

July 6, 2020



Office of the President

To our Quinnipiac community:

Over the last several weeks, faculty, staff and students have come together through various forums to listen, learn and share very personal and often painful experiences of racism at Quinnipiac. They have also come together to express hope – and articulate the expectation – that we will take steps to eradicate the injurious effects of racism within our own community.

These forums have been powerful reminders that it is time for our community to take the burden of our colleagues who are Black, Indigenous and people of color onto *our own* collective shoulders, so that it is not they who must again explain, or lead change, or exhort us that Black Lives Matter. Rather, each of us must commit to actions that will reverse an entrenched history of racism. Collectively, with forceful and concerted actions, we can work together to bring about change in our own communities, and within our own institution, by advancing equity, inclusiveness and anti-racism as cornerstones of who we are at Quinnipiac.

To that end, we are announcing **Quinnipiac's Actions to Advance Racial Justice**. The actions outlined below are informed by statements, pledges and ideas we heard from both faculty and student groups.

A 10-Point Plan of Action:

1. **We will begin an immediate curriculum review to increase learning about the roots and contemporary manifestations of social injustice, privilege, oppression and the drivers of social change.** We will expand across the university the types of reviews initiated by Dwayne Boucaud and Amber Kelly in the School of Health Sciences, and Hillary Haldane and Robert Yawson in the University Curriculum. We will aim for proposed changes this academic year.
2. **We will establish a clear and readily accessible system to report bias incidents.** Eradicating racism and racist behavior begins with holding each other accountable. People who witness, or are themselves the targets of, racist words or actions need a place to report these experiences. We will create and educate the community about this reporting process and ensure that our system includes efficient investigation and fair decision-making to build a safe and welcoming community for all.
3. **We will add student training on diversity, equity and inclusion** beginning this fall. All students will be required to complete annual training exploring the roots of racism, and actions to counter discrimination in society and in their own behaviors. In addition

- to online training, in-person sessions will be offered throughout the year and facilitated by members of the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement.
4. **We will monitor compliance and expand mandatory training for faculty and staff across the entire university** beyond the existing “Harassment and Discrimination” and “Managing Bias” online training. This will include in-person training within schools and units focusing on contemporary manifestations of racism and bias. This training will also work to build skills in facilitating and participating in difficult conversations.
 5. **We will enhance access to data describing Quinnipiac’s diversity.** We will expand the demographic data about our faculty, staff and student representation published on the university’s website. This will include data tracking progress on key diversity metrics, including faculty and staff advancement by rank and level.
 6. **We will expand affinity groups for faculty and staff on campus and offer alumni the opportunity to build affinity groups for people of color.** This will further amplify the voices of diverse groups on campus and in our alumni community.
 7. **We will improve policies and practices to enhance the pipeline and retention of under-represented faculty, staff and students.** This will include mandatory training and approval requirements for search committees to ensure more diverse candidate pools; openness to non-traditional candidate profiles; expansion of mentoring and development opportunities for faculty, staff and students of color; recruitment from more diverse high schools and community colleges; and greater diversification of our health services and student support professionals.
 8. **We will complete a review, and appropriately acknowledge, the Indigenous people of the land of this region who are Quinnipiac’s namesake.** We will continue work that has been guided by the Akomawt Educational Initiative to honor the legacy of the Indigenous people who lived here, to include refining the “Legend of the Bobcat” read at various events with a more appropriate representation of Quinnipiac’s roots and the development of a land acknowledgement statement.
 9. **We will increase university funding and attract philanthropy to augment resources for the Department of Cultural and Global Engagement.** This will fund many of the initiatives noted above as well as future projects developed in partnership with members of our community.
 10. **We will work with students and faculty to drive voter registration and participation.** Exercising one’s voting rights is the embodiment of enlightened citizenry and a cornerstone of our strategic plan, and holds elected leaders accountable for changes that are needed.

We are grateful that Professor Khalilah Brown-Dean has agreed to serve as the Senior Director for Inclusive Excellence, partnering with Vice President Don Sawyer, to champion implementation of Quinnipiac’s Actions to Advance Racial Justice. Greater detail will be released on each of these 10 initiatives, including how we will measure progress. We will continue to include our students, faculty staff and alumni in these critical discussions to ensure that your voices are heard, and that we persist in achieving ambitious change.

The university leadership holds itself accountable for progress on each of the initiatives noted above. But we cannot do it alone, and we should not. These actions require community-wide commitment, efforts and collaboration. We will not achieve the results to which we aspire unless we are passionate and authentic in our desire for systemic change. Quinnipiac has made notable progress in the last few years to become more inclusive.

However, the purpose of this letter is not to look back on those accomplishments. Rather, we want to look forward and focus on where we need to do much more to amplify progress.

It is our hope that by building understanding of the roots of racism and nurturing inclusive values during the formative years that students spend with us, Quinnipiac graduates leave our university with greater humility, empathy, compassion, respect for others, and the capacity for dialogue with individuals who have different lived experiences. Our essential purpose is to serve and advance each member of our community through education. It is a purpose that can be an antidote to these times when we are reminded frequently of all that separates us.

Let us come together, let us act to create a more just society, let us lead the way.

Judy Olian
President

Don C. Sawyer III
VP for Equity and Inclusion

