a lesser extent, Hispanic ODs) to pull from in our alumni network and the low number of URM in NOSA presents a challenging situation where they may feel overwhelmed. Alumni Affairs is eager to help, as they are able to explore options from their alumni network but would need all parties to coordinate the planning earlier to allow for effective recruitment of speakers.

Once students are at SUNY, there is an existing infrastructure for mentorship in the Family of Mentors Program, but program is more broadly for SUNY students, not specifically for URMs. There is also a severe lack of URMs on faculty, presenting a challenge with recruiting URMs to mentor students of color. Opportunities include leveraging NOA, as they offer mentorship to 3rd and 4th year NOSA students, presumably with a larger pool of ODs of color. Two opportunities include creating a formal Black Alumni Affinity Group, and a faculty-specific, mentorship program - this is more feasible by leveraging the strong leadership of NOSA.

In the areas of co-curriculum, first-year students are matched with an upperclassman (“Big”) through the Big Sibling program administered by the Admissions office. However, the current system does not allow for first-year students to choose upperclass URM students. Additionally, SUNY Optometry created SUNY Irises in 2018, as the first group of its kind to support URMs and high-need students that matriculate at the College – we have opportunities to build on this existing supporting structure!

## Goals and Objectives

The Student Diversity and Inclusion sub-committee can assist in the vision of the task force by assisting in the efforts geared around recruitment and retention of URM students, orientation, mentorship, and co-curricular activities. Through the use of the following goals and objectives, it is our sub-committee's hope that we can sustain a diverse student body for years to come.

## Recruitment

Goal 1. Increase recruitment of URM students, with a focus on Black and Hispanic students, to SUNY-OPT and the profession of optometry as a whole.

Objective 1. Identify HBCU’s and colleges/universities with a large Black and URM student body to do outreach to and create partnerships to put on events and market optometry to their students.

- Measures: Number of HBCU’s contacted, number of HBCU’s responded, number of HBCU’s enter into partnership with, number of HBCU’s eventually signing a formal agreement, number of HBCU students served in any capacity
- Responsible: Office of Admissions, NOA/NOSA\*

\*where NOSA is listed, this is merely giving them a chance to be at the table, should NOSA choose to participate, and by no means they have to over-exert themselves to be involved

Objective 2. Create ¾ programs with HBCUs.

- Measures: Number of HBCU ¾ programs created
- Responsible: Office of Admissions

Objective 3. Create a work-study position in which NOSA students work closely with Admissions. NOSA students help with interview days, tours, panels, virtual events, middle/high schools, and college outreach events. Overall, help streamline the work NOSA has been doing and additional work it wants to do with Admissions.

- Measure: Number of events collaborated with Admissions, number of URMs (Black and Hispanic) students served, # of interview days, tours, panels, virtual events, middle/high schools, and college outreach events
- Responsible: Office of Admissions, NOSA

Objective 4. Create a Summer Enrichment Program (SEP) which would be offered to 10-15 historically URMs as well as those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The goal of SEP would be to broaden existing opportunities for URMs and serve to improve the participants' qualifications and competitive standing for admission to SUNYCO or other optometry school programs.

- Eligible candidates would include historically URMs and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who:
  - Do not meet the criteria to apply for CSTEP and have not already participated in CSTEP in the past. (See Appendix D for CSTEP eligibility criteria.)
  - Have applied to the SUNYCO program, were not accepted and want to participate to strengthen their future application to SUNY and/or other colleges of optometry
  - Have been given contingency status of admission to the SUNYCO 4-year OD program (i.e. must complete SEP with a minimum GPA in order to be accepted to OD program)
- Housing: Local college dormitory could be sub-leased by SUNYCO for the duration of the program
- Meals: Participants would be responsible for purchasing their own meals
- Transportation: 30-day unlimited Metrocard would be provided
- Curriculum: The curriculum would follow a hybrid version of the subsets of the existing summer CSTEP program; incorporating an academic component, a clinical observation component, as well as career and admissions counseling and guidance in the form of workshops and one-on-one sessions with an admissions counselor.
- The Academic component would simulate the 1<sup>st</sup> year OD program experience at SUNYCO, including subject matters from several 1<sup>st</sup> year courses:
  - Human Bioscience
  - Gross Human Anatomy
  - Neuroanatomy
  - Ocular Anatomy, Biochemistry, Physiology
  - Integrated Optics
  - Optometric Theory/Clinical Optometry
  - Integrative Seminar/Clinical Observations
- Testing/evaluations occur on a weekly basis with questions and testing format comparable to what is typical during the normal academic year
- Mandatory 'Library Hours' with work study tutors available on site during these sessions.
- Measures:

- # SEP participants who ultimately enroll every year at either SUNYCO or another college of optometry
- GPA of enrolled students who participated in SEP
- # of participants who eventually go on to do residencies or pursue higher education degrees
- # of participants who eventually enter academia as a career (this is the end goal of PRODiG)
- Responsible:
  - Proposed position for Diversity and Inclusion, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs

Objective 6. Continue the work that was started with Vision Board Initiative as the main mechanism to do outreach earlier in the pipeline, including middle and high school students but add focus on expanding to market outside of NY, and finding mechanisms to measure impact.

- Measure: # of students that attend our programs as a result of Vision Board promotion (for events like Open House, CSTEP programs, summer camps, other Admissions programs), number of collaborations with NOA/NOSA, CSTEP, and similarly missioned organizations
- Responsible: Admissions Assistant (Savanna Ramirez)

Objective 7. Re-recommend Dine and Learn.

- Dine and Learn would serve two purposes—to expose students to the profession of optometry (and our College specifically) on one end, and for us to learn more about the experiences of URM students and their decision-making patterns in career paths on the other end. It is recommended offering one Dine and Learn in the NYC tri state area and the other in southern US where large concentrations of minority serving institutions exist. The program will be promoted to pre-health advisors, MAPS, cultural fraternities and sororities. The first Dine and Learn was proposed in 2020 but was not approved.
  - Measure: Dine and Learn implemented; # of new connections with pre-health advisors, MAPS, cultural fraternities and sororities as well as URM students
  - Responsible: Office of Admissions, proposed position for Diversity and Inclusion

## Orientation

Goal 1. Continue to ensure that incoming URM students feel supported and represented at orientation

Objective 1. Partner with NOSA and support their efforts in incorporating diversity awareness segments at future orientations

- NOSA student work study positions (objective mentioned above) would aid in implementing strategies that NOSA suggests for upcoming orientations
  - Measure: Students hired; # of NOSA students involved in future orientations
  - Responsible: Office of Admissions, NOSA

Objective 2. Continue to invite Black alumni as speakers during orientation

- Black Alumni Affinity Group (objective mentioned below) would aid in accessibility and involvement of our Black alumni in events, such as orientation.

- Measure: # of Black alumni involved in future orientations
- Responsible: Office of Admissions, Alumni Affairs

## Faculty/Student Mentorship

### Goal 1. Pair incoming and current URM with faculty and/or alumni mentors

#### Objective 1. Black Alumni Affinity Group

- Establishing a Black Alumni Affinity Group will allow a resource to future and current students, providing shadowing and mentorship opportunities. To do so, utilize the registrar, the Alumni office, and reaching out via email to capture as many people as possible. The most difficult aspect will be to get in contact with past students who are dispersed throughout the country and we may not have contact info for. Currently we are trying to reach out to the university's Alumni association to get names and contact info for students who have graduated in the last 10 years. The group would be open to all alumni, but focused on issues pertaining to Black alumni and students.
  - Measure: # of Alumni's and students that are signed up and connected.
  - Responsible: Alumni Affairs, Office of Admissions, NOSA, Registrar

#### Objective 2. Faculty Mentorship

- Connect current and incoming URM students with faculty mentors who have volunteered to provide guidance to students who have opted into the program. The mentorship in many ways can be open ended or directed by student preferences. Mostly, the mentorship can be a supplemental resource to these students to allow for a more well-rounded experience at SUNY. The mentor can also serve as a liaison to the student to address concerns they may be having at the school or with administration (i.e. prejudices, microaggressions). Pairings can be done by means of survey matches.
  - Measure: # of URM students who request for a faculty mentor each year, # of faculty mentors recruited, end of year satisfaction survey
  - Responsible: Proposed position for Diversity and Inclusion, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs

## Co-Curriculum (Student Life/Support)

### Goal 1. Continue to ensure that URM students feel supported and represented in our SUNY community

#### Objective 1. Add a question to the Big/Little survey that allows URM students to select if they would like to be paired with a Big based on racial preference

- TF propose: If you identify as an underrepresented minority (Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, Pacific Islanders, American Indians/Alaska Natives), would you like to be matched with a Big on the basis of racial concordance?
  - Measure: # of URM students matched with Big of choice

- Responsible: Office of Admissions, 1<sup>st</sup> year student representatives in charge of Big/Little pairing

Objective 2. Offer more support and visibility to NOSA, a club that caters to URM students

- The College could promote NOSA meetings/events on its official social media accounts and encourage community members (i.e students, staff, faculty and alumni) to attend events.
  - Measures: Increased # of attendees at NOSA meetings and events
  - Responsible: Student Council, NOSA

Objective 3. Prioritize and address the mental and emotional needs of our community, with a focus on students. Re-examine current procedures for reasonable accommodations and accessibility for students experiencing trauma, mental illness, disability, and neurodivergence.

- Support and promote mental health and wellness resources at our college, such as the chapter of ProjectLETS created by the Wellness Committee; offer mental health counseling through social workers
  - Collaborating with and holding SUNYOpt's chapter of ProjectLETS accountable to programming that emphasizes inclusivity, intersectionality, and accessibility
  - Lifting up diverse voices and URM students with lived experience of trauma, mental illness, disability, and neurodivergence
  - Collaborate with Stony Brook to offer on-campus assistance to students in need
- Continuously assess the wellbeing of our students
  - Quantitative Measures: 16-hour peer mentor health advocates (PMHA) training per year (with 10 or more PMHAs trained), train all faculty who serve as academic advisors to students on empathetic listening and crisis response
  - Qualitative Measures: include questions in future class surveys on mental health, wellbeing, feeling supported and understood by other peers/faculty/administration, level of awareness of resources available
  - Responsible: Wellness Committee, Student Affairs, Student Council

Objective 4. Further strengthen our efforts on the retention of URM students so that there is a continuity of support. One way is to ensure that SUNY Irises gets continued funding year after year to continue to provide resources, professional development opportunities, and academic and career support to URM and high-need students that matriculate at SUNY Optometry. In many ways, recruitment and retention go hand-in-hand. While much of the focus is on getting URM students matriculated into SUNY, it is as important to make sure that they graduate. Many of the aforementioned initiatives can assist in this matter but there may need to be additional tutoring, mentoring, resources and assistance provided.

- Measures: 90-100% URM students graduation rate for each class (5-year average of students who graduate in 4 years currently stands at around 90%), starting with the class of 2024, number of URM/high need students served, number of events implemented, number of students supported with Board prep, number of students who graduate from OD program, value of public and private funding sources, results of satisfaction surveys
- Responsible: Director of Minority Enrichment (CSTEP), Office of Student Affairs, proposed position for Diversity and Inclusion, Institutional Advancement

# Patient Care Sub-Committee Report

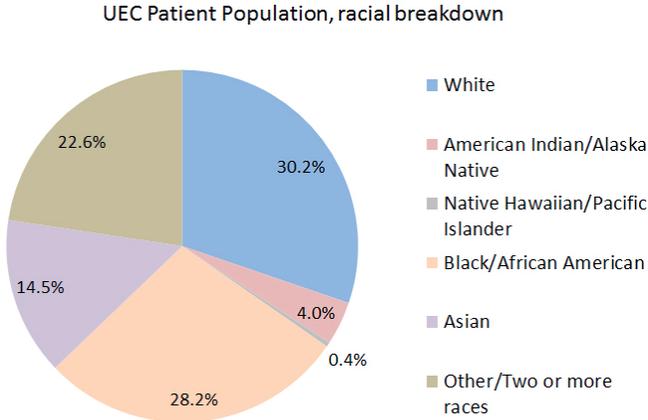
## Mission Statement

The Patient Care sub-committee of the Task Force on Race and Equity strives to cultivate patient-centered, compassionate patient care that is free of bias and discrimination and seeks to understand and treat the individual person.

## Introduction

The University Eye Center (UEC) at SUNY College of Optometry provides patient care to a diverse patient base. The racial breakdown of UEC patients is as follows: 30.2% are white; 28.2% are Black or African American; 22.6% are two or more races; and 14.5% are Asian. Outside of English, the most commonly spoken languages are Spanish, Mandarin, American Sign Language, Russian, and Cantonese. There are staff, student interns, residents, and faculty members engaged in patient care at the UEC.

<http://viewbook.sunyopt.edu/doctor-of-optometry-program/uec/>



\*33.9% of all patients identify as Hispanic/Latino

\*Data has been collected by the Clinical Vision Research Center and may vary from the general University Eye Center patients

## Analysis and Desired Outcomes

The UEC does currently have some measures in place to address racial disparities as they relate to patient care. The UEC Policy and Procedure Manual states the following:

- All UEC personnel have an obligation to treat patients and each other without discriminations and with respect, dignity and professionalism without regard to race, age, gender, religion, national origin, medical condition, physical or mental disability, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, legal status, ability to speak English or status as a covered veteran (p.69)
- The UEC does not tolerate harassment or discrimination by anyone based on the diverse characteristics or cultural backgrounds of those who work for the UEC (p.161)

UEC staff are notified of this policy and a copy is located on each clinic floor with the clinic manager. All new employees are given the New Employee Handbook, “UEC in Sight”, on the first workday. The UEC also conducts vision screenings to the local schools and community, with an emphasis on high-need areas. Cyacom phone language interpretation services are also in use to ensure providers can communicate with patients who do not speak their primary language.

The clinical optometry curriculum does address patient-centered care in the first year Clinical Optometry I & II course. There is a lecture that introduces culturally competent care, patient-doctor communication, and social determinants of healthcare.

There are areas that need further consideration and improvement with the members of the UEC involved in patient care:

- Providers and interns receive no training on social determinants of healthcare, culturally sensitive care, and patient communication with patients from diverse backgrounds. This is particularly important, as our UEC patient population is quite diverse.
- Social determinants of healthcare, culturally sensitive training, and patient communication with diverse backgrounds is sparsely taught in the curriculum, therefore students are not fully aware of these.
- Staff, faculty, and students do not receive anti-racism training, including analyzing their own implicit biases.
- The UEC staff does not receive further training or emphasis on the anti-discrimination policy.
- The UEC may not always have accurate data regarding patient demographics, as the way it is asked may not always yield accurate results
- The UEC does not have patient education materials in various languages to accommodate patients who do not speak English.
- The vision screenings by the UEC do not have measurable ways of ensuring we are serving the high-need schools and communities. Currently, we have partnerships with 35 schools, 5 colleges, and a few corporate sites. They are selected based on distance and feasibility, with many sites reaching out to us by word of mouth.

There are potential barriers to addressing these issues, including financial considerations for training programs and a third-party evaluator. Time in the curriculum is also challenging to ensure that all necessary skills are being taught in the students' education. Vision screenings and outreach must also be within 40-minute travel distance from SUNY to accommodate student schedules.

## Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1: Teach students about social determinants of healthcare, cultural sensitivity, and patient communication prior to delivering patient care**

Objective: Incorporate these subjects into the curriculum

- To be addressed with the Academic sub-committee
- Include patient-centered communication into curriculum
  - Measure: # of learning objectives added to course relevant to social determinants of healthcare, culture sensitivity, and patient communication
  - Responsible: Clinical Optometry course instructor(s)

**Goal 2: Create community culture of anti-racism within UEC patient care**

Objective: Incorporate yearly anti-racism mandatory anti-racism training for staff, faculty, and students

- To be addressed with the Community sub-committee
- Educate UEC staff yearly on anti-discrimination policy, can be done efficiently during anti-racism training
  - Measure: # of staff, faculty, and students completing anti-racism training
  - Responsible: Task Force, Director of Clinical Operations

### Goal 3: Gather data in a nonjudgmental way from patients to accurately assess our patient population

Objective: Re-word UEC patient demographics form to educate patients on reasoning for collecting data on race (e.g., a simple statement on why this information is being asked).

- On the current UEC patient demographics form, there is a section box that reads, “Race (Choose 1 or more)” with the options to choose American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, and Decline to provide. There are also ethnicities to choose from including Hispanic or Latino, Not Hispanic or Latino, Decline to provide.
- The manner in which race and ethnicity are asked can be reworded so patients better understand why that information is being asked, therefore leading to obtaining more accurate demographic for our patients.
  - Measure: Appropriate changes made to demographic form; # of patients that now respond to this question rather than leaving it blank
  - Responsible: Clinical Administration

### Goal 4: Utilize resources for vision screenings for high-need schools and communities

Objective: Identify high-need schools through area income/poverty and direct resources to those areas. Identify high-need senior and community centers to direct resources to those areas.

- Refer to list of NYC public schools that are designated as >95% poverty, which will also have diversity; review the school list that we already service with this extensive list to ensure that we are serving those most in need
  - Measure: percentage of schools and community centers served that are high-need and serve large homeless population
  - Responsible: UEC Community Outreach Coordinator

### Goal 5: Increase optometric awareness within patient care

Objective: Create and include materials on optometry as a career to give to pediatric UEC patients under the age of 22 years old both in pediatric and adult clinics. Include presentation at vision screenings to children regarding becoming an optometrist:

- Create materials (ex: coloring drawing, poster, short story) to give out to pediatric patients at UEC and during vision screenings
- Consider signage on clinic floors discussing optometry as a career with brochures/pamphlets
  - Measure: # of brochures/pamphlets distributed to patients
  - Responsible: Clinical Administration, UEC Community Outreach Coordinator

### Goal 6: Provide culturally sensitive care to all patients at the UEC

Objective 1: Ensure that patient education materials and clinic forms are provided in different languages to serve the patients that we care for the most

- Translate these materials to Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Russian (the most commonly spoken languages at UEC per the Cyacom records). This may require electronic translation service.

- Measure: Add question to clinic demographic form asking patients if the form in their native language improved satisfaction with their visit
- Responsible: Clinical Administration

Objective 2: Ensure that patient language translation services are readily available for use within UEC clinic rooms

- Consider other language translation services outside of Cyacom to reduce burden of obtaining phone, hooking it up, and waiting to be connected to translator that takes valuable time in an exam room. One option is for every computer in each exam room to include webcam and access to live interpreter services through video chat, such as All Access Interpreters (<https://interpreter.services/>)
  - Measure: Add question to UEC survey or clinic demographic form asking patients if interpreter services improved satisfaction with their visit
  - Responsible: Clinical Administration

### Goal 7: Understand our strengths and weaknesses of providing patient-centered care at UEC

Objective: Hire third-party evaluator to assess our implicit biases, patient satisfaction, staff, etc. to understand where we should direct our attention in the Patient Care sub-committee and the College's efforts as a whole.

- Proposals from third-party evaluators have been received and we would like to move forward with Co-Creating Inclusion (<https://cocreatinginclusion.com/>)
  - Measure: Change from pre- to post-evaluation and workshop surveys conducted by third-party evaluator
  - Responsible: Task Force

### Conclusion

In summary, the UEC provides eye care to a highly diverse patient base. In order to ensure patient-centered, compassionate patient care that is free of discrimination and bias, the Patient Care Sub-Committee of the Task Force on Race and Equity recommends addressing the goals listed to better serve our patients and create an inclusive culture.

# Academic Programs Sub-Committee Report

## Mission Statement

The Academic Programs sub-committee of the Task Force on Race and Equity aims to enrich the academic & residency programs at SUNY College of Optometry by reviewing current courses and making recommendations to enhance the curriculum so that it addresses health care disparities, as it specifically pertains to race, and social determinants of health with the goal of producing culturally competent optometrists and increasing Black student and resident enrollment.

## Introduction

As established earlier on this report, URM's are highly underrepresented in the optometric profession and at the College. Underrepresentation is particularly critical in teaching positions at the College, particularly in faculty positions (5% of faculty are identified as URM's). Residency education is a critical step toward careers in academic optometry. Although the national percentages by racial backgrounds of residents is unavailable, based on current trends, it is assumed that African American residents comprise less than 4% nationwide. At the College the total African American residents is 0% as of 2020.

The University Eye Center (UEC) at SUNY College of Optometry is one of the largest outpatient vision care facilities in the country with nearly 70,000 patient visits annually, which includes both UEC's on and off-site campus. By racial background, UEC patient population includes 30.2% White, 28.2% Black or African American, 22.6% two or more races, and 14.5% Asian. With such a diverse patient population it is imperative that future optometrists are trained in anti-racist and anti-discrimination behaviors, social determinants of health and communication when treating patients. The main recommendation of the report is to establish learning objectives that would be applied throughout the college's academic and clinical curriculum. These learning objectives would encourage the implementation of lectures and workshops on cultural competency/sensitivity and social determinants of healthcare. This would include but not be limited to the basic science courses, Integrative Seminar (IS), Clinical Optometry (CO) and the SUNY in-house and affiliated Residency programs.

## Analysis and Desired Outcomes

The instructors of record (IOR) state that in the first year Clinical Optometry I & II courses there is a lecture that introduces culturally competent care, patient-doctor communication, and social determinants of healthcare. The IOR states that in Integrative Seminar II there is a lecture that facilitates a discussion about anti-racism. There are currently no lectures in Integrative Seminar I or Residency Friday program that relate directly and explicitly in the area of cultural competency and social determinants of health. There is currently no reporting of racial or ethnic demographic information for the residency program.

The UEC currently has some measures in place to address racial disparities, such as stating in the UEC Policy and Procedure Manual that "all UEC personnel have an obligation to treat patients and each other without discrimination...with regard to race" (p.69) and that "the UEC does not tolerate harassment or

discrimination by anyone based on the diverse characteristics or cultural backgrounds of those who work for the UEC” (p.161).

In regards to Clinical Optometry, there are areas that need further consideration and improvement:

- Although a video about cultural competency is shown in Clinical Optometry I, it does not specifically address Black or African American patients
- The cultural competency lecture in Clinical Optometry I is 50 minutes and does not allow sufficient time for students to discuss lecture and video material in an in-depth manner
- Cultural competency lecture should not be limited to one lecture a semester; there should be multiple lectures and/or cultural competency should be integrated throughout other lecture material when appropriate

In regards to Integrative Seminar I, there are areas that need further consideration and improvement:

- Although there are no lectures that relate directly and explicitly in the area of cultural competency and social determinants of health care, IORs are open and willing to incorporate and emphasize these areas through guest lectures and video this academic school year 2020-2021 (i.e. Dr. Schuettenberg, IOR for Integrative Seminar, and Dr. Zuckerman, IOR for Clinical Optometry, will have a combined class to have a more in depth discussion of cultural competency and social determinants of health and perhaps incorporate a required viewing of a film that talks about health disparities)

In regards to Integrative Seminar II, there are areas that need further consideration and improvement:

- In addition to facilitating a discussion about anti-racism, this academic school year 2020-2021 IOR Dr. Lowe plans to incorporate a lecture on empathy through artwork (e.g., show art pieces from 1945 by John Woodrow Wilson)

In regards to the curriculum as a whole:

- Social determinants of health are addressed, but treatment of this topic is fragmented and could be better organized

In regards to the interns and College Residency Program, there are areas that need further consideration and improvement:

- Require the SUNY in-house and affiliate residents to attend any College wide anti-racism training workshops
- Incorporate a grading rubric that evaluates interns and Residents specifically on cultural competence, social determinants of health, patient-doctor behavior and communication with minority patients
- Require SUNY to take the lead on establishing a regular national process to collect racial and ethnic demographic information on residents as well leading the training on accomplishing this

In regards to UEC, there are areas that need further consideration and improvement:

- Although staff are notified of UEC policy, a copy is located on each clinic floor with the clinic manager, and new employees are given the New Employee Handbook, “UEC in Sight,” many students and some staff remain largely unaware of UEC anti-discrimination policies
- The UEC conducts vision screenings to the local schools and community in high-need areas however, there have been complaints that the vision screenings have not actually been conducted in high need areas. A review of the location of financial need of vision screen areas will be conducted by the Outreach Coordinator. This is currently under review by the Patient Care Subcommittee of the Task Force. Note: Upon further investigation, we were at times that the UEC is requested to conduct screenings at locations and populations by the insurance plans and partners that the UEC participate with and have a relationship with. Also, a couple of times a year (prior to COVID) we have also been contracted to conduct screenings.

In regards to SUNY College of Optometry, there are areas that need further consideration and improvement:

- Hire a third-party HR consultant to help triage racial discriminatory complaints and improve accountability

The potential barriers to addressing these issues includes:

- Financial considerations for training programs and third-party consultants
- Having adequate time in the curriculum to include lecture material that addresses cultural competency and social determinants of health
- Vision screenings and outreach must also be within 40-minute travel distance from SUNY to accommodate student schedules

## Goals and Objectives

The Academic Programs sub-committee seeks to contribute to the charge of the Task Force on Race and Equity by making reasonable recommendations about the lecture material and programs that can be incorporated into the current academic curriculum and Residency program. Using the following goals and objectives, it is our sub-committee's hope that we can produce culturally competent optometrists.

**Goal 1. Graduating students and residents must demonstrate racial and ethnic sensitivity in their relations with all members of the College community and those it serves.**

Objective 1: Students, as well as SUNY in-house and affiliate residents must participate in anti-racism and racial/ethnic sensitivity training that will be provided by an outside consultant at least once per year

- Measures: Number of students and residents signing in at anti-racism training, Racial Climate Survey, number of racial discriminatory complaints
- Responsible: Faculty/Task Force volunteers signing people in, VPAA, VPSA, NOSA

Objective 2: To the extent not already in existence, learning objectives must be established for relevant clinical courses taken by students and residents that address communication with racial, ethnic and economically disadvantaged individuals.

- Measures: Number of learning objectives added to courses, Class Climate Survey that addresses whether learning objectives was effectively taught, use of related written assignments, related poster/research presentations by residents
  - Class Climate Survey to include following question: On a scale of 1-10, 1 signifying not at all and 10 signifying thoroughly covered, how well did IOR cover social determinants of health when relevant?
- Responsible: IORs, Curriculum Committee, Department Chairs, Director of Residency Programs, VPAA

Objective 3: Incorporate a grading rubric that evaluates interns and residents specifically on cultural competence, and patient-doctor behavior communication with minority patients. Interns and residents must show a basic understanding of the roles of race, ethnicity and economic status as determinants of health and apply this knowledge to the care of patients.

- Measures: Grading rubric
- Responsible: Attending, Residency Program Supervisor, VPAA

Goal 2. Graduating students and residents must understand the roles of race, ethnicity and economic status as determinants of health and apply this knowledge to the care of patients

Objective 1: To the extent not already in existence, learning objectives must be established for relevant basic science and clinical courses that address the roles of race, ethnicity and economic status as determinants of health

Objective 2: To the extent not already in existence, learning objectives must be established for the residency program that address the roles of race, ethnicity and economic status as determinants of health

Objective 3: Clinical grading of students must include evaluation of students' application of the roles of race, ethnicity and economic status as determinants of health

Objective 4: Clinical evaluation of residents must include evaluation of residents' application of the roles of race, ethnicity and economic status as determinants of health

- Measures: Number of learning objectives added to courses, Class Climate Survey that addresses whether learning objectives was effectively taught, use of related written assignments, related poster/research presentations by residents
- Responsible: IORs, Curriculum Committee, Department Chairs, VPAA

Goal 3. Create an opportunity for students to be mentored by SUNY In House Faculty

Objective 1: Create a SUNY faculty/student mentorship program that includes only current in-house faculty and build it into FTE

- Connect current and incoming underrepresented minority students with faculty mentors who have volunteered to provide guidance to students who have opted into the program. The mentorship in many ways can be open ended or directed by student preferences. Mostly, the

mentorship can be a supplemental resource to these students to allow for a more well-rounded experience at SUNY. Pairings can be done by means of survey matches.

- Measure: Number of URM students who request for a faculty mentor each year along with end of the year survey's regarding the experience
- Responsible: Faculty, Task Force, VPSA, NOSA

# Community Engagement Sub-Committee Report

## Mission Statement

The Community Engagement sub-committee of the Task Force on Race and Equity aims to create an inclusive environment for all members of the SUNY Optometry campus.

## Introduction

SUNY College of Optometry is made up of the college campus and the University Eye Center, all consisting of administrators, faculty, students, and staff. A school climate where all members feel comfortable and included relies upon addressing implicit and explicit biases, discrimination, exclusionary behavior, and supervisory/faculty relations.

Members should feel comfortable and secure in reporting any incidents of the aforementioned behaviors through the SafeInSight app. Representation in the field of optometry is important to foster a new wave of diverse doctors. The lack of representation in the faculty at SUNY Optometry is an issue that must be addressed, in addition to fostering cultural humility in the current faculty and administrators.

## Analysis and Desired Outcomes

A campus-wide climate survey for faculty, staff, administrators, and students was designed by the Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan Committee in 2016. The survey focused on perceptions of bias, exclusionary behavior, fairness, respect, concerns about welfare, belonging, supervisory/faculty relations, and overall job/school satisfaction.

The results were separated by the various population groups. Overall, most students provided positive feedback. Noteworthy results include 22% of URM students reported having experienced exclusionary behavior and more perceived race and ethnicity bias compared to white students. While it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from the results of the survey because of the small sample sizes from URM students, this can serve as a baseline for future surveys.

As for the faculty, staff, and administrator results, 17.5% of URM and 10% of Asians reported exclusionary behavior related to race. URM students also responded less favorably regarding perception of relations with peers and higher administration compared to their white counterparts. Similar to above, limited sample size may affect any definitive conclusions, but the overall effect is similar.

Through Affirmative Action, it is policy for SUNY College of Optometry to provide equal employment and educational opportunities to all. Affirmative Action will be taken to ensure that underrepresented, protected classes of employees and students are given an equitable opportunity for progress.

ASCO issues an Annual Full-Time Faculty Data report with the total number of full-time faculty in all 21 schools of optometry. The average number of full- and part-time minority faculty at SUNY is similar to the nationwide average. In 2016, SUNY faculty was represented by 72.5% whites, 21.8% Asians, 4.2% Hispanics, and 2.1% Blacks. Currently, the only Black faculty members are adjunct professors who do not spend time on the main campus. SUNY Optometry staff and administration are more diverse than faculty, with 32.4% white, 29.5% Black, 13.3% Hispanic, 10% Asian, 0.5% American Indian, and 1% other.

The Community Engagement sub-committee has created a list of goals and objectives as described below to improve the campus climate for all members. Barriers to achieving these objectives include financial considerations for the training programs and hiring new faculty, a diversity and inclusion director, and a third-party evaluator.

## Goals and Objectives

### Goal 1: Foster cultural competency and humility amongst faculty, staff, administration and students

Objective: Deliver annual mandatory anti-racism, anti-bias, and anti-discrimination training sessions to all members of SUNY Optometry

- Hold trainings and workshops in-person/over Zoom by outside professional facilitator
  - Training sessions separated by groups on campus (i.e. faculty/staff/students), then optional sessions combined to conclude trainings
- Include anti-racism trainings into Annual Compliance Training starting Fall 2021 and New Employee Orientation; inquire about existing trainings from central SUNY
  - Measure: 100% of community members trained, periodic review of anonymous climate surveys
  - Responsible: TFRE

### Goal 2: Create a weeklong initiative to celebrate Black and other URM cultures in various forms

Objective: Engage the community by bringing awareness and appreciation to various cultures

- Creation of the BLAACK Initiative: Because Learning Achieves Appreciation and Community Knowledge; including events that celebrate Black and other URM cultures through art and dance, ending with anti-racism training and group discussion of the common book reading
  - Under the new D/I director, consider expanding to other URM cultures and celebrations
- Taste of NOSA (recipes), storytelling, dancers/performers, and movie night in November
  - Organize events with NOSA leadership
- Common book reading for fall 2020: Black Man in White Coat (see Goal 5)
  - Measure: Climate surveys; yearly implementation
  - Responsible: TFRE, NOSA, CDO, Student Affairs

### Goal 3: Provide professional development workshops for faculty

Objective: Supplement annual training with focused anti-racism and anti-bias education and workshops

- Consider incorporating into intersession activities, SIVR Colloquia, Faculty Retreat, etc. (i.e. hire speakers to discuss teaching through a social justice lens)
  - Measure: climate survey after faculty retreat, intersession, etc.
  - Responsible: TFRE, FDC

### Goal 4: Increase diversity of faculty

Objective: Examine recruitment and interview strategies that could increase the likelihood of increasing recruitment of URM faculty

- Utilize the PRODiG Proposal to recruit URM and women in STEM
  - More at <https://www.suny.edu/prodig/>
- Aggressively seek out and recruit qualified URM candidates for faculty positions
- Continue posting job openings in the National Optometric Association (NOA) monthly newsletter once hiring freeze ends

- Measure: # of URM faculty applied/hired (See Hiring Step Analysis on PRODiG Proposal, Appendix E)
- Responsible: HR, CDO, Academic Affairs

### Goal 5: Provide resources for continuing anti-racism education

Objective: Create a Race and Equity Monthly Newsletter for the internal community that promotes Black and other URM groups leadership, culture and business. Invite campus to read a common book every year and engage in a productive conversation. Create D/I section in the library with resources for community members.

- Newsletter may highlight a SUNY community member, recommendations for Black and URM owned businesses, books by Black and other URM authors, informational podcasts and websites, etc. Newsletter will be emailed to entire campus and posted to SUNY Optometry website
- Common book reading to be a part of BLAACK Initiative; group discussion with small group breakout rooms led by TF members and other community leaders
- Work with Library Director (Elaine Wells) to work on securing funding for a “diversity, equity, and inclusion section” to be available in the library, whether in-person or digital
  - Measures: # of clicks on newsletter through email and website, # of people participating in book club/discussion, # of people accessing library materials
  - Responsible: TFRE, Communications Dept, librarian, IA Office

### Goal 6: Hire a Diversity and Inclusion Director

Objective: Instate a position that is focused specifically on Diversity and Inclusion within the college.

Roles may include:

- Oversee implementation and progress of TFRE goals
- Fundraise for D/I initiatives, alongside the Institutional Advancement team, as needed
- Assist NOA/NOSA, CSTEP programs and related URM programs
- Coordinate and steer other committees which include faculty, students, staff, and alumni in developing the institutional diversity strategic plan
- Collaborate with Admissions to develop recruitment strategies to attract diverse students
- Collaborate with Alumni Affairs to build more engaging and robust opportunities for volunteer leadership for D/I initiatives especially among our Black alumni
- Collaborate with student leaders on diversity initiatives and develop mentorship programs/student retention
- Majority of time (60%) will be spent on D/I initiatives, and 40% spent on faculty duties (whether clinical or didactic)

Consider non-OD's who have an experience in D/I, admissions, or student affairs – will report to Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) and work with Director of Minority Enrichment (CSTEP)

- Hiring process:
  - Job description has been created; advertise for the position once hiring freeze ends
  - Include Task Force members on hiring committee, in addition to diverse members
  - Invite college community to give feedback to committee during interview presentation

- Measures: Number of objectives fulfilled, results of climate surveys, diversity of upcoming matriculated classes, number of students serving in pipeline initiatives, number of collaborations formed
- Responsible: TFRE, VPSA, CSTEP, Office of Admissions, NOA/NOSA, IA Office

### **Goal 7: Provide a safe space for members to anonymously report incidents on campus**

Objective: Revamp the SafeInSight app to allow follow-up when incidents are reported anonymously and increase visibility

- Emphasize utilization of app through multiple channels (i.e. within the classroom, online, etc.)
- Update app to allow email encryption for those who want to remain anonymous but allow HR to follow-up for more information and ensure closure of report
  - Measure: # of incidents reported with appropriate follow-up
  - Responsible: UPD, HR, Student Affairs

### **Goal 8: Promote mental health resources for students**

Objective: Endorse a ProjectLETS chapter through the Wellness Committee (student-led group) to create Peer Mental Health Advocates (PMHAs) who will provide support to fellow students

- Offer Wellness Committee assistance with any fundraising or promotion as necessary through IA; more information once chapter is formed
  - Measure: # of students/faculty/staff utilizing PMHA resources
  - Responsible: Wellness Committee, Student Affairs, IA Office

# Broad-Based Recommendations

This section contains recommendations deemed essential by the TFRE to create the required organizational support for the successful implementation of this plan.

## Goal: Provide organizational support for continued success

- Allocate yearly budget to support the College's DEI goals
  - Measures: budget established and funded on yearly basis
  - Responsible: CDO, Director of DEI, President
- Develop fundraising campaign to ensure continued funding of DEI goals and initiatives
  - Measures: funds raised to support DEI initiatives and programs
  - Responsible: President, Institutional Advancement, CDO, Director of DEI
- Develop public-private partnerships to accomplish DEI goals
  - Measures: partners identified; action taken
  - Responsible: President, Institutional Advancement, CDO, Director of DEI
- Establish a mechanism to ensure accountability and progress towards recommended actions
  - Appoint an Advisory Council to ensure implementation of the recommendations in this report
    - Measures: Advisory council established
    - Responsible: President

# Appendix A. TFRE Process and Timeline

## TFRE Process and Timeline

**June 19, 2020:** Task Force was announced to College community by Dr. Heath

**July 6, 2020:** Task Force Kick Off meeting

The Task Force was divided into 4 sub-committees, with each comprising of at least one student, one faculty, and one staff member. The sub-committees and their respective areas of analysis can be found below:

1. Community Engagement (Faculty/Staff/Administration/Students): community building strategies, professional development (DEI training), diversity of faculty.
2. Student Diversity & Inclusion: recruitment, orientation, faculty/student mentorship, co-curricular activities.
3. Academic Programs: curriculum - inclusion of issues of race, social determinants of health, health disparities, and communications; Diversity of residency programs.
4. Patient Care: patient communication; race, ethnicity, and cultural competency; healthcare disparities and population health.

The TF met nearly every week since the kick-off meeting on July 6, 2020. Sub-committees held their own meetings to define work processes, data needs and establish goals and priorities. To assess and review the College's current activities, subcommittees conducted numerous additional meetings with staff and administrators responsible for the specific areas under review (i.e., residency, admissions, etc.).

On **September 1st**, the TF delivered its interim report to Dr. Heath. The report is comprised of four parts, one for each subcommittee, and contains actionable short- and long-term goals and strategies to further the College's diversity, inclusion, and equity goals.

On **September 8**, the TFRE met with Dr. Heath to discuss the interim report. He was very receptive to the recommendations outlined by the TF and provided feedback for improvement. Based on his feedback, the TF made adjustments to the interim report to prepare it for community feedback.

On **October 2**, the interim report was shared with various committees at the College for input and feedback. Deadline for feedback was set for October 19.

Chair met with various committees and councils to present the interim recommendations and gather feedback.

- Clinic Council: October 9
- Institutional Research and Planning Committee: October 13
- President's Council: October 15
- Dean's Council: October 19

On **October 13**, the interim report was shared with the entire College community for input and feedback.

**November 1:** Task Force Report submitted to Dr. Heath.

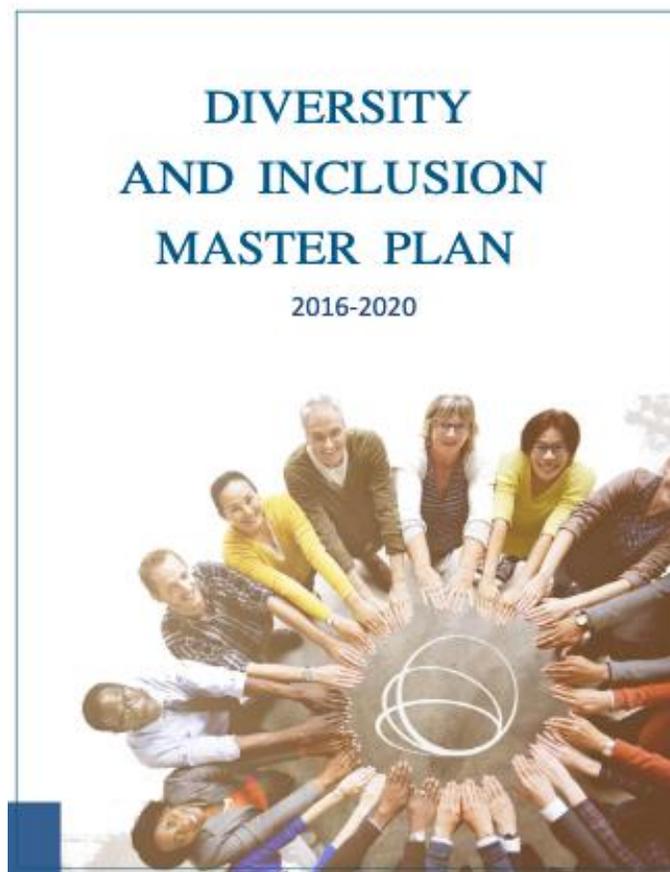
**Short-Term Deliverables:**

- Community Book Project. The inaugural book chosen by the TF is *Black Man in a White Coat*, by Dr. Damon Tweedy. More than 203 participants have joined us in this exciting project, and all participants should have received their free copies of the book. A book discussion moderated by our own Dr. Shirazian is scheduled for the evening of November 19 at 8 p.m. The book discussion will happen in conjunction with BLAACK (Because Learning Achieves Appreciation and Community Knowledge), a week-long celebration of Black culture.
- Mandatory Diversity Training: Provide diversity training for all staff, students, and faculty. The training will occur during the academic year. Facilitator has been selected. Training delayed due to Federal Executive Order.
- Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: position description created and provided to Dr. Heath for approval.
- DEI Newsletter: newsletter template created and approved. First edition of newsletter ready to be distributed.

# Appendix B. Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan

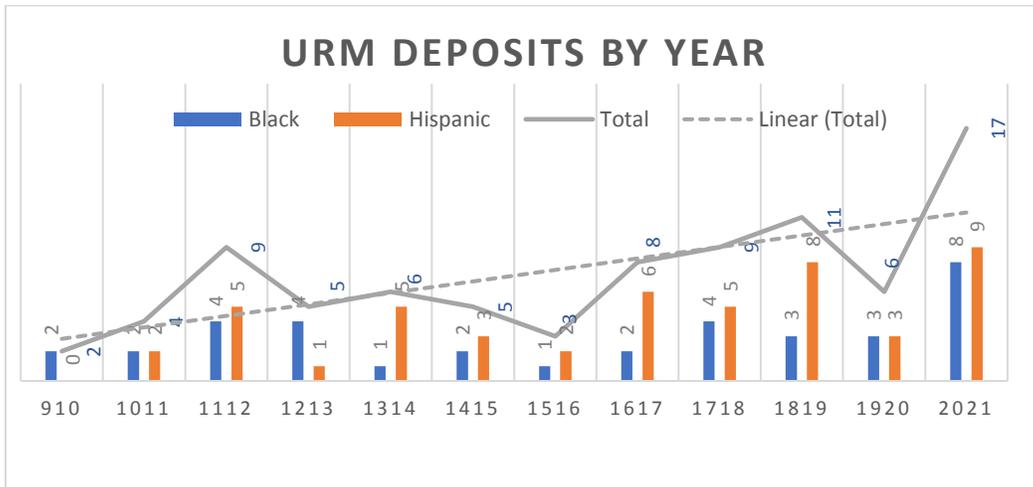
For a copy of the 2016-2020 Diversity and Inclusion Master Plan (DIMP), visit [https://www.sunyopt.edu/pdfs/offices/diversity\\_inclusion\\_plan.pdf](https://www.sunyopt.edu/pdfs/offices/diversity_inclusion_plan.pdf)

For an analysis of progress toward the goals outlined in the DIMP, visit <https://www.sunyopt.edu/offices/office-of-diversity-and-inclusion/progress-tracker-diversity-and-inclusion-master-plan>

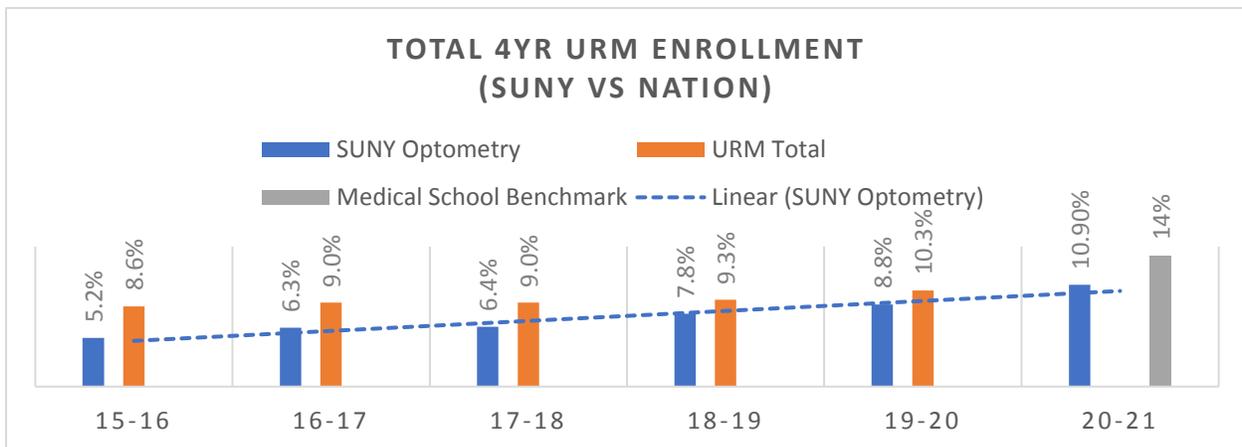
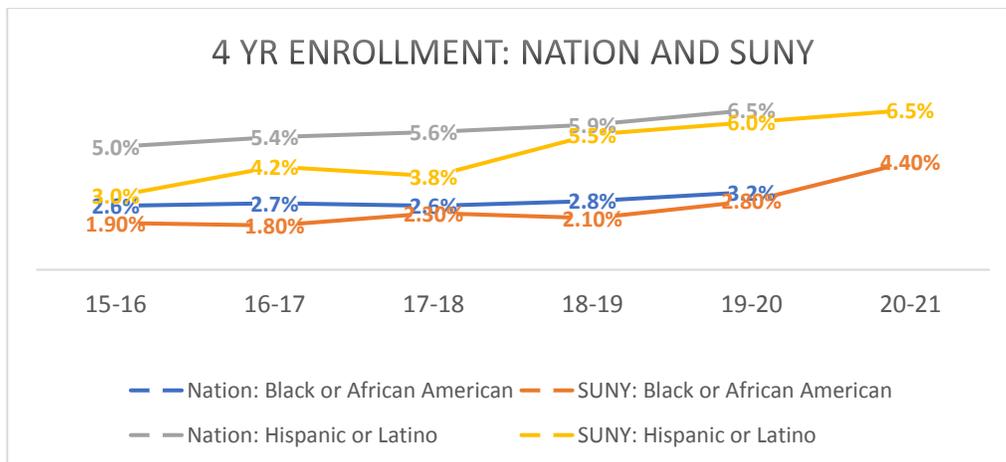


# Appendix C. URM Enrollment at the College

Historic URM 1<sup>st</sup> Year Enrollment (2009-2020)



Historic URM 4 Year Enrollment (2015-2020)



# Appendix D. CSTEP Eligibility

Student Eligibility for CSTEP program:

1. New York state resident
2. Full time college or graduate student, during our CSTEP program
3. African-American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaskan native
4. If you are not African-American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaskan native, you can qualify as an economically disadvantaged student. Please refer to this [chart in the link below](http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/20-21incomecriteria.pdf) .
  - <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/20-21incomecriteria.pdf>

# Appendix E. PRODiG Report

The PRODiG Report can be downloaded here: <https://www.sunyopt.edu/wp-content/uploads/Final-PRODiG-Proposal-with-revisions.pdf>