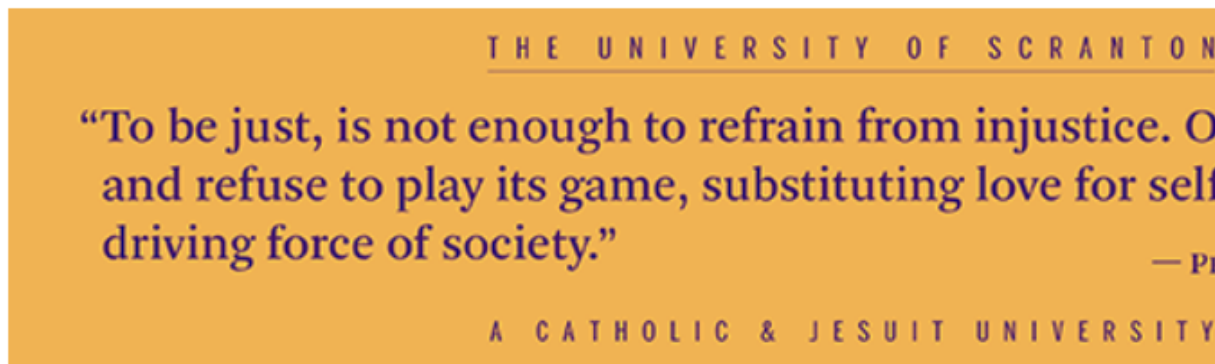


Subject: An Update on University Actions to Combat Racism and Discrimination
Date: Friday, August 28, 2020 at 11:41:03 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Rev. Scott R. Pilarz S.J. <scott.pilarz@scranton.edu>
To: universitycommunity@scranton.edu <universitycommunity@scranton.edu>
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Dear Members of the University Community:

Although efforts to reopen campus for the Fall Semester in the midst of the pandemic demands considerable attention, we continue to make progress on actions to combat racism and ensure that Black Lives Matter at The University of Scranton.

First, as I mentioned in June, the Office of Equity and Diversity now reports to the President, and Elizabeth Garcia has quickly become a valuable member the President's Cabinet as Executive Director of Equity and Diversity and now also Special Assistant to the President.

Today, the University has launched a [Diversity and Inclusion website](#) that will reside prominently on the University's site and provide a consolidated overview and access point for resources and educational efforts across campus. Additionally, I asked the Office of Equity and Diversity to gather a fulsome account of many other related programs and actions that took place over the summer or that are planned for the fall. This report can be accessed on the new Diversity and Inclusion website by clicking [here](#).

Briefly, however, I wanted to highlight just a few key actions on which the President's Cabinet and I have focused these past several weeks. Many relate to the areas of concerns that were most frequently raised in June following the death of George Floyd and now in the deeply disturbing events in Wisconsin surrounding the shooting of Jacob Blake and three protestors:

- **Policy on racism, discrimination, bias and inclusion for all members of the University community.**
 - After I approved the new Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy in June, the Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) with assistance from Student Life and Human Resources created a [reporting and resources brochure](#) for students, faculty and staff. Printed copies are also being distributed throughout campus. In addition, OED and Student Government collaborated to create a social media information campaign to promote the policy.
 - Students, faculty and staff now may [file reports of harassment, discrimination, bias or hate on-line](#). Reports can be filed anonymously.
 - OED also provided training on the Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy to all recently hired faculty and staff. Now that our community is back on campus, additional trainings will be announced over the next few weeks.
- **Long-term commitment through strategic planning:**
 - In coordination with the University Planning Committee and with feedback from across the

University community, we have solidified our long-term commitment to diversity and inclusion by firmly embedding them into the new strategic plan. The plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees in September for approval.

- One of the five primary goals for this new plan is to:
Reflect and understand the diversity of the world by demanding that diversity be a priority as we build an inclusive community and campus culture, develop and deliver our education and shape our student experience.
- **Training and development for students, faculty and staff.**
 - Student Life developed and implemented a session for all incoming students that focused on diversity and inclusion and educates students about microaggressions as part of every Summer Orientation session.
 - Faculty were provided a [host of curricular resources](#) developed by OED.
- **The need to address better in our curriculum racism, discrimination and the cultural richness, and contributions of blacks and all persons of color.**
 - Faculty have begun a productive discussion to ensure that a review of general education this year includes a focus on the development and implementation of a curricular component that addresses racism and discrimination. In addition, some academic departments have already had significant discussions about how to strengthen their disciplinary curriculum and teaching methods.
 - Relatedly, I approved a proposal from the History Department to hire a full-time faculty member with a focus on African American history. Other academic departments have submitted proposals for new faculty lines to strengthen our curriculum and help to diversify our faculty. We ask that any further proposals be submitted by September 4 to the Provost's Office.

I want also to report progress related to faculty and staff hiring, an area of strategic importance. At my request, Jeff Gingerich, Ph.D., Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Patricia Tetreault, Vice President for Human Resources, convened a working group of faculty and staff to assist the Office of Equity and Diversity in identifying and implementing steps to expand the pool of candidates and intentionally seek to build a faculty and staff that better represent the growing diversity of our student body. I am grateful to the following individuals who have agreed to serve on this working group: George Aulisio, Lori Bruch, Elizabeth Garcia, Christie Karpiak, Michelle Maldonado and Nabil Tamimi. Additional information is included [on the website](#).

Personally, I reached out throughout the summer to alumni who shared with me their experience as students of color, listening to their stories and seeking their advice. I was deeply moved by their candor. Consistently, they talked about being feeling marginalized by fellow students who used racist terms largely out ignorance and unfamiliarity with people of color. It is painful but necessary for all of us in the University community to acknowledge the presence of systemic racism, implicit bias, and microaggressions on our campus.

In the coming days, I will meet personally with several students of color, including leaders of our United Cultures Organization. I look forward to listening to them and to asking for their good counsel on ways that we can do better.

Creating a welcoming and supportive community is uniquely central to Scranton' Catholic and Jesuit mission. I am grateful to the many members of campus for their efforts this summer and their plans for this fall. I recognize, however, that a list of activities is not enough to transform any institution and that there is so much more to be done. We must all commit ourselves to this work and accept nothing less than a community in which everyone feels welcome and safe.

Sincerely,

Scott R. Pilarz, S.J.
President