

UCIC Annual Briefing

June 2021

Background

This Annual Report is being written at the conclusion of an extraordinary year. In March 2020, the University closed in-person instruction and moved on-line due to COVID-19. Then on May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered, setting off a year of protests against police violence and systemic racism. We experienced a contentious and divisive national election in the fall, and in the spring the murder of Asian women in Atlanta brought to the surface anti-Asian hatred closely tied to the corona virus.

At the University of Redlands, faculty, staff and administrators worked through the summer to prepare for an entire year of online instruction, with no students on campus. We also worked to address a financial structural deficit that led to furloughs and layoffs.

The 2020-21 year also marked the 5th year of the University Council on Inclusiveness and Community's (UCIC) existence. It was in the fall of 2015 when the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri triggered protests and activism on college campuses across the country. At the University of Redlands, student protests and organizing led to a November 2015 Forum on Race attended by 500 people. That same month, President Kuncl announced the creation of the UCIC. The President sought nominations from the various university constituencies (faculty, staff, admin, and students). In January 2016 the 34-member council convened.

The UCIC was charged by President Kuncl to “consider, plan, and communicate actions and progress on our commitment to improve the University of Redlands’ culture and climate for all.” To guide the work of the UCIC the council adopted President Kuncl’s language: “We’re in a process of becoming... a process of becoming and evolving... remaining committed to a rich history of excellence by redoubling and sustaining our efforts in important areas and exploring new way of being in the modern world.”

Mission and Vision

Today, the following Mission and Vision statements expand upon President Kuncl’s initial charge and function to guide our work.

Mission - The UCIC is a University-wide body with broad representation committed to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all students, faculty, staff, and other stakeholders. The Council will pursue recommendations ensuring programs, policies, and practices that are just, equitable, and ingrained in the fabric of the University.

Vision - The UCIC is dedicated to promoting inclusiveness and excellence across all units, curricular and co-curricular, for the purpose of moving beyond realizing numerical diversity in order to advance achievement, respect, regard, and involvement for all in the workings of the university.

2020-21 – UCIC Activities

This year's activities can be put into two categories.

Deepening Our Understanding and Connections – Over the past two years, we have established a pattern of inviting key University actors to come to a UCIC meeting to help inform us of diversity and inclusion issues, actions, and concerns in their spheres. In this way, we develop a more comprehensive understanding of the University, and build connections with people. This year, we met with the following:

- In July, President Kuncel joined us. In a wide-ranging and fruitful conversation, he shared his vision and recommendations. He noted that his approach to DEI matters is to develop decentralized leadership across campus and has tried to move in this direction through the diversification of his cabinet, putting more women and people of color into top administrative positions. He encouraged the UCIC to be more proactive in “inviting ourselves to the party” meaning that we should reach out to Administrators and the Board of Trustees to be included in their discussions.
- In our September meeting, we invited a number of people involved in developing restorative justice practices on campus. Already 30 people have been trained, and another 25 would go through training in December, including people from the Marin campus. The goal is to offer Restorative Justice alternatives to existing student conduct processes. A larger goal is to develop restorative justice practices to resolve disagreements that may arise outside the realm of Student Affairs’ conduct process. Erica Moorer is taking a significant lead in this area.
- In November 2020, members of an Ad Hoc group, tasked to develop a University-wide Anti-Racism statement, attended our meeting. This group, which included representatives from across campus constituencies and the Board of Trustees produced a strong statement that was approved by faculty, administration, staff, and the Board of Trustees. Two segments are particularly relevant to the work of the UCIC. One states that we “*will listen and learn from each other and work to hear and amplify the voices of those who have been marginalized, and we will use every opportunity to create lasting change in alignment with these objectives.*” Second, the University commits to *bringing together all constituents to create and implement an anti-racism action plan with specific goals and objectives. Our progress will be measured on set dates and all will be able to inspect, review, and question the outcomes.*

- In February 2021, Yan Xie, from the Institutional Research Office came to our meeting. She is developing a number of data reports and dashboards that will make data accessible to the University community. We hope that the “Diversity Snapshot” page will be a resource for the UCIC to analyze and develop a regular practice of sharing information with the University. Currently it is still under construction.
- In March 2021, we invited Amy Moff-Hudec, who is the Director of the School of Continuing Studies. We were excited to learn about a number of certificate programs that are being offered or developed that address DEI issues. These include certificates in LGBTQ Leadership, Mental Health and Spirituality and Racial Justice.

Actions to Advance Inclusion and Community – The UCIC took an active role to advance diversity, equity and inclusion work this year.

- In June, 2020, the UCIC wrote and sent to President Kuncl and the Board of Trustees a memo entitled: “Recommended Actions in Response to Anti-Black Racism.” The memo was written in response to the George Floyd murder, and offered specific recommendations to address systemic racism and the financial difficulties faced by the University. In the summer, UCIC members were part of Christopher Jones’ summer webinar series on Challenging Conversations. The webinar led directly to Keith Osajima working with the Alumni Office to offer a 4-week on-line “class” on systemic racism.
- On August 18, 2020, the UCIC sent a memo to the Board of Trustees in response to a University-wide communication from President Kuncl in which he addressed, among other matters, concerns regarding the Redlands Alums for Black Lives Matter group. The UCIC objected to the characterization of the issue and sent the Board of Trustees a memo offering our perspectives and calls for action.
- UCIC members took part in the Diversity Town Hall in September 2020 and three UCIC members chaired working groups charged with developing the Diversity Strategic Plan effort. Work on the Diversity Strategic plan continued through the year.
- Through the year, partly in response to the George Floyd murder and the University’s Anti-Racism Statement, the Board of Trustees developed an ad hoc Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee. This is a significant step, as the Board has never had such a committee. The plan is for it to become a permanent standing committee. The UCIC with Christopher Jones and Board of Trustee members to develop the committee and plan activities. In the May 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, an educational program led by Dr. Benjamin Reese. The entire Board was also sent Daryl Smith’s book, *The Promise of Diversity in Higher Education*. UCIC participation in the development and activities of the DEI Committee signals the Board of Trustees interest in working with us.
- As mentioned above, UCIC members also took part in Restorative Justice trainings.
- UCIC supported, attended, and participated in a number of Public Square events.
- We monitored progress on the Campus Climate survey, followed the University’s efforts to become a Hispanic Serving Institution, and became aware of the Educational

Assessment Committee's work to develop DEI assessment activities into campus academic programs and units.

- In April, in response to the murder of 6 Asian women in Atlanta, the UCIC co-signed with the Faculty of Color Caucus, a statement on Anti-Asian Hatred.
- In our last meeting in May, the issue of the University of Redlands granting permission for police training surfaced. This issue may continue into next year.

Reflections and Future Directions

There is no question that the 2020-2021 academic year was challenging on many levels and for many people at the University of Redlands. It was also true that many at the University met those challenges with creativity, energy and determination. From the UCIC vantage point, awareness of systemic racism and DEI matters grew significantly across campus, and new actions and institutional changes were generated as a result. This carries implications for the role and work of the UCIC.

While there is still much work to do, we leave this year with important new structures and initiatives in place. The Senior Diversity and Inclusion Office is established and is taking on important work at the Cabinet, Trustee, and campus level. With the restorative justice training, increasing numbers of people are developing perspectives, skills and processes that could potentially shift the campus culture and ways conflicts are addressed. The Public Square offered weekly events that featured students, faculty and outside speakers. The University adopted an Anti-Racism statement which can guide on-going work. DEI initiatives are unfolding across all academic units. The Board of Trustees is creating a DEI committee. The Educational Assessment Committee is initiating a project to incorporate assessment of DEI work into existing academic assessment efforts.

The UCIC has supported, and in many instances, participated in these efforts, but it is important to note that much of the initiative, leadership and activity has happened outside of the group. In other words, whereas early in our existence, the UCIC saw its role partly to prod, encourage, and/or demand that people take on DEI work, now there appears to be good momentum across the University. The context for UCIC work, then, appears to be different. UCIC's future directions below are familiar, but where once we felt like the lone voice in the wilderness, today there are more actors and energy across campus to help carry the load, and more policies and structures in place to hopefully sustain the work. Here's are recommendations for future work. UCIC should continue to:

- Learn about and keep track of all that is happening across the campus with respect to DEI. This means inviting key people to come to UCIC meetings, perhaps starting with the new President.

- Serve as a place for individuals and groups to bring important DEI issues to the University's attention.
- Be a voice to express concerns and make recommendations to the Administration and Board of Trustees.
- Improve the communication of our work and the University's DEI efforts, perhaps working with others to develop a regular mechanism to report DEI data.
- Participate in and support University-wide DEI efforts.

UCIC Members during 2020-21

- Robin Cooper, Counseling Center
 - Martín Hoecker-Martinez, Physics
 - Jose Lalas, School of Education
 - Paige Mann, Armacost Library
 - Jeff Martinez, Athletics
 - Briar Meszaros, CAS Undergraduate
 - Dalyn Montgomery, School of Education
 - Keith Osajima, Race & Ethnic Studies
 - Daria Pikulina, CAS Undergraduate
 - Belinda Sandoval Zazueta, Admissions
 - Iyan Barrera-Sandri, Information Technology Services
 - Marco Schindelmann, School of Music
 - Denise Spencer, Race and Ethnic Studies, Women, Gender, and Sexuality, and the Meditation Room
 - Devan Steele, Alumni
 - Jennifer Tilton, Race and Ethnic Studies
 - Peter Tupou, Memorial Chapel and Campus Diversity and Inclusion
 - John Walsh, College of Arts & Sciences
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- Christopher Jones, Senior Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Regularly Invited Guest