University Task Force on Individual, Institutional and Systemic Bias

The Executive Committee of the Task Force on Individual, Institutional and Systemic Bias on April 30, 2019 approved in concept several preliminary recommendations of task force work groups for referral to appropriate administrative units to explore implementation. Specific details of implementing the frameworks set forth in the recommendations will be developed by these units, with in-depth consideration of associated concerns and processes, after which the recommendations will presented to senior leadership for adoption.
ACCOUNTABILITY MODELS WORK GROUP

QUESTION #1
Employment applications – Of what value is adding a diversity statement requirement to the application process for all positions? What are ways to evaluate applicants’ demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion?

Task.ISB Executive Committee Meeting - April 30, 2019
Problem/situation

VCU lacks a visible, unified approach to effective evaluation of applicants’ commitment to diversity and inclusion. As a result, there can be inconsistency and misunderstanding about how to consider diversity in the recruitment process, slower pace of progress in addressing underrepresentation and in creating cultural change, and diminished ability to meet student needs and demands related to diversity and inclusion particularly in the academic setting.
Research

Nationally, faculty diversity lags behind the progress made among students attending post-secondary education. At VCU, faculty diversity is slightly higher than the national average but still not close to matching students. For example, VCU has approximately 10% underrepresented minority faculty in contrast to 30% underrepresented minority students.
Recommendations

It is recommended that the Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention work with Central HR and the Division for Inclusive Excellence to develop a diversity statement requirement and evaluation rubric that would then be added to the eJobs application and be required for all applicants who are applying for any position at VCU. Evaluation tools should also be developed that evaluate applicants on their actions, not their status, and their subsequent actions upon hiring. Stakeholders including Faculty and Staff Senates, SGA, and ADVANCE-IT should have the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the statement and evaluation rubric. It is also recommended that additional trainings and toolkits for inclusive job postings and search processes be made available for hiring authorities and search committees.