



Cornell University

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Dear Dean DeRosa,

I write to update you and the faculty senate on the progress of the racial justice and equitable futures initiatives over the last academic year. We thank the senate for their very thoughtful work that went into the three proposals that emerged from President Pollack's [message](#) to the Cornell community on July 16, 2020.

As you are aware, President Pollack and Provost Kotlikoff responded to the faculty senate's proposals that emerged from Working Groups C (the development of a research center), S (an educational requirement for students) and F (an educational requirement for faculty), in December 2021. This response is summarized below, along with progress to date on each.

President Pollack and Provost Kotlikoff noted that there was strong support for the development of a Center for Racial Justice and Equitable Futures. As a result, a [national search](#) has been launched for the inaugural director of this center. The inaugural director will "...be responsible for further developing the capacity of the center to serve as a central node that connects and amplifies scholarship on racism, indigeneity, ethnicity, and bias". The search committee is co-chaired by Brooks School of Public Policy Dean Colleen Barry, and me, with search committee members drawn from across the university, with assistance from the academic executive search firm Isaacson Miller. We anticipate the search identifying an inaugural director sometime this fall semester.

On the proposal from Working Group S, an educational requirement for students, President Pollack and Provost Kotlikoff noted that the three resolutions considered by the senate conflicted on important aspects of the proposal, and that none received majority support. Furthermore, university bylaws place graduation requirements in the colleges and units that grant degrees. The president and provost therefore charged an implementation committee in the Spring of 2022 to develop a process for implementing an educational requirement for students, that ensures overall learning goals are developed and achieved while respecting the curriculum responsibility of colleges and schools. The implementation committee includes associate deans of undergraduate education from each of the undergraduate colleges and schools that award degrees, along with a representative appointed by the Dean of Faculty, and is chaired by me. The implementation committee has decided to focus its work first on an educational requirement for undergraduate students, given the significant differences with the graduate and professional students population, with plans to take

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up a requirement for the latter group after. The implementation committee met a few times over the Spring semester to understand where each college is with regards to such a requirement. What has emerged is that the landscape in many of the colleges has changed significantly since President Pollack's message. A number of colleges have already modified their curriculum (e.g. the Nolan School of Hotel Administration and School of Industrial Labor & Relations) or are in the process of modifying their curriculum to institute such a requirement for their undergraduate degrees.

Therefore, the goal of the committee is to ensure that this requirement is implemented in a way that all Cornell students experience the same learning goals, although each college has an interest in doing so taking into account their own local contexts. The committee has been engaging with the Directors of the following units: Africana Studies & Research Center; American Indian & Indigenous Studies Program; American Studies Program; Asian American Studies Program; Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies Program; Latina/o Studies Program, on their disciplinary expertise towards such a course(s). The goal is to have a policy and process in place for the Fall of 2023.

Also note that the work of these colleges and schools follow up President Pollack's message that colleges and schools to undertake "*..a systematic review of the curriculum [...] to ensure that courses reflect, represent and include the contributions of all people.*" This work has been aided in part by the development and offering of new guides on [Curriculum Mapping for Diversity and Inclusion](#) from the Center for Teaching Innovation, and on [Inclusive Curriculum Review](#) from the Cornell Intergroup Dialog Project. Furthermore, the senate's [Faculty Committee on Program Review](#) (FCPR), has revised its guide for department and program review, to more explicitly evaluate the progress of departments and programs on this goal.

On the proposal from Working Group F, an educational requirement for faculty, President Pollack and Provost Kotlikoff also noted that the three resolutions conflicted on important aspects of the proposal, and that like the Working Group S proposals, none received majority support that would make such a program for faculty mandatory. They have asked the deans of the colleges and schools to consider the spirit of the resolutions, and to identify ways in which their faculty "*... engage(ment) with diverse colleagues, students, members of the staff, and with the broader community.*" Accordingly, the Provost's Office of Faculty Development & Diversity (OFDD) has been working with the OFDD's Advisory group, which includes representation from the colleges and schools, on the development of a faculty education program that would engage faculty from across the university. This program will start with a pilot, being developed in collaboration with faculty from American Indian & Indigenous Studies Program, Africana Studies & Research Center, and Asian American Studies, and will be launched at the upcoming New Faculty Orientation scheduled for the beginning of the Fall semester 2022.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this update.

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CC: Michael Kotlikoff, Provost
Martha Pollack, President