



**Diversity Council**  
**2019-2020 Final Report**

10/13/20

Submitted by:

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**Table of Contents**

Task Force #1: Supporting Retention and Thriving of Faculty and Staff.....Page 3

Task Force #2: Inclusive Excellence .....Page 5

Task Force #3: Highlighting Campus Diversity Initiatives and Programs .....Page 7

Advisory Contributions.....Page 9

## **Task Force 1: Supporting Retention and Thriving of Faculty and Staff**

### **Task Force Members**

Abby Hollern (chair), Director, *Center for Inclusion & Campus Involvement*

Stephanie Gonzalez Guittar, *Assistant Professor of Sociology*

Sheryl Naminigit, *Assistant Professor of Business*

Jenifer Ruby, *Director of Student Life: International Student & Scholar Services*

Jen Herr, *Assistant Director, Accessibility Services*

Miranda Jung, *Talent Management Specialist, HR & Risk Management*

Patricia Tome, *Professor of Spanish*

### **Background**

Building on the prior work of the Council, specifically in reference to the recommendations made in the 2017-2018 Diversity Council Final Report, the Task Force focused its efforts on Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) as a crucial component of supporting retention and thriving of Rollins staff and faculty. ERGs are [voluntary, employee-led groups](#) that foster a [diverse, inclusive workplace](#) aligned with the mission of their organization.

### **Method and Activities**

Interviews were conducted with six campus groups that are currently serving as informal ERG's: Black Women's Circle, Common Vision, PRISM, Young Professionals, and Adoption. The following questions were asked.

- Structure
  - How does your group meet/stay in touch?
  - Do you have leadership?
- Eligibility
  - How do you identify members?
- Promotion and marketing
  - How do people learn about your group?
  - Do you have any signature events?
- Needs
  - Do you have financial support?
  - What would ideal support look like from Rollins?
- Structure
  - Would it be helpful to provide a guide or monthly workflow/checklist?

### **Conclusions**

Responses to the above questions were somewhat idiosyncratic across groups but did indicate some commonalities. Group leadership is generally voluntary, and leaders are not compensated (e.g., stipend, course release, etc.) for their work. Groups foster engagement primarily through word-of-mouth, and several groups indicated a desire to be more publicly recognized. Groups are generally not funded (though some reported very modest support, from a variety of campus offices).

### **Recommendations**

#### **Short Term**

- All ERGs should be listed on the Rollins Human Resources website

- Information regarding ERGs be included in Rollins orientation materials for staff and faculty

#### Long Term

- Consider where ERGs are housed at Rollins. ERGs are commonly under the purview of HR departments, but other organizational structures may be appropriate, and a consideration of the department with the resources to support the important work of ERGs is warranted.
- The Diversity Council should create a guide, based on the interview responses, that could be used for community members to start a new group and/or organize current groups.

## **Task Force 2: Inclusive Excellence**

### **Task Force Members**

Megan Kohr (chair), *Assistant Director of International Student and Scholar Services*

Samantha Fonseca, *Assistant Professor of Physics*

Robert Whetstone, *Student Outreach Coordinator, Center for Inclusion & Campus Involvement*

### **Background**

The task force for Inclusive Excellence understands its charge to be reviewing the Rollins' curriculum and curricular opportunities as it pertains to access and a diversity of perspectives.

### **Method and Activities**

#### **Informal Survey (Fall 2019)**

As a first step, the Task Force focused on the word *Accessibilities* in its broad aspect. Within this context, five full-time faculty at different stages of their academic career (from year one to over a decade working at Rollins) were asked the question: "What is the meaning of accessibility for you?"

Because the word *Accessibility* was used, the answers were heavily weighted on work performed by the Accessibilities Services Office. The answers were different enough in their small details, but surprisingly, all of them approached a clear common theme to build their narrative: *How faculty will be supported.*

The participants expressed concerns about meritocracy and discrimination and some questioned if having access to certain accommodations is a point of privilege at Rollins. Others discussed the balance between accessibility and rigor, asking how to keep accommodations reasonable and connecting students to the material and meeting their needs at the same time. About half of the participants mentioned Universal Design, wondering what it could mean in the case of mental disabilities. They pondered about how to re-design coursework to explore different but equivalent talents when not every student comes to the classroom with the same set of abilities. In the end, every participant deliberated on how to implement best practices for accessibilities to foment inclusion while trying to keep it attainable for the already busy faculty and without compromising the value and meaning of the Rollins diploma.

#### **Meetings and Outreach (Spring 2020)**

The task force met with Endeavor Center Director Nancy Chick, and this meeting corroborated many of the findings of our initial informal survey regarding faculty needs and priorities in this area. The Endeavor Center continues to include frequent programming targeting inclusion and would be open to collaborating with Diversity Council in future programming efforts.

Additionally, the task force felt that a review of data is invited to begin to answer fundamental questions about Rollins' approach to inclusive excellence, specifically with respect to issues such as: mentoring for underrepresented students by faculty members, diverse representation of perspectives within the curriculum and in course materials and readings, equal distribution and access of curricular opportunities among all types of students, and inviting and encouraging diverse perspectives within classroom discussions. One source of such data may be the Gallup

Survey conducted in 2018, however, the task force was informed that the Gallup data were not yet available for review by the council. Perhaps this can be revisited in the future.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

1. Our findings indicate that faculty are interested in how to support accessibility efforts but could use additional training opportunities in how to reconcile the challenges of achieving inclusive excellence. We recommend that Diversity Council organize or co-organize an event/resource for AY 2020-2021 to help support these efforts.
2. Several faculty and staff on campus have undertaken efforts to support inclusion at the College, including applying for grants, initiating book clubs, etc. We think these efforts are to be commended and should be recognized and supported by Diversity Council and the campus, generally. Diversity Council should continue to invite these members of the community to our meetings to share their findings and support their work by disseminating and publicizing their opportunities.
3. A persistent question is how to reach faculty that do not self-initiate training in this area. We recommend that the Dean of the Faculty and others consider opportunities to involve all faculty in training and collaboration regarding inclusive excellence.

### **Task Force 3: Highlighting Campus Diversity Initiatives and Programs**

#### **Task Force Members**

Samantha Vega (chair), *Associate Director, Center for Inclusion and Campus Involvement*

Katrina Jenkins, *Dean of Religious Life*

Teasa Mays, *Program Coordinator for Diversity and Inclusion, Admissions*

Deyenira Gonzalez, *Graduate Assistant, Center for Inclusion and Campus Involvement*

#### **Background**

The focus of this task force is to evaluate areas of opportunity for highlighting work on campus relating to diversity. How is Diversity Council communicating with the college community? How can this communication be improved?

#### **Method and Activities**

This task force reviewed the Diversity Council 2017-2018 Final Report, the Diversity Council Website, and the Diversity Council Facebook Page. The task force also reviewed the methods of publicizing and recruiting applications for Diversity Infusion Grants.

#### **Online Presence**

This task force completed an overhaul of the Diversity Council website, including updating membership and adding helpful links (e.g., to meeting minutes and reports). The Diversity Council Facebook page is relatively inactive but could serve as an additional communication avenue for the Council.

#### **Marketing of Campus Events**

We considered whether additional marketing efforts by the Council (e.g., campus-wide emails or a newsletter) would be helpful to highlight the numerous events and initiatives related to diversity sponsored by a variety of campus departments/groups. However, we ultimately concluded that this messaging would be redundant and potentially contribute to “email overload.” Because many standing members of the council represent (or are involved with) groups that plan such events, this may be best addressed by facilitating within-council communication regarding upcoming D&I events.

#### **Recruitment of Applications for Diversity Infusion Grants**

A multi-pronged approach for recruitment of Diversity Infusion Grant applications was used, including:

- Presentations from prior grant awardees at a Council meeting, including a discussion of numerous examples of previously funded projects
- Encouraging council members to disseminate information about the grants at department and/or division meetings
- Distribution of multiple campus-wide emails with application information
- Distribution of a flyer designed to appeal to student applicants, distributed in student common spaces including a QR code

This approach was successful in recruiting 5 Diversity Infusion Grant applications, a substantial increase from the 2018-2019 grant cycle.

**Recommendations**

1. The Council should continue to use approach outlined above (or similar) in recruitment of Diversity Infusion Grants.
2. Responsibilities for ongoing management of the online presence of the Council (e.g., website updates, social media presence, etc.) should be considered.
3. The Council should consider allocating time at meetings for members to provide updates and reminders regarding upcoming Diversity and Inclusion events and initiatives on campus.



### **Advisory Contributions**

In addition to the work conducted by the task forces, the Diversity Council also served in an advisory capacity in providing guidance regarding several issues on campus during AY 2019-2020. A summary of these contributions is included below.

1. The Council provided feedback on, and approved a draft of, the Rollins [Statement of Diversity and Inclusion Philosophy and Principles](#). The Council jointly brought this statement before the CLA faculty for approval with the Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness (Toni Holbrook) in September 2019, and the statement was approved and adopted.
2. During Spring 2020, the Council provided feedback regarding the Disruptive Classroom Behavior Policy proposed by the Director of Community Standards (Megan Rempala) and Associate Dean of Advising (Gabriel Barreneche).
3. During Summer 2020, in the wake of the movement for racial justice sparked by the death of George Floyd, the council distributed a statement providing guidance to the Rollins community on ways to engage with on-campus efforts initiated in response to this movement.