

Racial equity: A Strategy for Tomorrow begins today

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Through A Strategy for Tomorrow, Tulane University is moving forward on a long-range plan to advance equity, diversity and inclusion for students, faculty and staff. A steering committee, which met during the summer, welcomes input from across the university. The committee will continue its work this fall. (Photo by Sally Asher)

A Strategy for Tomorrow, a long-term plan to advance equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) priorities, reached a milestone recently when its steering committee began brainstorming ideas to advance EDI on the Tulane campus.

A Strategy for Tomorrow, spearheaded by Anneliese Singh, Tulane's chief diversity officer and associate provost for diversity and faculty development, arose from the President's Commission on Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and its ongoing presidential initiative, A Plan for Now. Singh, working closely with her Office of EDI staff Eva Silvestre, EDI data strategist, and Shelby Norman, EDI program manager, initiated the data gathering and planning process.

During spring 2021, the Office of EDI conducted an EDI Inventory to scan the current inventory of EDI programs and initiatives at Tulane to identify needs and gaps across the institution. The EDI

Inventory - along with focus group data that was collected with students, staff, and faculty in the spring - provided important feedback and input on strategic priorities related to EDI and anti-racism. Singh and the Strategy for Tomorrow Steering Committee held their first meeting on July 19-20 to review the information collected in the spring and to start the process of developing the EDI strategic goals and objectives, which will be implemented from 2022-2027.

The key themes that emerged from the focus groups will inform the work of the Strategy for Tomorrow's steering committee going forward.

Using this information, Singh and the steering committee are beginning the identification of goals for A Strategy for Tomorrow's plan, which centers around important priorities such as producing a unified Tulane community that is dedicated to the goals of EDI and anti-racism work being realized on a local, regional, national and global level, as well as creating and sustaining a climate of trust, integrity, respect, acceptance and inclusivity. Speaking about the work still to be done, Singh said, "We need a cohesive list of [campus wide] values to guide us in our work, so that EDI and anti-racism is not an afterthought or an add-on, but actually a crucial part of our DNA and will be the foundation of everything we do. And then ... we need every single person on campus holding themselves accountable to these EDI and anti-racism strategic priorities."

Steering committee member Kady Weingart, assistant provost for finance and operations, expressed how it feels to be a part of this important committee. "I am honored to be learning and working alongside an amazing group of people that represent student, faculty and staff perspectives. I'm hopeful that this process will bring about growth and positive change for Tulane."

Singh and the steering committee met through August to refine strategic priorities, and they are continuing to request feedback from the Tulane community through mid-September. From September to December, the committee will work with all Tulane schools and departments, assisting them with the creation of their own internal five-year plans.

Though Singh acknowledges the breadth and scope of this work is "a heavy lift," she and steering committee member Carolyn Barber-Pierre, assistant vice president for multicultural affairs, are optimistic about the future. "A Strategy for Tomorrow is building that vision of who we want to be as a transformed community in 2027," Singh said.

"I'm happy that we can finally move forward in creating a vision for how we want this institution to operate and the values we want to espouse. The committee has shown real commitment to do the work to set this effort in motion and I appreciate being a part of creating a new vision," Barber-Pierre said.

To read more about A Strategy for Tomorrow, click [here](#).