University Task Force on Individual, Institutional and Systemic Bias

The Executive Committee of the Task Force on Individual, Institutional and Systemic Bias on July 31, 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.
STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE SUPPORT WORK GROUP

QUESTION #4
Restorative justice – What can schools/divisions do to ensure accountability for incidents that are contained within their management structure?

Task.ISB Executive Committee Meeting - July 31, 2019
Problem/Situation
From our research and the feedback from the Task Force P4 Committee, it appears that VCU does not currently have or use a restorative justice model.
Research

Our team reviewed research about restorative justice and its use within the criminal justice system as well as outside the criminal justice system. At VCU, we might implement a process of restorative justice to resolve student or workplace conflicts amicably and through voluntary cooperation of the parties.

Approaches to restorative justice outside the criminal justice system and in the classroom/school setting include facilitation and conciliation. In the workplace, facilitation and conciliation may also be used to resolve workplace conflict.
Recommendations

• VCU should assess its readiness for an organizational and/or restorative justice model.
• VCU should devise its own campus-wide model of “restorative justice” based on an appreciative inquiry and appreciative approach model. This model should address harm and accountability relative to bias incidents.
• VCU should consider what level of autonomy (unit/division/department/school) would exist to address bias incidents and examine processes and procedures to ensure bias incidents are handled fairly and equitably.
• Establish a centralized “owner” or centralized oversight of a process to consider, process and track bias incidents at VCU.
• If a university-wide plan for restorative justice is implemented, provide annual training to educate and facilitate its use.
• VCU should require heads of departments and deans of schools to take part in very specific and specialized training that addresses handling incidents at the unit level.
• Vice Presidents who oversee specific departments/schools would continue to address the issue of bias in handling incidents on the unit level.
• Encourage those that lead departments/schools to have a policy/procedure for the handling of incidents that works hand in hand with other university/HR policies.
• Engage Vice Presidents and chairs/deans in a discussion of why a unit would want to handle incidents in-house rather than using existing procedures.