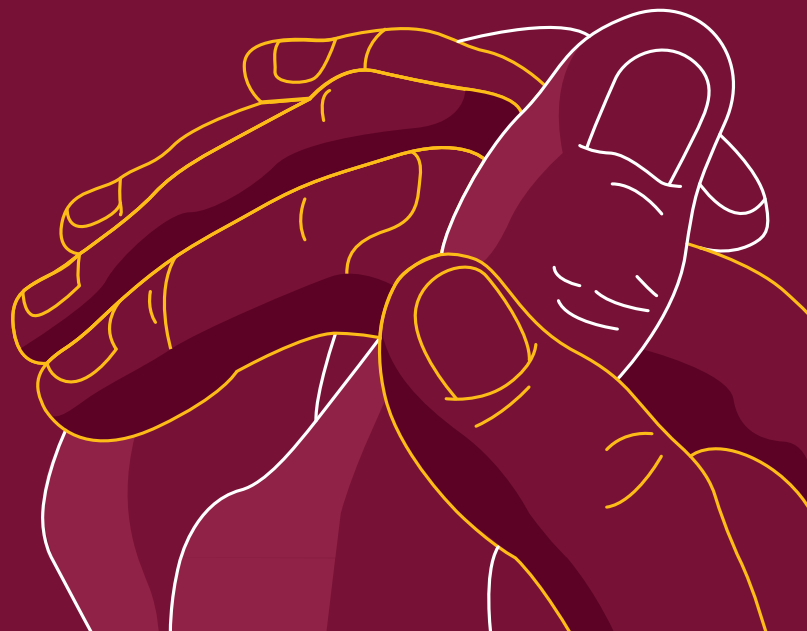


Continuing Our Dialogue

Key Findings to Support the University's Anti-Racism Initiative



In April 2021, Loyola University's Anti-Racism Initiative worked with Embark Strategies to conduct a series of 25 focus groups, or "dialogues," as part of the racial Examen. These dialogues provided critical insight and feedback from across the University community and served as a complement to the racial Examen process that Loyola has undertaken. This process was designed to surface insights about the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Loyola and help inform the University's planning and next steps towards creating an anti-racist community and culture.

DIALOGUES WERE STRUCTURED TO ALLOW FOR A CONVERSATION AROUND FIVE THEMES:

01. CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

02. HIRING AND RETENTION

03. SERVICE AND SCHOLARSHIP

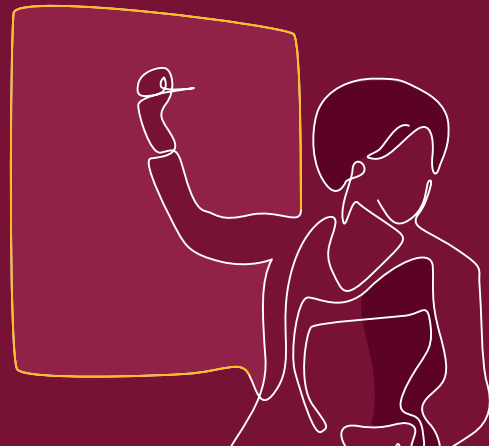
04. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND CULTURE

05. ADDITIONAL REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS

The following pages provide an overview on the key findings from the focus groups. We hope these lessons learned are informative and inspirational on our journey to become an anti-racist university for our students, faculty, and staff.

01.

CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY



KEY FINDINGS

- 01. TRAINING:** Perceptions vary about the need for and/or impact of training designed to build faculty understanding of DEI and strategies to incorporate it into their curricula and pedagogy.
- 02. CURRICULA:** Some faculty hold narrow ideas about the “cannon” and curricula which limit their engagement with new academic materials, perspectives, and bodies of work.
- 03. RELATIONSHIPS:** Personal comfort, discomfort, and strength of relationship can influence the ease or difficulty of navigating complex conversations about race and diversity.
- 04. SYSTEMS & PRACTICES:** Loyola’s systems and practices create institutional barriers to incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences into the curricula.
- 05. INCENTIVES:** Faculty experience a range of incentives and disincentives to taking on DEI work.

“Training’ is a loaded word. People assume that I can automatically teach about racial issues just because I’m a [person of color]. I don’t understand why people don’t know how to do this just because they’re in this world. Anyone should be able to teach about diversity. The ‘barrier’ is the assumption that only Black and Brown teachers can teach those courses. It lets white faculty off the hook.”

“Most of the faculty are white. There’s a barrier for non-people of color to engage in topics deeply focused on race.”

“It’s not only what faculty are doing explicitly, but also implicitly that may discourage discussion in the classroom. [We] need feedback from students to help inform discussions or topics that might be productive or counterproductive. Most departments don’t seek that information from their students.”

02.

HIRING AND RETENTION



KEY FINDINGS

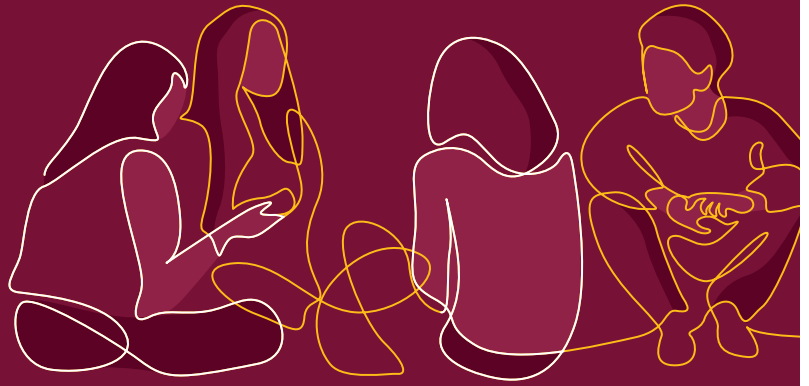
- 01. COMMITMENT:** There is fundamental work to do in order to define Loyola’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion and to match that commitment to the University’s institutional practices, including those focused on selection and retention.
- 02. SELECTION PROCESS:** Bias shows up in the selection process in a number of ways.
- 03. BRIGHT SPOTS:** There are bright spots and proven strategies in the selection process that can be leveraged more broadly across the University.
- 04. GUIDELINES:** Performance guidelines and processes are inconsistent and often ignore/undervalue the types of contributions made by and expected from faculty of color.
- 05. PROGRAMS:** Mentoring programs favor faculty on the tenure track and are inconsistently offered and practiced.
- 06. INCENTIVES:** Better financial packages for graduate students would help attract more BIPOC candidates.

“Be more inclusive and welcoming with faculty of color at the school. If you ask me about Loyola, it’s a good place to be. It’s one thing to be here, and it’s another thing to be included. Speaking as a person of color. I’m not saying give me mentorship. I can teach. There’s the other aspect of the University and inclusion, I still find it missing. I think we can do more. It’s the little things that will make me pause before telling someone about my experiences as a person of color on faculty at Loyola.”

“There are annual performance reviews and reviews for promotion. The guidelines are clear. The bias comes in when we reward the standard products and not others. BIPOC faculty have higher service demands. The students are coming to them. They have to serve on these diversity committees. The guidelines allow for the metrics we expect, but they don’t speak to the additional aspects that matter as well.”

03.

SERVICE AND SCHOLARSHIP



KEY FINDINGS

- 01. REPRESENTATION:** Representation is a fundamental issue, and resources should be allocated to address it.
- 02. SERVICE:** Service should be acknowledged, supported with funding and built into workloads and evaluations.
- 03. COURSES AND SCHOLARSHIP:** There are opportunities to more deeply integrate racial justice into courses and scholarship.
- 04. BIPOC COMMUNITY:** Currently, service, scholarship, and racial justice work largely falls on BIPOC students and staff.
- 05. ACADEMIC WORK:** Faculty have a desire to think about academic work more expansively.

“A number of faculty members left in recent years; three were focused on racial and social justice. All of the faculty in the program are white. What are we doing to retain faculty of color? The students, in turn, feel that they don’t matter.”

“Making service and racial justice work a requirement for achieving tenure would enhance faculty’s work in this area.”

“One challenge is that our faculty of color are often asked to work on diversity issues, so they are the ones overburdened by this service. If we want diversity on all our various committees and tasks, then faculty of color get over-extended.”

04.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE AND CULTURE



KEY FINDINGS

- 01. EVENTS AND SUPPORT:** Culture-building and support for underrepresented groups is sparse and inconsistent. While the University frequently hosts community-oriented events, they are not necessarily focused on supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 02. CULTURE:** Across departments there is not a cohesive culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 03. GRIEVANCE PROCESS:** For students, the grievance process is unclear, and the lack of anonymity does little to inspire confidence.

"We strive to create a sense of belonging for students to help smooth the transition from high school to college, but that transitions quickly to very piecemeal programming."

"The culture for students of color is welcoming and supportive, but the faculty and staff side feels like there's something weird going on that I'm not getting. My instinct tells me there's something not quite where it should be with faculty and staff."

"I don't believe that students, residents, faculty of color feel comfortable coming forward because of deeply entrenched fear and gatekeeping. Will I get a Dean's Letter? Will I get matched? Will I get tenure?"

05.

ADDITIONAL REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS



KEY FINDINGS

- 01. CURRICULUM:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion are not generally incorporated into the curriculum, and BIPOC faculty and staff should not be solely responsible for changing that. Faculty need support integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion into curriculum and coursework – especially in content areas that may be less obvious.
- 02. BEST PRACTICES:** Multiple opportunities exist to share and leverage best practices across the University.
- 03. EXAMEN PROCESS:** The Examen process is viewed as rushed and designed to check boxes rather than genuinely advancing the University's goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 04. REPRESENTATION:** Representation is a theme and must be prioritized if the University wants to address the issues around diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- 05. GRIEVANCE PROCESS:** The grievance process is opaque and insufficient.
- 06. DEI SPACES:** Loyola must create thoughtful, purposeful spaces for authentic DEI conversations.

"I observe that racial justice service ends up on faculty of color and students of color, and there are only a handful of us. There is other work, but we are still doing 5-7 hours on racial justice a week and I don't know how that's taken into account at all."

"I think about the toll of doing things related to racial justice. You're tired after talking about this stuff. It opens wounds to think about your own experiences and the experiences of those you care about."

"There's so much more work and we're not going to get here in a semester or a year. This needs to be ongoing for the University. It has to be ongoing beyond what we're doing now. The whole Examen right now has to be in a brainstorming position. It can't be that we've done the Examen and we're going to move forward. The initiative has to be ongoing."