

*NOW WHAT?*

*AFTER THE STUDENT/FACULTY PROTESTS, MARCHES,  
AND LISTS OF DEMANDS, HOW TO STRATEGICALLY  
CREATE A SUSTAINABLE EQUITY FRAMEWORK ON  
CAMPUS*

Julian R. Williams  
Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
University of South Carolina

\*The views/opinions expressed are my own and do not  
represent the University of South Carolina

# Introduction and National Context

The world is in the midst of the largest worldwide civil rights movement in modern history. While protests originally started in response to George Floyd's and Ahmaud Arbery's murders they have quickly evolved into larger conversations and movements about institutional racism.

- 2015 energy multiplied (Missouri and beyond)
- Although we're operating amidst COVID, our campus constituencies are still focused on equity and social change
- Athletics, policing, naming, and long-standing unaddressed equity issues are all potential institutional flashpoints
- It is critical for institutions to be proactive, providing direction to campus units, faculty, staff, and students on our commitment to inclusion and demonstrate intentionality.
- Emphasis on continued communication on issues related to social change, social justice, and DEI more broadly.
- Nothing short of bold leadership will get us through this moment.



- Higher education's foundations on inclusion, equity, are problematic since our inception:
  - Exclusionary
  - Segregated
  - Built by enslaved labor (in many instances)
  - History of campus protests/activism (Civil rights, anti-war, sexual assault, etc.)
  - It is crucial that we study our history, spaces, and symbols

- Areas of opportunity

Many of our institutions are behind in terms of DEI infrastructure

Lack of faculty and senior leadership diversity

We must increase our efforts to “institutionalize” our commitment to inclusion across campus. Diversity can't just be seen as the responsibility of the diversity officer.

If its important to you, you write it down, you hold yourself accountable, you make time for it, and you invest in it.



- Be honest with your community on your starting point
- Be patient: Progress will take time
- Be intentional: DEI and anti-racism efforts only designed for show will be unsuccessful over time
- If your anti-racism efforts or DEI efforts in general are not embedded within your institutional strategic plan, what message does that send about prioritization?
- We write down what is important to us
  - *What is in your DEI action plan?*
  - *What proactive steps are you or your office/area taking to further diversity, equity and inclusion on your campus?*



# What can your institution do right now to meet this moment?

- Build relationships with key constituencies on and off-campus
  - Community engagement will be critical
- Use this momentum to propel work forward and bring institutions closer to our values
- Strategically plan and communicate updates
  - If the only time your campus hears from you on DEI is when something bad happens, you're doing it wrong
  - Incorporate proactive anti-racism education
- Invest in DEI infrastructure!
- Communicate with ONE voice
  - Communication plan on DEI
  - Pitch stories, ideas, and communicate proactively
  - Communicate the “why?”
  - Dashboards on DEI metrics

# What can your institution do right now to meet this moment?

- Incentivize faculty through interdisciplinary grants: UofSC Racial Justice and Equity Research Fund
- Listen with empathy
- Examine professional development for faculty and staff
- Develop pipelines, pathways, and partnerships with K-12
- Ensure professional/administrative staff reflects diversity of our states and communities
- Expand on-campus education and increase administrative accountability for creation and maintaining an inclusive campus environment.

**We must approach this moment bravely, honestly, and intentionally**

# Resources

- EAB: 4 key components of a strong higher ed DEI plan:  
<https://eab.com/insights/expert-insight/academic-affairs/components-of-a-strong-dei-plan/>
- *How to Be an Anti-Racist*, Ibram X. Kendi
- *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehesi Coates
- *Strategic Diversity Leadership*, Damon Williams
- Stanford University Anti-Racism toolkit: <https://cardinalatwork.stanford.edu/manager-toolkit/engage/ideal-engage/anti-racism-toolkit>
- American College and University Educators (ACUE) Inclusive Teaching toolkit:  
<https://acue.org/inclusive-teaching-practices-toolkit/>

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS  
AND THANK YOU!

