

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: CORES and COPS Leaders

From: Lou Anna K. Simon

Subject: Status Update to CORES and COPS Campus Conversations

CC: ASMSU, COGS, RHA

Date: March 28, 2016

In the time since our February 19 session, additional meetings have been held across campus to respond to issues and expand the dialogue regarding the processes and actions MSU is taking to continue progress toward inclusive excellence. Among the units and departments that have conducted these meetings are: Residence Education and Housing Services, Residential and Hospitality Services, Culinary Services, MSU Police Department, and the Office for Institutional Equity and Office for Inclusion & Intercultural Initiatives (I3). Town hall meetings, specific to the concerns previously identified, have been held by the associated units and offices to engage students. From this dialogue and ongoing positive conversation has come tangible action, but more must be done.



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I thank you for your leadership, your commitment to our institutional values, and for partnering with us to build a stronger and more welcoming campus community. Your leadership is a testament to the Spartan spirit, and our discussions are proving fruitful. We look forward to continued constructive dialogue and actionable ideas on these crucial issues.

Updates from Units and Departments

Residential and Hospitality Services (RHS) continues to work to provide an inclusive living community that supports the educational aspirations of all our students. Dialogue is key to the educational process and as such RHS is committed to hosting an all-campus town hall meeting each semester. RHS and Infrastructure Planning and Facilities will be conducting an Inclusive Excellence review, which will cover policy, hiring and intercultural training practices.

Residence Education and Housing Services (REHS) and Culinary Services (CS) are committed to meeting with CORES and COPS leadership, RHA and student staff on a regular basis each semester to discuss issues and problem

solve together. In addition, REHS will be adding a staff member to work with various university offices regarding Title IX and bias incidents.

The need to make SAFE and SARV accessible for students with disabilities is an issue that has been raised. With respect to SAFE, the directions for students who need accommodations is included in the eLearning, and students were referred to the Title IX Coordinator's office. For example, accessible text was available for SAFE, however we recognize the need for this to be more readily apparent in the instructions. In the notice to students participating in SAFE, there is not only a trigger warning, but students are also advised if they need accommodations to contact OIE. There is also a "Frequently Asked" document that is on the OIE website that provides instructions for accommodations. We are continuing to review other ways in which accommodations should be provided to students with disabilities. When accommodations are requested for SARV, students will work directly with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD). The directions for requesting accommodations will be added to the information provided to incoming students.

Student Affair and Services

Renovations to improve accessibility in the restrooms in Dem Hall are underway. The soap and towel dispensers have been lowered and mirrors have been installed. Plans for redesigning stalls for greater accessibility are being developed. Additional issues of accessibility have been identified and plans for addressing these concerns are being developed as well.

The Office for Inclusion & Intercultural Initiatives (I3) has conducted focus groups to engage students through an interactive process in structuring the format and content of the e-learning module on inclusion. Students report a desire to have an opportunity to review the final product before it is launched in the fall. I3 is working to include as many voices as possible without delaying the launch of the module. I3 has offered dates and times to get input on the content from various student constituencies. Students were given an opportunity and additional time to provide input electronically. At the Feb. 19 meeting, representatives were told that the script and video for the e-learning will be vetted with CORES/COPS (the first script reading is March 25, 2016), with a target date of July 18–August 5 for the actual launch of the diversity eLearning.

Students remain concerned about the breadth of training for faculty and staff. I3 continues to offer implicit bias training across the campus. The office is currently offering and conducting workshops for administrators, faculty, and staff, including MSU law enforcement on disrupting bias, microaggressions, and creating inclusive learning environments. In addition, the office is developing an educational series on topics including diversity awareness, implicit/explicit bias, microaggressions, racial literacy, and inclusive leadership as ongoing offerings. I3 is working with faculty governance to gather additional input on

resources to support faculty in their work to create inclusive learning environments, and will continue to collaborate across campus to provide curricular, co-curricular, and professional development offerings that support a campus climate that values all aspects of diversity.

Academic Developments

Progress has been made in several areas discussed in previous sessions, although work continues. The changes for eligibility for in-state tuition have been implemented and the changes have been posted. In curriculum, Associate Provost Doug Estry has assembled a group of integrative studies directors, faculty and students to review the diversity content of MSU's required integrative studies courses, and those already carrying the "diversity" designation.

The colleges have been working since January to promote weekly diversity activities and programs through their social media channels.

The Steering Committee of Academic Governance has charged the University Committee on Undergraduate Education to form an ad hoc committee of students and faculty to discuss best practices in creating inclusive learning environments.

The programs in African American and African Studies (AAAS) and Chicano/Latino Studies (CLS) are moving forward with new leadership. Dr. Glen Chambers has assumed leadership in AAAS and the CLS program has four finalists in their director search. Dr. Chambers is meeting regularly with students and conducted a first full-faculty meeting. Both programs are working with respective deans to development action plans for program enhancement and expansion, including additional faculty and graduate assistantships in both. Beyond these colleges, several academic units have received implicit bias training through the I3 office and through academic advisers.

The graduate school has proposed the expansion of programs, currently funded, which support under-represented students, and a network to support the scholarly activity of minority faculty members is being planned with the assistance of faculty focus groups. Twenty-five faculty members are being supported this summer for an enhanced mentoring program and a stipend for research and travel support. While there is more to accomplish, these efforts can result in an enhanced environment for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as faculty.

Student Group Space

Some initial work has been completed, and other projects are under way to address the need for group spaces. A walkthrough of the currently assigned spaces was completed by IPF, Facilities Planning, Residential and Hospitality Services and Student Affairs. An assessment of the current spaces to determine need for updating and renovation has been provided. These possible projects are under review. Lastly, RHS, Student Affairs and Services and Facilities Planning, are participating in a review of possible future student group space.

A Diverse Faculty and Staff

MSU recognizes the need to increase the representation of faculty, staff, and administrators of color, particularly in certain jobs, fields, and units where they are underrepresented as compared to their availability in the labor market. This is an area where we've had some successes, but not enough. We know the value and importance of students having role models in and outside the classroom that have cultural backgrounds that represent the diversity of students at MSU. Any declines in the racial and ethnic representation of faculty and staff at MSU is a cause for concern and action. While there are certain legal constraints on strategies that can be employed to increase the racial/ethnic diversity of our work force, we are committed to recruitment strategies that will increase diversity in the applicant pools, and will continue monitoring of interview pools and hiring outcomes. The training that is currently provided to faculty and staff search committees includes strategies for recruiting for diversity, ways to increase the diversity in the applicant and interview pools, screening and selection criteria that includes diversity as an institutional value, avoiding bias in the process, and unlawful questions in the interview process. This is a daily responsibility of the hiring units, I3, and the offices of human resources.

Continuing Dialogue - Moving Forward

The exchange of ideas and experiences, the development of cross-cultural understanding, and appreciation of individual differences are fundamental to MSU's commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment. Whether in classrooms, residence halls, or social settings, the importance of diversity cannot be overstated. MSU, through formal curriculum in the classroom, and various offices, including the Office for Inclusion & Intercultural Initiatives, Faculty and Organizational Development, Human Resources, Student Affairs and Services, and Residence Education and Housing Services, and through our efforts in the Neighborhoods and the colleges, has promoted a series of broad dialogues that are intended to develop and enhance cross-cultural understanding.

We recognize that these processes are a work in progress, and we will continue to make concerted efforts to broaden our impact. We are committed to continued, open dialogue with students as we move forward toward positive change.