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Introduction

The Sam Fox School Racial Justice Task Force was appointed by the Dean and the Directors of Art and Architecture to curate an immediate response to the uprisings following George Floyd's death in the summer 2020. The group was charged with curating short- and medium-term (within the next academic year) responses that elevate knowledge, discourse, dialogue, and action as related to the experiences and demands of Black and African American students and faculty.

The work of the Task Force builds on the efforts of many past and ongoing groups, both within the Sam Fox School and across WashU. The Task Force is also indebted to the organizing and clarity of the undergraduate students involved in the WashU Takes Responsibility Campaign. The Task Force convened four times over the summer to discuss the content of this charge, leading to this report.

Concerns Addressed by the Task Force

The Task Force identified the following as significant concerns that should be addressed:

- Communication about diversity, inclusion, equity, and racial justice.
- Lack of a common culture of expectations for students, faculty, and staff to interact with each other regardless of their many different identities.
- Opportunities to set the tone for incoming and prospective students about school resources and culture.
- Lack of opportunities to build connections between Black and African American students to foster spaces and positive experiences.
- Lack of student representation across the Sam Fox School representing the needs of Black and African American students.
- Insufficient staff support that would bind together, facilitate, support, and document all of the work across the Sam Fox School related to these topics.

Evaluating, Sustaining, and Continuing These Efforts

The actions suggested here for the 2020-2021 academic year must be sustained, as addressing a history of racial injustice and anti-Blackness is not a one-time endeavor. Throughout the year, follow-through, impact, and success of these recommendations should be evaluated and documented (the Task Force recommends considering a Practicum student from the Brown School to support this effort).

In addition, the Task Force recommends future bodies of students, staff, faculty, and alumni are convened to continue this conversation, add new action items, and review the current scope of work. The Sam Fox School's standing Fairness & Diversity Committee will take on some aspects of this work, but with a broader charge focused on multi-identity diversity, there is a need to focus specifically on the experiences of Black and African American students, faculty, and staff.

Communicating Outcomes

One of the most important gaps identified by the Task Force was the clear communication and knowledge about ongoing activities related to diversity, inclusion, equity, and racial justice. From the

work of the Fairness & Diversity Committee to recruitment efforts at HBCUs to curricular offerings, the range of ongoing work in the Sam Fox School is not visible to students, alumni, or prospective students. Regular, clear communication about these efforts is necessary to give the community confidence that action is being taken, and to create venues to involve others and push the School even further.

Building a Long-Term Culture

The Task Force identified that this work is about building a long-term, sustainable culture that recognizes and supports Black students, faculty, staff, alumni, practitioners, and partners. This cultural change goes beyond any one action item and must percolate through the school in studio culture, in student group programming, and in our daily interactions.

Requiring Additional Staff Support

Finally, the Task Force recognized that there is a gap between the current staff capacity to support and facilitate diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice work and the demand within the School. Additional staff support dedicated to connecting with students, facilitating discussions, and evaluating efforts is essential. Appended to this report is a list of roles the Task Force identified as valuable for this individual.

Prioritizing Investment

The Task Force acknowledges that accomplishing all these goals in one year may be challenging given the capacity and attention of the Sam Fox School. They recommend focus on the following items:

- Produce a regular email update to the whole school that gives updates about what's happening with Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Racial Justice
- Establish a specific affinity group for Black and African American students across the Sam Fox School
- Create content for graduate student recruitment that highlights student support on campus and in the Sam Fox School
- Develop a baseline for civility and interaction between students, staff, and faculty
- Develop training for building more inclusive classrooms and environments

Most of these efforts are already underway, and additional focus and investment are required to make measurable progress with these goals.

Sam Fox School Racial Justice Task Force, Summer 2020

<i>Georgia Binnington</i>	<i>Shantel Blakely</i>
<i>Adrian Gonzalez</i>	<i>Annie Kern</i>
<i>Teddy Levy</i>	<i>Bruce Lindsey</i>
<i>Tim Portlock</i>	<i>Shreyas Ravikrishnan</i>
<i>Melisa Betts Sanders</i>	<i>Ian Weaver</i>
<i>Sparkle Whitaker</i>	

Prepared with support from Liz Kramer

Immediate-Term

These requests should be undertaken in the 2020-2021 academic year, with the intention of continuing these practices into the future.

Communication with the school

[Produce a regular email update to the whole school that gives updates about what's happening with Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Racial Justice](#)

Beginning in fall 2020, the Sam Fox School must regularly and clearly share back work related to diversity, inclusion, equity, anti-racism, and racial justice. This process of reporting must be made available to students, staff, faculty, alumni, National Council, and the broader community. Updates should include ongoing programming, courses, training, proposals, demographics, and more. These updates should also highlight progress towards representation and inclusion, as well as towards stated goals, and should invite feedback from the community. Be transparent about who was involved in the discussion, and what the process of conversation and decision-making was.

Highlight this content in the regular Sam Fox School e-news. Share clear communication about where to find information in e-news, website, and other sites. Ensure that all communication is documented online for archive purposes. This reporting should also become part of the Sam Fox School Annual Report.

- **Who:** Liz Kramer with input from Task Force / Fairness & Diversity
- **When:** At a minimum, quarterly beginning in fall 2020

Supporting Diverse Students to Choose the Sam Fox School

[Develop specific groups to examine closely the pipeline for each college, grad and undergrad, looking at touchpoints along the way from first contact through graduation.](#)

Convene a group of faculty, students, and alumni in each program to examine the process of recruiting students, and identify new opportunities to recruit Black and African American students. This effort should focus on how to tie together the resources including social support, financial aid (including scholarships and on-campus jobs), and an understanding of St. Louis. An output of this process should include a diagram or map that illustrates the process from potential student to an alum, and highlights the differences between the programs.

In undergraduate recruitment, understand the opportunities for the Sam Fox School to influence the process, working with Georgia Binnington and Rachel Yoon.

In graduate recruitment, understand the processes for each program, and work with Taylor Yocum and department chairs to understand the process and identify additional opportunities to support.

- **Who:** Georgia Binnington, Rachel Yoon, Taylor Yocom, department chairs
- **When:** 2020-2021 academic year

Create content for graduate student recruitment that highlights student support on campus and in the Sam Fox School

Students are not clear about what the supports are across campus including financial aid, social resources, and St. Louis. A standalone piece that highlights some of these supports offered by the University would serve to highlight the culture of the University. This piece would be used in portfolio reviews, conversations with prospective graduate students, and could be referenced in digital communications.

- **Who:** Shreyas with support from Georgia and Communications
- **When:** For recruitment for fall 2021

Make connections between prospective students and current students

In undergraduate admissions, work with Rachel Yoon to support the virtual recruitment cycle in the 2020-2021 academic year. Involve faculty of color in portfolio reviews and other student recruitment. Involve students in the follow-up conversations after students have been admitted. Specifically engage students from the to-be-created affinity group. Support virtual recruitment process for 2020-2021 academic year.

In graduate recruitment, engage students and create venues for direct engagement with prospective students. Create opportunities for current graduate students from the to-be-created affinity group to be ambassadors for incoming students. Involve students in the follow-up conversations after students have been admitted. Support graduate students in establishing human connections and personal relationships with incoming students, and particularly about understanding St. Louis.

Consider adding a direct connection on the website for prospective students to connect with a current student.

- **Who:** Student organizations
- **When:** Immediate

Host a specific preview weekend for Black students and/or students of color for graduate programs

Empower graduate student organizations to offer a preview weekend or preview programming for prospective students of color that don't have experience with graduate studies. Consider bringing these students in as a cohort to build additional relationships and connections to each other. *This may require additional funding to support, and should align with other programs such as lectures and*

exhibitions that are relevant.

- **Who:** Taylor Yocom and graduate student organizations
- **When:** Spring 2021

Add racially diverse alumni and/or practitioners to portfolio review for graduate programs

The portfolio review process for graduate applications is an essential part of acceptance into our programs. Intentionally invite Black or African American alumni and/or practitioners to participate in the portfolio review process in order to increase the diversity of people involved in the review process. The Chairs should identify the role of these participants in the review, and ensure they have space to participate.

- **Who:** Architecture: Audrey Treece; MFA-VA: Lisa Bulawsky; MFA-IVC: John Hendrix
- **When:** Spring 2021

Increase outreach for graduate recruitment to new prospective students

In order to have Black and African American prospective graduate students in the pipeline, a specific effort must be made to reach these students. Efforts are already underway in architecture, and increased outreach should be undertaken in the MFA-VA and MFA-IVC.

- **Who:** Architecture: Audrey Treece; MFA-VA: Lisa Bulawsky; MFA-IVC: John Hendrix
- **When:** All academic year

Offer shared workshops or classes for students at HBCUs as a way to build partnerships

Currently, one class is taught in partnership with Harris Stowe State University — Segregation by Design in the College of Architecture. Expand these relationships, such as the existing relationship with Morgan State alumni, by offering programming, courses, and workshops that are accessible to HBCU students. Be mindful of the attention HBCUs have been receiving in the current crisis, and that there may be challenges in administrative relationship building. Consider students leading efforts to include students from HBCUs in WashU programming and vice versa. This might be an option for the new 1.5 credit engagement and St. Louis classes.

- **Who:** Directors to identify appropriate classes to begin with, recruitment team to identify appropriate HBCUs to partner with.
- **When:** Spring 2021

Ensure a 20-21 version of the Alberti Program

Working with youth is an important part of increasing awareness about architecture, art, and design as potential career and educational paths. The College of Architecture's long-standing commitment to the Alberti Program is a good example of commitment to cultivating this interest in youth in the St. Louis committee. Offer a version of the program in the 2020-2021 academic year, and specifically focus on recruiting Black, African American, and students of color to play leadership roles.

- **Who:** Office for Socially Engaged Practice
- **When:** Starting fall 2020

Evaluate current partnership with College Prep Program

Ensure art, architecture, and design are represented in other pipeline programs at WashU and in the region. In past years, scholars have participated in a Design Thinking course taught by faculty from the Communication Design program. Follow-up with current program leads and understand what happened this year, and how we can best support the current program.

- **Who:** Audra Hubbell, Courtney Brewster (CPP head), Office for Socially Engaged Practice
- **When:** Fall 2020

Strengthening Student Organizations & Relationships

Establish a specific affinity group for Black and African American students across the Sam Fox School

While Black and African American students play important leadership roles in other student organizations across the school, there is no specific organization that represents their interests. Develop and support a student organization that convenes and represents Black students. This group can play a leadership role in advocating student needs, serve as mentors for other students, participate and lead previously mentioned recruitment efforts, and interface with faculty and staff on initiatives and events.

- **Who:** Task force students with support from Shantel Blakely and Liz Kramer
- **When:** Immediately

Strengthen NOMAS organization

Within the College of Architecture, NOMAS serves an important role. Continue to strengthen this organization by recruiting a faculty member to serve as the bridge between the organization and students, provide support for NOMAS to address their goals as an organization, and continue involvement in the NOMAS competition and participation in the NOMA conference. Establish connections with alumni involved in NOMAS and determine firms interested in working with NOMAS.

- **Who:** NOMAS student leadership team, Heather Wooffer, Audrey Treece
- **When:** Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

Uplift voices of current Black students

Continue to highlight the experiences, voices, and work of Black and African American students, alumni, and faculty through profiles and social media. Ensure that this does not become a big ask of time for those featured, but highlights their work and experiences.

- **Who:** Communications, Office for Socially Engaged Practice
- **When:** Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

Support student-curated and juried exhibitions

Support a student-curated exhibition to raise awareness and promote a conversation about how artists and architects explore identity in their work, potentially in partnership with the Museum.

Support a national juried exhibition at Des Lee Gallery (or another space) that focuses on black identity and expression. This juried exhibition (for national artists, designers, and students) could bring artist's work and ideas while educating and sharing with students, faculty, staff, and the St. Louis community, and include a jury of students, faculty, alum, and invited artists and designers.

If possible, connect exhibitions to a student preview weekend for students of color.

- **Who:** Kemper, Students
- **When:** Timeline TBD

Host a mixer for alums, students, and practitioners

Create casual interactions to bring together Black students, alumni, and practitioners. Support students in leading this initiative. Offer remote interactions in 2020-2021, and continue these interactions regularly.

- **Who:** Student leadership
- **When:** TBD by students

Fostering a Shared Culture in Classrooms and Studio

Develop a baseline for civility and interaction between students, staff, and faculty

Creating standards of interaction that guide the relationships between students, faculty, and staff would help set the tone for the school. The Fairness & Diversity Committee will host a virtual event in early fall 2020 for students, staff, and faculty to continue building on the draft civility code:

https://padlet.com/shantelblakely/SFS_civility_code.

Once a co-created code exists, it should be disseminated through the School. On a regular basis, there should be assessments and updates. An ongoing, collaborative process of developing the code

might involve Peer Mentors, student group leadership, teaching assistants, and other students who can act as peer support.

- **Who:** Task Force, Fairness & Diversity Committee, student leaders from Peer Mentors and others
- **When:** Fall 2020 and Spring 2021

Develop training for building more inclusive classrooms and environments

Develop training for faculty, teaching assistants, and others that support creating more inclusive classrooms and environments. Develop training that is specifically relevant to the Sam Fox School as well as partnering with on-campus entities like the Academy for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Implement training regularly during TA training, faculty training, and orientations. Training must be offered regularly and assessed for impact.

- **Who:** Fairness & Diversity Committee
- **When:** Ongoing

Long-Term

In addition to the recommendations above, to be implemented in the 2020-2021 academic year, the following recommendations must be pursued in the long-term. We expect to see these ideas more fully fleshed out in the Sam Fox School strategic plan and other documentation.

Increase studio faculty diversity

Hire Black and African American studio faculty across the Sam Fox School and ensure their support and retention.

Develop, support, and invest in pipeline programs

Continue to invest in pipeline programs from elementary education through graduate school to ensure Black and African American students are aware and have access to art, architecture, and design education.

Dedicate space and/or resources to encourage protest, conversation, and learning

Create spaces and resources within the Sam Fox School that encourage and support students and faculty to protest, discuss, and learn, particularly as it supports extending their practices as artists, architects, and designers.

Expand study abroad options

Create study abroad options that go beyond traditional, Eurocentric centers and expose students to global and diverse culture, especially in the Fashion Design and Architecture concentrations.

Support entrepreneurship education and programming

Develop programming that supports students in learning about entrepreneurship, arts, and creativity. Develop partnerships with the Olin Business School and the Skandalaris Center. Offer courses that address these issues. Offer programming that brings students in contact with alumni and practitioner entrepreneurs.

Create a Campus Exchange Program with HBCUs

Building on existing relationships with HBCUs, create a campus exchange program that includes transfer credits that would allow students to experience the cultures of both schools. Consider options that range from study abroad to exchange programs.

Hire a staff member who is focused on diversity, inclusion, and equity

As previously mentioned, staff support to facilitate and move these efforts forward is required to be successful. The details below were compiled by the committee as roles this staff member could play.

Assistant Dean for Diversity, Fairness, Equity and Social Cohesiveness

- Connects with marginalized or underrepresented students
 - Including Black, Latinx, students from low-income backgrounds, students from local neighborhoods and international students
 - Potentially from the St. Louis community
- Understands the special concerns of Black students
- Skilled at creating and maintaining an equitable discussion environment and able to bring that perspective into faculty and staff meetings
- Tracks students in marginalized groups, across the timeline from the prospective applicant to the alumni/ae
 - Meets regularly with student affinity groups and assists with funding and official status
 - Develops lists of grant, scholarship, competition opportunities for SFS communications
 - Involved in retention of current students
 - Maintains a database of alumni from affinity groups
 - Coordinates with SFS Development team
 - Works with student affinity groups to host public lectures, etc. that could serve as networking events for alumni and current and prospective students. Perhaps short talks by alumni about their work.
- Attends selected faculty committee meetings (lectures, academic integrity, curriculum, strategic planning)
- Conducts trainings and discussions among student and faculty groups
- Works with student affinity groups to support onboarding of new students
- Works with Communications to develop and produce web content and features on student life that reflect the many cultures and ethnicities within the school
- Collaborates with Communications to develop features on initiatives and profiles of individuals at Sam Fox School
- Maintains regular contact with University centers (Habif, Diversity and Inclusion, Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Equity)

- Attends events and meets corresponding staff at other universities (Michigan, Harvard) to keep abreast of best practices in this area
- Reports to the Dean

Appendix: Priorities

Question 1: Which area is the most important area to focus in? Add an X in the box below.

Communication	Supporting Recruitment	Strengthening Student Organizations	Fostering a Shared Culture in Classroom and Studio
			xx

Question 2: Which 5 actions are most important to complete? Add an X in the box to the right.

Communication	Produce a regular email update to the whole school that gives updates about what's happening with Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Racial Justice	xxx
Supporting Diverse Students to Choose the Sam Fox School	Develop specific groups to examine closely the pipeline for each college, grad and undergrad, looking at touchpoints along the way from first contact through graduation.	x
	Create content for graduate student recruitment that highlights student support on campus and in the Sam Fox School	xxx
	Make connections between prospective students and current students	xx
	Host a specific preview weekend for Black students and/or students of color for graduate programs	x
	Add racially diverse alumni and/or practitioners to portfolio review for graduate programs	x
	Increase outreach for graduate recruitment to new prospective students	
	Offer shared workshops or classes for students at HBCUs as a way to build partnerships	xx
	Ensure a 20-21 version of the Alberti Program	x
	Evaluate current partnership with College Prep Program	xx
Strengthening Student Organizations & Relationships	Establish a specific affinity group for Black and African American students across the Sam Fox School	xxxxx
	Strengthen NOMAS organization	x
	Uplift voices of current Black students	x
	Support student-curated and juried exhibitions	
	Host a mixer for alums, students, and practitioners	
Fostering a Shared Culture in Classrooms and Studio	Develop a baseline for civility and interaction between students, staff, and faculty	xxx
	Develop training for building more inclusive classrooms and environments	xxx