Reiss-Davis Graduate School

Diversity and Inclusion Task Force

2021 Calendar Year Report

February 18, 2022

Dear Reader,
Welcome to the second annual Reiss-Davis Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (DITF) report, reflecting on calendar year 2021.

The DITF is a Reiss-Davis Graduate School (RDGS) advisory committee originally formed under the charge of the chancellor's office and now endorsed by the shared governance committee of RDGS. The committee serves as a dedicated safe space to gather thoughts and perspectives, and to incubate and monitor the school's commitment to include diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) perspectives in all its endeavors. The committee members' work to advance DEI goals is carried out through their stakeholder positions in the institution.

2021 was another year marked by the global COVID-19 pandemic and historic events affecting many changes in society. The Reiss-Davis community was furthermore affected by the untimely passing of its chancellor in March 2021, the resignation of the interim chancellor/provost in October 2021, and significant turn-over in staff and faculty, resulting in a restructuring of leadership positions and governance. Throughout, the members of the DITF continued to meet biweekly, predominantly on zoom, to pursue the agenda of promoting the establishment of a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive learning environment.

Highlights from this past year include:
- Producing the first annual 2020 DITF report, a self-reflective document for the institution.
- A school sponsored documentary screening and panel discussion focused on the psychological impact of gentrification attended by students and faculty.
- The implementation of professional identity and multicultural development as a program learning outcome (PLO) in the PsyD curriculum.
- Meeting with the Vista Del Mar's agency wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee chair.

Thank you,

Simran Khalsa, MLIS
Chair, Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (DITF)

Contents

2021 Attendees

- Simran Khalsa, MLIS; Chair
- Lourdes Brown, BA
- Moniqueé Brown, BA
- Adriana Cuestas, PsyD
- Alanna DeLeon, BS
- Maura Gonzalez-Rivas, MA
- Jasmine Reyna, BA
- Jens Schmidt, PhD
- Elizabeth Villaseñor, PsyD
- Paulo Yanez, PsyD
- Ali Youmagul, BS

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Activities and Achievements

Amplifying Institutional Voices, Bringing in New Voices, Changing Voices

- Committee membership changed as two student members, one faculty member, and two staff members moved on, and two new staff members joined, one of whom is also faculty.
- The DITF outreached to all new staff, providing opportunities for them to trial the committee without pressure. All current staff members have attended at least one meeting.
- DEI topics were brought up in shared discussions in non DITF committees and meetings so that those not participating directly in the DITF could have their voices and opinions be part of the institutional DEI dialogue.
- End of 2021 organizational restructuring simplified organizational structures, clarified and acknowledged institutional roles and duties, and improved lines of institutional communication, creating a framework for a more equitable and transparent institution.
- At the end of 2021 the all-institutional staff weekly meeting was reframed in terms of shared governance and restructured to invite leadership, learning and sharing from all of its constituents and to actively offer incubation space for professional growth in committee work and presentation skills for all staff members.
- Questions about a candidate's stance on and relationship with diversity continued to be part of the process of recruiting and interviewing potential new staff, faculty and students, with the eventual goal for the institution to reflect the community it serves, and meet the criteria to become a minority serving institution.

Closing Loops within the Curriculum and Building Up the Faculty

- DITF members who work on curriculum helped implement an updated set of program learning outcomes (PLOs) for Academic year 2021-2022.
  - The updated PLOs were developed over the course of and approved at the end of 2020 to provide academic prominence to professional development and multicultural considerations. See the DITF Calendar Year 2020 Report.
  - The new set of PLOs was published in the 2021-2022 catalog and student handbook in summer of 2021.
  - Rubrics were modified to incorporate the new PLOs in fall 2021-2022.
  - The change to the PLOs will build an easier to track academic baseline for aspects of diversity and equity and self-development as part of academic progress and learning. This will give the school a new tool to use for reflection for years to come.
- The reorganization of PLO's facilitated the process of identifying which classes already strongly feature identity, professional and multicultural development, and created a visual story of how these classes were clustered through updating the PLO curriculum grid.
- This sequential curriculum analysis engendered a change in the locked curriculum class order starting academic year 2021-2022, a partial result of which places classes that specifically address cultural considerations earlier in the curriculum. (cultural competence in fall vs spring 2nd year).

- The program chair replaced the position of curriculum director at the end of 2021, bringing with it new clarity to this pivotal role which will help strategically develop, guide and change the curriculum in consideration of professional and societal trends, in addition to facilitating the ongoing implementation of the curriculum. Diversity, equity and inclusion are very much part of that visioning and planning.
- A POC faculty member with strong DEI experience was appointed into the program chair position in fall/winter 2021-2022.

Normalizing the Practice of Sharing Preferred Pronouns

- A staff email signature template was developed in Spring 2021 to include a place to share preferred pronouns.
- Resources on why to share preferred pronouns and guidance on commonly used pronouns (such as singular they) was promoted to staff during the development of the signature template and promoted faculty in the August 2021 professional development newsletter. (Simran, Elizabeth)
- Best practice is being promoted about providing pronouns and asking candidates what their preferred pronouns are during introductions at the start interviews.

Participating in and Promoting DEI Educational Opportunities

- 2 DITF members and one additional staff member participated in a 7-week Diversity and Equity in the Workplace free online certificate program in spring 2021, bringing back perspectives and resources.
- Committee members and staff attended diversity and equity related sessions at the online ARC conference in April 2021, relevant to institutions of higher learning.
- Committee members with roles as continuing education leads coordinated and promoted the showing of the documentary, Alice Street, in Summer 2021, with a panel discussion that brought a psychodynamic lens to the story of displacement, gentrification, and community activism.
- The planning for the Continuing Education series, Saturdays at the Center, for the following academic year 2022/23 will focus entirely on the theme of diversity and inclusion in psychotherapeutic services for children and adolescents.

Sharing and Promoting Committee Insights and Goals

- In Spring 2021 the DITF created and presented its first calendar year report.
- The report was shared to all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, the board and select members of the parent organization.
    - A PowerPoint version of the report was presented at various meetings.
- In Fall 2021 the DITF committee met with Vista Del Mar's (VDM's) Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee chair to share our progress and discuss future collaboration and participation in VDM's institutional DEI efforts.

Looking Forward into 2022

The DITF plans to do research on and provide guidance for departmental self-reviews starting in 2022. Each department will be asked to present brief reports on the current states regarding DEI, and any goals or initiatives they have in fall/winter 2022. The self-review process will help encourage the development or continuation of mindful and deliberate approaches to the integration of DEI into operations and planning.

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DITF Information

Mission Statement

The Reiss-Davis Graduate School Diversity and Inclusiveness Task Force (DITF) is aligned with the RDGS mission and core values. We are committed to engaging the entire institution in a continuous adaptation of inclusiveness in response to societal changes and diverse trends in higher education.

Proclamation Statement

We proclaim that Reiss Davis Graduate School will be best supported in the pursuit of its mission and vision for the future by a task force that is diverse, inclusive, and focused on equity:

- **Diverse**: We assert that RDGS will be strengthened in its decision making by drawing on the skills, talents, and perspectives of all stakeholders and their diverse viewpoints that come from different life experiences and broad cultural backgrounds.

- **Inclusive:** We promote a culture of inclusiveness that ensures that all stakeholders are represented by bringing their perspectives, identities, and life experience to the institution. An inclusive RDGS culture welcomes and celebrates differences and ensures that all stakeholders are engaged, invested, and take part in sharing responsibility for the organization.

- **Equity-Focused**: We advance awareness of a societal context of inequality and aim at fostering decision processes that best prioritize resources with the goal to provide opportunities to all and avoid unintentional biases that can lead to flawed strategies.

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Goals

Goal 1: Establish best practices to have equitable inclusion of traditionally underrepresented groups as part of our students, faculty, staff, and administration.

1.1 Hire more underrepresented faculty and staff, including bilingual faculty and staff.
1.2 Collaborate with marketing to recruit underrepresented students, including reviewing the use of Symphonic Marketing with regard to the ads used to attract students.
1.3 Emphasize diversity and inclusion as integral to plans for institutional improvement of guidelines - in terms of selection, recruitment, and hiring practices for staff, administration and faculty.

Goal 2: Constitute a campus-wide welcoming multicultural, diverse, and inclusive community for all stakeholders.

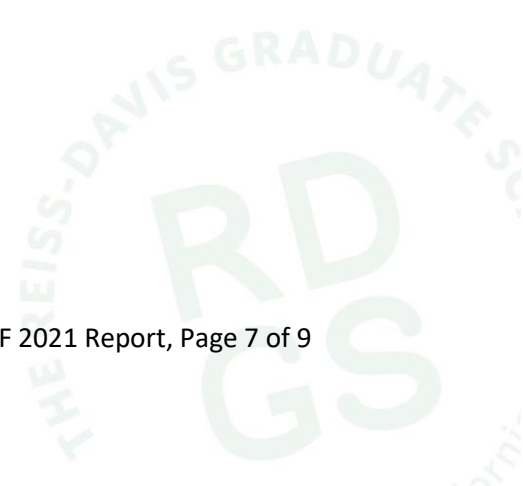**2.1** Promote diversity visibility and normalization.
2.2 Develop and communicate recommendations to educate the leadership about structural discrimination and inequality, and the need for a variety of cultural perspectives in all institutional activities (from boardroom to classroom) to be present.
2.3 Research and monitor the societal context and standards for diversity and inclusion – review initiatives of diverse organizations and consider how we may collaborate and/or incorporate some of these initiatives.
2.4 Gather information about and report on the state of diversity and inclusion within the school.

Goal 3: Integrate a multicultural, diverse, and inclusive approach into academic program components.

3.1 Review and make recommendations to integrate diversity and inclusion into the school's curriculum; *participate in program review/reform.*

Definitions

Antiracism: The policy or practice of opposing racism and promoting racial tolerance in oneself, in interpersonal interactions, in organizations, in institutions, and in socio-economic structures.

Culture: Integrated patterns of human behavior that include the language, thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups.

Cultural Competence: The integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into practices and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of interactions. Having the capacity to function effectively as an individual or an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by individuals and their communities.

Cultural Humility: A lifelong process of self-reflection and self-critique of one's own values, beliefs, and cultural identity which is embedded in context from both present and historic realities. It is from that position of contextualized self-awareness that one respectfully approaches the beliefs and cultural identities of others.

Cultural Sensitivity: Being aware that cultural differences and similarities between people exist without making a value judgment on that difference.

Diversity: The practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.

Equity: A process acknowledging unequal starting places, that advantages and barriers exist, which commits to correct and address the imbalances so as to provide everyone access to the same opportunities.

Inclusion: People from different identities feeling and/or being valued, leveraged, and welcomed within a given setting.

Intersectionality: The interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Multicultural: Reflecting all the intersections of identity, such as race, gender, orientation, ability, economic status, and experience.

Underserved: People not having access to medical/health services. A more appropriate term is under-resourced, but only when talking about services. DITF does not recommended as a blanket term for impoverished communities; recommends removal from plan.

Underrepresented: A subset of a population that holds a smaller percentage within a significant subgroup than the subset holds in the general population. Specific characteristics of an underrepresented group vary depending on the subgroup being considered.

Resources

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