A Synthesis of UNL Stakeholder Calls to Action in Summer 2020
Themes to Inform UNL's Anti-Racism Journey
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The UNL Anti-Racism Journey Co-Leaders

In the summer of 2020 during a global pandemic taking a particularly large toll on Black and Brown communities, a Black man, George Floyd, was brutally killed by police. In this context, the existing movements for racial justice grew in strength and impact into what many have named an uprising against racism in the United States. At UNL, the work to strive for racial justice in the context of this uprising has been conceived of and operationalized as an anti-racism journey. This journey is led by the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, and the Co-Leaders (faculty and staff with expertise and insight on anti-racism from a variety of racial and disciplinary perspectives) but is intended to be a journey for each member of the UNL community individually and collectively. In fact, many stakeholders at UNL participated in naming the issues and topics that needed to be addressed during the process of creating and conceptualizing the anti-racism journey at UNL. These perspectives and contributions were analyzed and discussed by the Journey Co-Leaders and are presented here in the form of a six-pillar analysis.

The information contained in this document stems from the various conversations and requests made during the summer of 2020. From the Co-Leaders perspective, important stakeholders whose ideas and demands were, in fact, the genesis of the anti-racism journey at UNL must be attended to in order for our journey to be truly anti-racist. Stakeholder groups whose perspectives are highlighted here include faculty (e.g., Faculty Senate, Institute for Ethnic Studies, AFIRE[1], etc.), students (e.g., student athletes, Black Student Union, ASUN, etc.) and staff/administration (AAALC, AFIRE, etc.) from across the institution from varying racial backgrounds and with varying perspectives and insights into anti-racism.

The Co-Leaders have examined, analyzed, and discussed the original statements, providing several recommendations based on that analysis. We acknowledge the important work and labor by all of the groups who contributed demands. We also acknowledge that this document is our analysis and synthesis and should be understood as such. While we seek to acknowledge the groups from which various ideas and issues originally came, this is our interpretation and representation of their demands and ideas. At times we use their language, at times we use our interpretations of the ideas across groups. For those seeking to address the issues listed, we recommend revisiting the original documents and demands as appropriate.

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[1] Please see our Legend at the end of this document for acronym descriptions.

OUR FIVE PILLARS

The Co-Leaders have developed five pillars on how to continue on and deepen the impact of our anti-racist journey at UNL.

1. **Transparency, Inclusivity, & Responsiveness** As work is done to respond to these ideas and shift our institution towards racial justice, it is important to acknowledge and as meaningfully as possible, include those from whom the demands came. Meaningful transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness should be principles that guide action coming from the information in this document. Specifically, the people who are impacted most by the issues described here should also be the ones who are involved in the problem solving. Such important stakeholders should have not just a seat at the table, but also be adequately compensated for the labor (emotional, intellectual, and physical) that they contribute to address the issues described below.

2. **Remove Silos & Barriers Created by Racist Structures** Engaging in the work to address the issues described in this document is fundamentally an opportunity to build relationships and break down traditional silos and barriers created by racist power structures. Engaging with each item described below from a perspective of relationship building and more equitable power distribution will open up new anti-racist, racially-just possibilities on our campus and beyond.

3. **Inadequacy of Small Tweaks, Quick Fixes and "Nebraska Nice"** Addressing these issues should come from a perspective that achieving racial justice is more than just being nice or kind to People of Color. 2020 marked another chapter in the fight for racial equality in the United States and at UNL (listed below). The recognition of the deeply rooted historical as well as institutional issues are deeply problematic for the harm and racial violence that they have caused and continue to cause to racially minoritized[2] groups at UNL and beyond. These will not be adequately addressed with small tweaks, quick fixes, or surface level celebrations of diversity. To adequately respond to the issues described in this document, deep, long-term commitments must be made and engaged in that center on understanding long-standing harms and focus on meaningfully repairing them.

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[2] For definitions of terms used in this document, please see our glossary at the end.

4. **A Living & Ongoing Historical Document** We feel it is important to note that this is a historical document that captures our analysis of several important demands and conversations that led to the development of the Anti-Racism Journey at UNL and our role as Co-Leaders of it. This should not be understood as a comprehensive or exhaustive reflection of all issues that need attending to on our campus to achieve racial justice. For a variety of reasons there are myriad issues that have not yet been given voice through this analysis. Therefore, ongoing attention to any and all issues of racial injustice at UNL will require the same level of attention and addressing over time as those listed here.

5. **Co-Leaders as Facilitators** the Anti-Racism Journey Co-Leaders are an ongoing resource to provide guidance and where appropriate, assistance, in addressing the issues described below.

CALLS TO ACTION
The following calls to action that arose from institutional stakeholders, include varying topics, issues and demands which have been organized into eight major themes (in no particular order).

1. **During the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis Attend to Groups/Communities thatare Under-Resourced and/or Racially Minoritized**
   - Research impact of COVID-19 on racially minoritized groups in Nebraska. (AAALC; IES)
   - Engage with the city, county, and state to keep and post data on the racial impact of COVID-19 in Nebraska. (AAALC)
   - Check in with racially minoritized groups on campus regularly to learn about the ways the pandemic is impacting them and create solutions to problems that are identified. (AAALC)
   - Recognize the need for and offer explicit protections for faculty, staff, and students from racially minoritized backgrounds in their various roles (including but not limited to advancement and promotion). Care and protections should be offered if they choose to engage remotely during the pandemic as well as for those in roles on campus that make them more vulnerable to the virus. (AAALC)

2. **Support Faculty**
   - Strategic cluster hires (e.g., of Native American Studies, African & African American Studies, etc.) (ASUN; BSU; CEHS AFIRE; DE; IES)
   - Strategic support of existing and new faculty coming in from racially minoritized background as well as those doing racial justice work in their fields. For instance, providing access to Op-ed Project's Public Voices Fellowship program (https://www.theopedproject.org/public-voices-fellowship) and establishing Endowed Professorships. (AAALC; CEHS AFIRE; CCSPC)

- Work with the NU Foundation to prioritize fundraising for the Institute for Ethnic Studies. (IES)
- Reexamine promotion and tenure processes to include clear expectations on diversity and inclusion. For faculty in IES, consider joint appointment loads to ensure IES has the deciding vote on tenure and promotion. (CCSPC; IES)

3. Support Students
- Review all campus resources for access and affordability. Expand important services into spaces where greater racial diversity exists. (CEHS AFIRE)
- Create financial supports for Black students and fully fund resources and departments across campus that support Black students. This should include funding supports for students who may need legal representation but who are not currently covered with that kind of supports outside of the regular academic year. (AAALC; CEHS AFIRE)
- Hire more mental health providers from racially minoritized backgrounds who have expertise and knowledge on the challenges of racism. Make accessible to students on both campuses. (ASUN; CCSPC)
- Meaningfully assist students in knowing what legal services they have access to on campus and what their rights are when encountering law enforcement. Work with the law college to provide additional resources, for instance in regard to housing discrimination that students may face. (AAALC)
- Examine current and historical data regarding enrollment, retention, and graduation rates for students from racially minoritized groups at UNL. Use the analyses to inform and improve student supports and services. (IF)
- Examine DACA and immigration issues and create necessary supports for students. (IES)
- Student leaders (ASUN) and campus leadership should take vocal and visible actions to communicate and meaningfully offer support for Black, Indigenous, and other Students of Color on campus. (BSU)
- Specifically attend to student athletes at UNL by addressing the disparity (within the next five years) in numbers of athletic administrators, head coaches, psychologists, etc. who come from racially minoritized groups versus the number of student athletes from those groups. (SAN)

4. Expand Education Opportunities
- Global perspectives on racial justice, curriculum, and service-learning opportunities. (IES)
- Hold town halls and campus forums to discuss important topics like how UNL Police address policy misconduct, excessive use of force, etc. as well as to hear from Black students, faculty and staff regarding issues and opportunities for racial justice. (AAALC)
- Develop bachelor's degree programs in African American, Native-American and Hispanic-American Studies. (IES)
- Start an Asian American Studies program. (IES)

- Implement a true U.S. racial/ethnic diversity requirement for all students as soon as possible. These should include diversity coursework beyond ACE 9 an expansion of Husker Dialogues, and deliberate work with incoming freshmen. (ASUN; IES; SAN)
- Have mandatory education activities across all four years of undergraduate experience, graduate work, and for all leadership, faculty, coaches, and staff into dialogue about and engage in important racial justice work. This must include careful attention to our local and national history of white supremacy. (AAALC; ASUN; CEHS AFIRE; IES; DE; SAN)

5. **Community Engagement**
- Position and support the Institute for Ethnic Studies and other relevant groups/experts on campus to develop and deliver a variety of diversity and equity programs and trainings for businesses, non-profits, etc. to reach out across Nebraska as leaders and supports in anti-racist work across the state. (IES)
- Collaborate with Lincoln police to prevent the poor treatment of UNL community members from racially minoritized backgrounds off campus.
- Finalize a land acknowledgement by December 2020. (IES)
- Donate .5% of annual athletic department proceeds to Black owned businesses in the community and charities/organizations that support and serve Black youth and the Black community. (SAN)

6. **University Leaders**
- Learn to listen and respond to issues of racial injustice and inequity with attention to repairing harm and changing systems and practices to limit such harm replication in the future. (AAALC; BSU; CEHS AFIRE; NUFS)
- Take ownership and leadership for racial justice work individually and collectively rather than only relying on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to do this work. (BSU; CEHS AFIRE; SAN)
- Examine physical landscape of the campus and make necessary changes to represent an institutional commitment to anti-racism and acknowledgement of our history (IES, SAN)
- Examine and prioritize the positioning and funding of important work on campus regarding anti-racism. For instance, the resources and location of the Institute for Ethnic Studies. (IES)
- Increase funding to the Institute for Ethnic Studies and address the load and power differentials that exist with appointments between departments and IES. (IES)
- Create the context where every member of the UNL community does the work to combat racism and oppression. (ASUN; SAN)
- Set inclusive and anti-racist teaching as a priority across all courses on campus. (AAALC; CEHS AFIRE; IES; DE)

- Create and fund necessary task forces to not only create recommendations, but actually implement necessary changes across the institution. (IES)
- Work with state representatives on legislation that prioritizes racial justice. (AAALC; ASUN)
- Make explicit and public statements acknowledging that Black Lives Matter and that discrimination in regard to racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, and gender identity is not tolerated. (SAN)

7. **Systemic Improvements in Response to Racist Incidents**
- Audit and monitor processes, including when groups from racially minoritized backgrounds are reported for talking about race, culture, and Indigenous matters. (AAALC; CEHS AFIRE; CCSPC)
- Ensure processes are led by trained and competent leaders. (CEHS AFIRE)
- Create necessary accommodations for accessibility to participate in reporting and reconciliation processes. (CEHS AFIRE)
- Ensure faculty have a way to report experiences with racism that they have heard and responded to. (CCSPC)
- Make sure reporting systems are well publicized. For instance, create a communications campaign with clear guidance on the process. (AAALC; CEHS AFIRE)
- Use the Culturally Engaging Campus Environment Model developed by the National Institute for Transformation and Equity to capture and analyze the experiences and stories of community members. (AAALC)
- Protect and prevent students from racially minoritized groups from having their comments regarding race and racism posted on social media by hostile organizations or anyone else that would harass and potentially harm the student(s). (IES)

8. **UNL and Policing**
- With transparency, conduct formal review of and reconsider any institutional relationships and partnerships with local and state police. (AAALC; CEHS AFIRE)
- Develop ongoing relationships with UNL PD and Lincoln PD to address issues of policy misconduct and hold PD accountable for their impacts on UNL faculty, staff, and students (e.g., racial profiling, de-escalation techniques, harassment, intimidation, etc.). (AAALC; BSU)
- Establish oversight to UNL PD and implement a public safety model versus a militarized one. The focus should be connecting with community members and peacekeeping. Expect the same from city and state police or terminate relationships with them. (CEHS AFIRE)
- Require safety and accountability measures for all police that may interact with the UNL community—e.g., wear body cameras, maintain a duty to intervene if witnessing another officer using excessive force, publish the names of officers in reports of calls and arrests, etc. (CEHS AFIRE)

- Hold town halls to learn about experiences of racially minoritized students, staff, and faculty for how they have been treated by university and Lincoln police. (AAALC)
- Establish a review board composed of faculty, staff, students, and community members to examine complaints of police misconduct involving students on and off campus. (AAALC; CEHS AFIRE)

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Legend

AAALC (African and African American Leadership Caucus)
ACE (Achievement-Centered Education)
ASUN (The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln)
BSU (The Black Student Union of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln)
CCSPC (Chancellor's Commission on the Status of People of Color)
CEHS AFIRE (College of Education and Human Science Advocating for Inclusion, Respect and Equity)
DE (Department of English)
IES (Institute for Ethnic Studies)
IF (Individual Faculty)
PD (Police Department)
NUFS (The Faculty Senates across the University of Nebraska campuses)
SAN (Student-Athletes at Nebraska)

Glossary
(These definitions are based upon the collective disciplinary knowledge of the Co-Leaders. The definition of stakeholder also draws upon the work of Minu Hemmati[3].)

Anti-Racism – this concept captures a focus upon actions instead of talk, praxis instead of theory, and other active efforts that aim to eradicate racism, racist practices/policies, racist institutions/structures.

Institutions/Institutional – this concept refers more to the dynamic patterns, ideologies, and practices that sustain an entity like a university, organization, school, police department, government agency, and so on, instead of the concrete fixtures of which such entities are made.

Minoritized – we use this word to describe groups of people who through their racialization have been marginalized and experienced various levels of oppression. The importance of using a word like this versus "minority" is that it signifies an oppressive power flow rather than just counts numbers.

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[3] See: http://msp-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Hemmati-2017-MSP_Principles_Practices_PPT.pdf

Stakeholder(s) – Stakeholder typically refers to an individual, group, or other persons that hold or have interest(s) in an organization. We use a more participatory definition: Stakeholders are any individual, group, or other persons that hold or have interest(s) in a decision or an outcome either because they actually or potentially influence the decision or outcome or because they are affected by it.

Structure(s) – By structure we are referring to social structures made of ideas, ideologies, belief systems, rules, regulations, patterns, logics, practices, and so on.