

President Smatresk:

We are writing to affirm our support for “Moving Forward Together: UNT’s Action Plan for Improving Diversity and Inclusion on Campus.” We appreciate the effort that went into crafting the action plan. That said, we do have a few concerns.

- Staff are under-represented in the Action Plan. We would like to ensure Staff Senate is included in every step of the process, including but not limited to:
 - A Staff Senator from the Staff Senate Diversity and Inclusion Committee to serve on the forthcoming Diversity Council.
 - A Staff Senator to be included in the development of diversity training for faculty and staff.
 - A Staff Senator to be included in the forthcoming Police Advisory Board.
- Expand the mandatory training to include all staff, not only academic staff.
- The action plan still lacks clear accountability for faculty and staff who violate University standards and exhibit racist attitudes and behaviors. We support a third party-facilitated method for faculty and staff to report racist behaviors. Additionally, all supervisors should be mandated to report all racist comments and behaviors formally, as they are with Title IX. Supervisors should no longer be given discretion to determine which comments and behaviors should be noted in an employee’s file; that determination should be made by an external party.
- To your initiative to improve faculty and staff hiring practices, we recommend adding improved recruitment and hiring strategies that focus on top administration and staff serving in a role that creates or promotes the brand identity of the University of North Texas, such as marketers, recruiters, promoters across all colleges and schools, and the Division of University Brand Strategy and Communications.
 - The university should seek diverse candidates for these roles through evidence-based inclusive hiring strategies, including maintaining partnerships with professional organizations specifically for Black, Indigenous and People of Color.
 - We also believe that the university should re-target the geographies used for candidate searches to attract a more diverse pool of candidates.
 - All job postings and interview questions must be reviewed to ensure that both are using inclusive language and not unfairly biased against Black candidates and candidates from other historically underrepresented groups. Additionally, hiring managers need to attend trainings on ways to employ inclusive hiring and supervision practices.
 - The addition of a dedicated trainer for faculty and staff in the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
 - Ensure that the salaries in the Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity are competitive.
- Establish alternatives for response to nonviolent UNT Police Department (UNTPD) calls and those involving people experiencing a mental health or drug-induced crisis. This can be accomplished through the addition of full-time, licensed helping professionals in the UNTPD, such as licensed social workers or other social service providers. They can more effectively assess these calls and respond with empirically tested, non-punitive and unarmed techniques.

This will relieve police officers of managing unnecessary, nonviolent or social service-related issues.

- Mandate the creation of Diversity and Inclusion Councils across all divisions, including non-academic divisions.
- Increase funding to anti-racist and inclusive campus offices such as: The Multicultural Center, Pride Alliance, Office of Equal Opportunity and the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. These offices are central to upholding the university's core values as a diverse, supportive and caring community. We recommend benchmarking these services against peer institutions, and then seeking to be the leader among our peers.
- We agree with the recommendation to institute Juneteenth as a University holiday for future years. Additionally, rather than only closing the University, we recommend that Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Juneteenth be used as educational opportunities for students, staff, faculty, and the community.

The UNT Staff Senate commits to being anti-racist. We are committed to serving UNT staff and UNT's core values by:

- Adding a Diversity and Inclusion Committee to Staff Senate.
- Continuing to promote and offer opportunities for staff to participate in trainings facilitated by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
- Providing a space for staff to present campus climate concerns and actionable solutions.

As the representative body for UNT Staff, we would like to ensure that staff are fully utilized in creating a more inclusive campus community. We implore the President and Campus Leadership to consider adding these recommendations to the Action Plan and acting on them with the urgency they deserve.

Respectfully,

The Staff Senate Executive Committee:

Suzan Cruz, Chair

Charlotte Cooke, Chair-Elect

Katie McCoy, Past Chair

Lisa Cuevas, Communications Coordinator

Megan Cunningham, Secretary and Treasurer

Allison Peeler, LMSW, Parliamentarian

Staff Senate Members:

Allyson Gardner

Amanda W. Bennett

Karen Goss

Monique F. Scales

Alexis Guess

Craig Howard

Amy Ferman

Audra O'Neal

Kayla Green

Devin Axtman