RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

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Approved by DEI Committee on: 12/7/2022

The DEI Committee would like to formally recommend adding two trainings to the required suite of Vector/SafeColleges trainings for Spring 2023 and beyond: **"Creating a Respectful Campus for LGBTQ+ Students" and "Implicit Bias and Microaggression Awareness."** These trainings have been reviewed by the co-chairs of the DEI committee, in addition to a small review group. The microaggressions training has previously been required for completion in 2020, though only 60% of employees completed it despite it being mandatory (this was verified through HR). This request for trainings comes as a follow-up to a recommendation made for the Spring 2022 semester.

While two trainings lasting approximately twenty minutes each could not sufficiently train our employees on the full nuances of DEI education in the workplace and higher education, the committee has determined this is a meaningful starting point that will promote more positive employee interactions and contribute to a stronger student experience.

The primary reason the Committee voted to recommend the above individual trainings relies on the ability to approach these topics in an individual, self-paced manner. We also considered the importance of communicating the following information alongside the recommendation for the required trainings:

1 The use of a pre-approved institutional platform (Vector LMS) makes use of resources we have already deemed appropriate for training in other areas.

2 Individual trainings are an ideal starting point, as removing the group setting makes space for the trainings to meet people where they are. Ideally, this would eliminate worries about being embarrassed, feeling shame or frustration, expressing vulnerability or a lack of knowledge on a topic, or any other emotions that may arise when completing the modules.

3 Trainings align with our institutional value of diversity and some of the work already happening on campus, including the ally directory, being a leader with name changes in Watermark, and the recently-adopted Preferred Name Policy.

4 Since the College has already assigned the Microaggressions (race-specific) training through Vector LMS, recommending it be completed again demonstrates confidence in the original recommendation and a commitment to continued diversity education for our employees.

WHY AN LGBTQ+ SPECIFIC TRAINING?

"In 2018, the Association of American Universities found that out of a sample of more than 180,000 undergraduate and graduate students, nearly 17% identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual, queer, or questioning."

SAFETY CONCERNS AS IMPLICATIONS

Two in three LGBTQ college students reported having experienced sexual harassment at least once in a 2019 campus climate survey by the Association of American Universities (AAU).

Non-heterosexual students are more likely to experience harassing behavior, intimate partner violence, and stalking than heterosexual students, according to the 2019 AAU campus climate survey.

Twenty percent of LGBTQ college students feared for their physical safety due to their gender identity or their perceived sexual orientation according to the 2015 AAU climate survey.

THE 2016 DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER ON TRANSGENDER STUDENTS

In 2021, the Biden Administration reinstated an Obama-era protection for transgender students in the form of extended protections under the 1972 Title IX Education Amendments. **Compliance with Title IX would present itself as a major implication,** and the transgender student-specific training the committee has recommended only supports this federal guideline.

LGBTQ+ STUDENTS & MENTAL HEALTH

WELL-DOCUMENTED MENTAL HEALTH RISKS FOR LGBTQ+ COLLEGE STUDENTS

Increased risks for depression, anxiety, suicidality, and substance abuse	Lack of acceptance both on- and off-campus
Lesser sense of belonging and lower perceived safety needed to engage socially	Navigating a heterosexist & cisnormative higher education institution

(Backhaus et al., 2021; Carrasco, 2021; Kulick et al., 2017)

WHY FOCUS ON IMPLICIT BIAS AND MICROAGGRESSIONS?

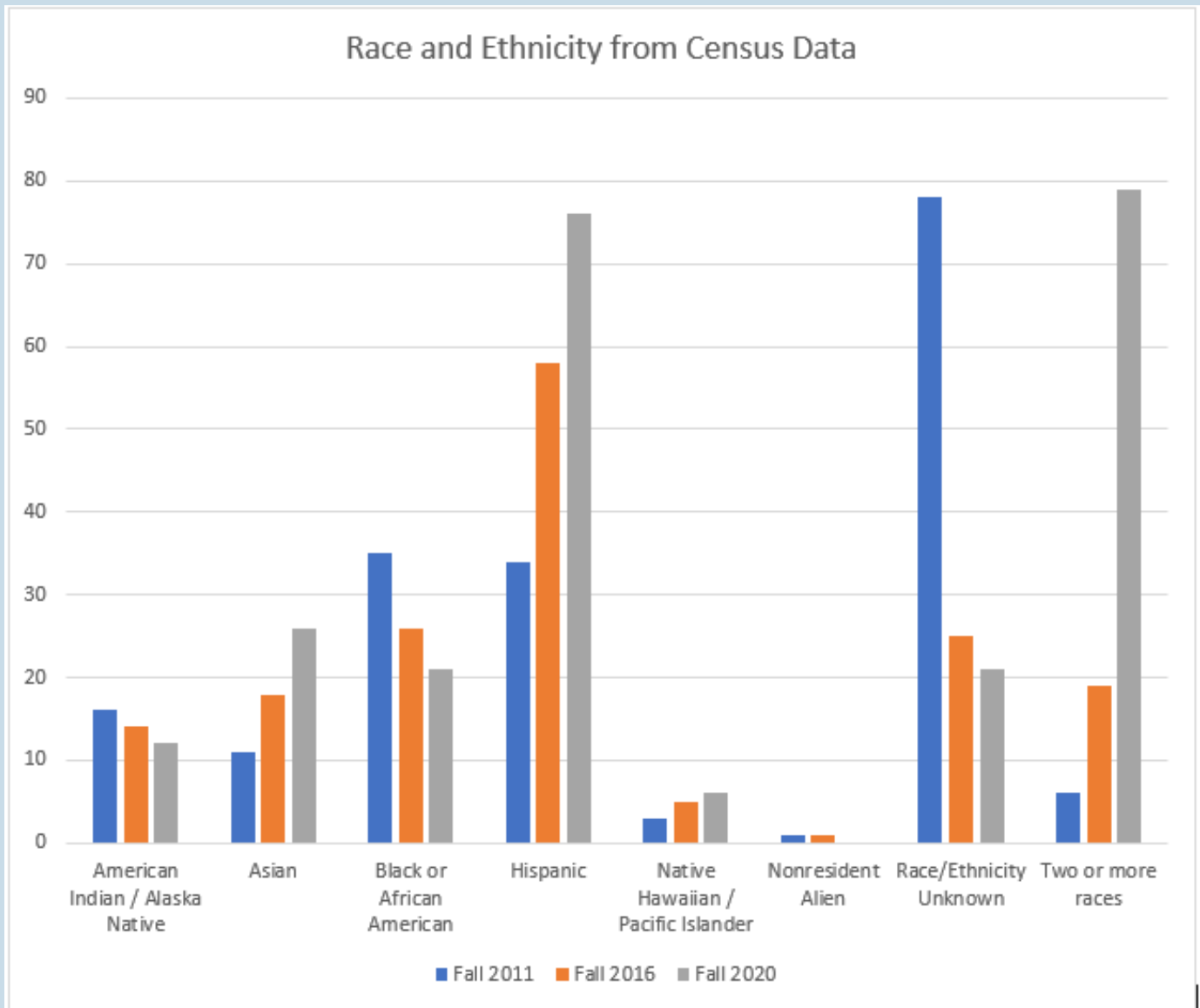|	
IN THE CLASSROOM	"Microaggressions in the classroom can **disrupt students' ability to engage in the learning** process because their **feelings of belonging are called into question**" (University of CO Boulder).
IN THE WORKPLACE	"Microaggressions are causes and symptoms of larger systemic and structural problems. Calling out microaggressions can serve as a deterrent. Accountability and empathy together can help to create more thoughtful and inclusive communication across all the divides of race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity" (Agarwal, 2019).
SHARED IMPLICATIONS	In addition to the physical effects of continued microaggressions, including depression, high blood pressure, and prolonged stress and trauma, "Microaggressions can negatively impact careers as they are related to increased burnout and less job satisfaction, and require significant cognitive and emotional resources to recover from them (Washington, 2022).

As the College continues to emphasize holistic student services and care, requiring employees to learn about the ways in which our implicit biases may negatively impact our students is essential in caring for our students as people first and then as students. The same can be said for our workplace culture and interactions between colleagues.

DIVERSITY & HLC REQUIREMENTS

1.C. The institution provides opportunities for civic engagement in a diverse, multicultural society and globally connected world, as appropriate within its mission and for the constituencies it serves.
1. The institution encourages curricular or cocurricular activities that prepare students for informed citizenship and workplace success.
2. The institution's processes and activities demonstrate inclusive and equitable treatment of diverse populations.
3. The institution fosters a climate of respect among all students, faculty, staff and administrators from a range of diverse backgrounds, ideas and perspectives.

OUR DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATION IS GROWING - ARE WE?

Race and Ethnicity from Census Data

Bar chart showing Race and Ethnicity from Census Data for Fall 2011 (blue), Fall 2016 (orange), and Fall 2020 (gray):

- **American Indian / Alaska Native**: Fall 2011 ≈ 16, Fall 2016 ≈ 14, Fall 2020 ≈ 12
- **Asian**: Fall 2011 ≈ 11, Fall 2016 ≈ 18, Fall 2020 ≈ 26
- **Black or African American**: Fall 2011 ≈ 35, Fall 2016 ≈ 26, Fall 2020 ≈ 21
- **Hispanic**: Fall 2011 ≈ 34, Fall 2016 ≈ 58, Fall 2020 ≈ 76
- **Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander**: Fall 2011 ≈ 3, Fall 2016 ≈ 5, Fall 2020 ≈ 6
- **Nonresident Alien**: Fall 2011 ≈ 1, Fall 2016 ≈ 1
- **Race/Ethnicity Unknown**: Fall 2011 ≈ 78, Fall 2016 ≈ 25, Fall 2020 ≈ 21
- **Two or more races**: Fall 2011 ≈ 6, Fall 2016 ≈ 19, Fall 2020 ≈ 79

Legend: ■ Fall 2011 ■ Fall 2016 ■ Fall 2020

Key Findings & Interpretations:

- Student populations identifying as Asian, Hispanic, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander have steadily increased at the cross-sections taken at 2011, 2016, and 2020.
- Students who self-disclose being unsure of their race/ethnicity have decreased significantly. Conversely, students who identify as being of two or more races has increased drastically. As more students become empowered to identify with their racial and cultural backgrounds, we have a responsibility to ensure our instruction, student services, and campus culture are sensitive and inclusive.
- To ensure we're adapting in a way that aligns with the professional and academic cultures of the work to which we have committed ourselves, it becomes essential to complete trainings that promote cultural awareness and competency.

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INTERNAL VS. EXTERNAL DIVERSITY

"Internal diversity characteristics are ones related to situations **that a person is born into**. They are things that a person didn't choose for themselves and are impossible for anyone to change."

"External diversity are things **related to a person but aren't** characteristics a person is born with. External diversity can be heavily influenced or even forced, but ultimately **they can be (and often are) changed over time**."

EXAMPLES OF INTERNAL DIVERSITY

RACE & ETHNICITY

AGE

NATIONAL ORIGIN

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

CULTURAL IDENTITY

GENDER IDENTITY

ASSIGNED SEX

PHYSICAL ABILITY

MENTAL ABILITY/ NEURODIVERGENCE

EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL DIVERSITY

PERSONAL INTERESTS

EDUCATION

APPEARANCE

CITIZENSHIP STATUS

RELIGION & SPIRITUALITY

LOCATION

RELATIONSHIP STATUS

SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

FAMILIAL STATUS

While we seek to protect diversity in all its forms, it is important to understand which aspects are inherent and unmovable as opposed to ones that an individual can change as they desire.

HOW ECC CURRENTLY ADDRESSES DIVERSITY

We already have an institutional implication to address issues pertaining to diversity, as we list diversity as an institutional value. Specifically, we have written, "We value diverse identities and perspectives, and are committed to fostering an inclusive community that embraces our differences as essential for success."

Type of Diversity	Internal vs. External	Measures Taken
Socioeconomic status	External	• Consistently affordable tuition • Food pantry and clothing closet • Emergency grant funding through Foundation • Scholarships • Matt Newlin speaker presentation at in-service
Cultural identity and national origin	Internal	• International Education Week activities • Social media campaigns such as National Hispanic Heritage Month • Film & Lecture Series
Sexual orientation and gender identity	Internal	• Ally directory & ally signs • LGBTQ+ resources webpage • Preferred Name Policy • National Coming Out Day activities • GSA student club
Education	External	• Placement testing • Course offerings to meet all levels of the academic experience • Summer Bridge Development • First-Gen Resources
Physical ability	Internal	• Compliance with ADA standards for accessibility • Prioritization of pedestrian bridge repairs
Mental ability & Neurodivergence	Internal	• Adequate offerings of Access Services • Mental health awareness & counseling services • Filling of Rolla Counselor role
Race & Ethnicity	Internal	• Black History Month social media campaigns • Black History Month Film Fest • Dr. Bauer's 2020 Statement on George Floyd • Previous training opportunities

POSITIVE IMPLICATIONS OF DIVERSITY TRAININGS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In a 2016 study, Booker et al. chronicled the positive impacts of employee diversity trainings for students in higher education and presented implications rendering these kinds of trainings as essential for both a welcoming campus climate and student retention.

"Those who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning[or Queer] (LGBTQ) students are actively choosing universities that provide a sense of community and acceptance" (Booker et al., 2016, p. 1).

BENEFITS GAINED BY STUDENTS IN THREE PRIMARY AREAS:

Professional Development	"Because faculty were actively connecting diversity to professional practice, learners were able to further develop professionally" (Booker et al., 2016, p. 5).	This aligns with our Personal & Professional Development ISLO, our value of empowerment, and our mission as a whole.
Classroom Environment	"Students within the classrooms of these participating faculty experienced having a voice in their learning spaces. They felt included, valued, and visible." (Booker et al., 2016, p. 5-6).	This supports our values of diversity, learning, and empowerment, supports our overall mission, and supports assessment of our Social Responsibility ISLO.
Personal Growth	"Faculty focused on changing students' ideas of acceptance, and of "otherness," by enabling a paradigm shift wherein students recognized that difference is a quality inherent in all people." (Booker et al., 2016, p. 6).	This supports our values of diversity, learning, and empowerment, supports our overall mission, and supports assessment of our Social Responsibility ISLO.

SHIFTING OUR INSTITUTIONAL MINDSET ABOUT DEI WORK

If we truly strive to be a leader in our community as an institution of higher education, we have to demonstrate a more serious commitment to DEI work at an institutional level. We have outlined some dialogue and examples of how the trainings can help us shift our outcomes and live out the values we have identified as central tenets of our institutional identity.

"These trainings are just being pushed by the DEI Committee, not administration."

Anecdotally, we know this is a commonly held mindset. By institutionalizing these efforts and having the request to complete trainings be promoted by administrators, we have a better chance of gaining buy-in, reducing the silos in which this work is occurring, and communicating broader support for having open dialogue about diversity work and how it shows up in the classroom and office space.

"This might be required, but I didn't complete it last time, and nothing happened."

As mentioned earlier in this report, we have a history of little to no accountability for completing these kinds of trainings despite having serious precedent from HLC and the values we continually advertise to stakeholders. If we truly value diversity, then we as leaders have to be willing to follow up on this kind of work. This work is not controversial--it is essential within academic institutions. As we avoid championing this work and being leaders in our community, we lose alignment with our vision and values, and we run the risk of losing students who specifically seek inclusive institutions.

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY BECOMES THE WAY

In Brené Brown's "Dare to Lead," a leadership guide used by our own Deans and Department Chairs and the inspiration behind a recent MCCA presentation from our own faculty, Brown writes of the ten most common challenges to leaders and institutions that create obstacles for success. One of these obstacles was:

> "Organizational values are gauzy and assessed in terms of aspirations rather than actual behaviors that can be taught, measured, and evaluated" (Brown, 2018, p. 9).

Again, we know that these two trainings are not (and should not) be the leading trainings we offer to employees, but we do believe this is a meaningful starting place. So much work is happening in pockets throughout the College, but if we do not build a sustainable culture of diversity we will fail to make meaningful progress, and we will fall behind. Brown (2018) explains that the obstacles that stand in our way, when left unaddressed, will become the way. We are, and deserve, better.

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