

Arts & Sciences Leadership Committee on Intersectionality and Justice: Rationale and Founding Principles and Guidelines

April 24, 2017

Taken together, Seattle University's core values of care, academic excellence, diversity, faith, justice and leadership guide us to be an academic community that not only conducts teaching and research on issues of injustice, but one that also is a leader in higher education in how we live out those values within our own community. While the university has long been committed to social justice, the 2015 Campus Climate Survey (more information available [here](#)) indicated areas in need of significant attention around issues the report framed as "inclusion and diversity." After reviewing the findings, the University Task Force on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence provided a [final report](#) highlighting "six goals, each supported by several initiatives, which will propel the university's commitment to equity, access, and community." Those six goals are:

- Realize an organizational infrastructure that embeds inclusive excellence in all aspects of the Seattle University experience
- Integrate inclusive excellence across curricular and co-curricular offerings
- Build and sustain the capacity of students, staff, and faculty to engage, teach and lead through an inclusive excellence lens
- Meet the challenges and opportunities of recruiting and graduating a diverse student body
- Meet the challenges and opportunities of recruiting and retaining talented faculty and staff
- Maximize the university's capacity for social change in the local community

As Fr. Sundborg noted in his January 25 email announcing the final report, "...we have made strides in recent years to strengthen diversity and inclusion on this campus, but there is much work yet to be done in our pursuit of inclusive excellence. It will be important for our campus community to work together as we seek to move forward as best we can on the initiatives outlined in the report."

The College of Arts & Sciences houses several academic programs that focus on issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism, income inequity, religious bigotry, immigration status, other historically and structurally marginalized groups and the intersectionality of these domains, with many nationally and internationally recognized faculty experts in programs across the college. Given those domains of expertise and our position as the largest college at Seattle University, it is incumbent upon us to lead and support work within our own college that falls under the university's framework of "Diversity and Inclusive Excellence." This document establishes a Committee on Intersectionality and Justice as a Dean's initiative to lead and support these efforts in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Vision – The College of Arts and Sciences at Seattle University will be recognized as a leader among higher education institutions in the region in its culture of openness and respect across and between the issues encompassed by intersectionality and social justice, and in the quality of education, scholarship and creative works in these domains. The A&S Committee on Intersectionality and Justice will be a leading and foundational component of this work.

Mission - The mission of the A&S Leadership Committee on Intersectionality and Justice (LCIJ) is to a) improve the institutional culture and structure within Arts & Sciences for faculty, staff and students around issues of race, gender, sexuality, religious bigotry, immigration status, income disparity, other historically and structurally marginalized groups and the intersections of those domains, b) support faculty integration of state-of-the-art knowledge in these domains into course curriculum, scholarship

and creative works toward academic excellence and c) connect with and support university-level work on these issues, as outlined in the [2016 Final Report of the Task Force on Diversity and Inclusive Excellence](#). These goals are consistent with the Seattle University commitment to social justice as a central part of the Jesuit Catholic mission of the institution, defining justice as the elimination of systematic unfairness and oppression.

Activities - The LCIJ will develop, support and promote activities that a) increase understanding and awareness of these issues, b) improve the institutional culture of the College regarding issues of race, gender, sexuality, religious bigotry, immigration status, income disparity, other historically and structurally marginalized groups and the intersections of those domains, c) support increased coverage of these issues in all curricula across the college, d) support scholarly and creative work in these domains and e) advise the Dean on issues of intersectionality. The work on internal college culture will engage faculty, staff and students, and the committee is encouraged to consider focusing on a subset of particular initiatives within the broader University Task Force goals at any given time. The committee will serve as the main point of interface between the College of Arts & Sciences and broader university-wide goals and initiatives, via offices such as the Office of Diversity and Inclusive Excellence and the Wismer Chair. The committee will also serve as an advisory group for faculty who are working to enhance the social and racial justice content of their coursework, scholarship or creative work toward the goal of advancing understanding and progress of social and racial justice and reducing oppression in society. The committee will meet quarterly with the Dean and should also connect regularly with staff and students, including leadership bodies such as the Executive Committee, Faculty Staff Senate, Student Executive Committee and A&S Graduate Council as well as Student Advising. To that end, the committee will develop an advisory group of faculty, staff and students to help determine initiatives. Initiatives may include but are not limited to providing consulting to or training opportunities for faculty, staff and students, work with the Dean and college governance bodies on policy changes, developing discussion or reading groups, or other activities. The Dean will provide an annual budget to the committee. The founding of this committee will coincide with initial training for college faculty, staff and student leadership focused on addressing the problem of institutional racism.

Committee Membership - The LCIJ will embody egalitarianism, mutual respect and broad representation in its structure and function. Three faculty members will serve on the committee with one course release each across the three regular quarters of the academic year. The three representatives should have expertise at least within and preferably across the domains noted above and will reflect the breadth of the college community (as much as reasonably possible across three people) regarding race, gender and sexual orientation. To that end, one committee member will be elected to a three-year term through the college electoral process and the other two members will be appointed from a pool of applicants, with an eye toward balancing domain expertise, disciplinary background and personal characteristics as best as possible. The appointed founding committee members will serve staggered terms of two and four years (determined by agreement of the members or at random), to allow for gradual replacement of membership over time. Following that founding period, each member will be replaced via the method from which they gained membership (election or appointment). The founding members will be asked to provide a general review including outcomes to date and a set of recommendations moving forward to the Dean after the first two years. Committee members may serve a maximum of two contiguous three-year terms, but may return to the committee following a period of at least one academic year off the committee.