Town Hall: Addressing anti-Blackness at UNM
Date: Tuesday, 05/12/20
Inquiries Document – Questions and Answers

Note: We will continue to update this document, as answers to questions posted below continue to evolve.

Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO)

1. Do the statistics which were just presented include numbers of claims filed to the supervisors of the alleged perpetrators (or just formal OEO complaints)?

   OEO Complaints:
   Ana – the stats are those filed under hate bias form and may be the same or different than those that are reported to OEO as discrimination. Many/most of our hate crime reports are anonymous or done via computer.

2. Part of the issue with OEO is that they seem to think that unless it rises to the level of hate crime, that there was not a violation of university policy. Across ranks, across time, across people who have reported to OEO the response from that office has been the same. So, the perpetrators who add to this climate of anti-blackness carry on, unbothered, unpunished, often times promoted.

   [Please see response from OEO below.]

3. I like the idea of a truth telling commission but there are already so many points of data on this campus (looks like OEO office, all of your departments, etc) which again are ignored, or unacted upon. Will this commission be given teeth/institutional support and backing to enact and institute change?

   Yes, Pres Stokes will charge a truth commission. We are currently analyzing the multiple data sources collected via past faculty surveys to take a look at stories faculty have shared concerning past harms. We will also summarize whether policy changes were made on the basis of past studies and identify gaps in follow-through.

4. Can somebody clarify the difference between a hate crime and a bias incidence please?

   [Please see response from OEO below.]

5. According to the data presented, there was a sharp increase in hate/bias incidences at UNM between 2016 and 2017. Why? Is that due to a lack of reporting/documentation?

   Nationally, there was a sharp increase in hate/bias incidents after 2016. Many have indicated that this resulted from the 2016 election season and results. Please find OEO’s data below.
6. Information provided from OEO Director, Francie Cordova:
   a. **CRIMES**
      i. Criminal cases including hate bias crimes are investigated by UNM-Police Department. Accused does not have to be affiliated with UNM. Processed via criminal statutes and court system. The burden of proof is Beyond A Reasonable Doubt.
   b. **DISCRIMINATION**
      i. Discrimination based on a protected status (an individual against an individual) are investigated or resolved by OEO.
      ii. In order to be jurisdictional to OEO, the Respondent (the person the complaint is against) must be affiliated (student/faculty/staff) at UNM and allege discrimination due to a protected status (age, race, gender etc.). OEO determines whether UAP 2720 or 2740 was violated.
      iii. Discrimination is typically reported to OEO in person, via email, phone or via UNM’s EthicsPoint system.
      iv. Attached is link to OEO’s data for 2015-2018. In 2019, OEO received over 800 complaints alleging a variety of different conduct including gender and race discrimination and sexual assault. Some complaints were referred to other offices on campus because they were not jurisdictional (i.e. Human Resources, Provost).
      v. [https://oeo.unm.edu/assets/docs/datatrendreport.pdf](https://oeo.unm.edu/assets/docs/datatrendreport.pdf)
      vi. Note that civil rights cases do not address structural racism in that they must be brought against an individual. Subtle forms of racism or gender discrimination may be difficult to prove. The burden of proof is by a Preponderance of the Evidence.
   c. **Hate Incidents**
i. Hate bias incidents are speech or conduct that do not rise to the level of a crime. They are typically reported via the hate-bias form. At UNM they have primarily been anonymous via social media, computer, or left anonymously on campus.

ii. Some speech that is offensive to many of us may be protected by First Amendment and Academic Freedom.

Administration/Leadership

1. Can we talk about administration using student evaluations as a point of quality assessment and how they skew disproportionately negative towards faculty of color and/or women, and particularly our Black faculty? Maybe taking institutional steps to eliminate student evaluations as a measure of merit or success?

   That is a great question. It is something we will bring to the Diversity Council for advocacy in AY21. Attached to the end of this Q/A document, please find sources concerning race and gender bias against in students’ evaluations of faculty teaching.

2. How do we produce leadership across campus to treat faculty of color with respect? For example, how do we create practices that do a better job of valuing black faculty IN FRONT OF students, and being proud of the accomplishments of faculty of color in deep ways?

   Specific recommendations in the literature include, “identifying environmental barriers to diversity and implementing strategies for their amelioration, promoting effective and innovative mentoring, and addressing leadership issues related to constructive change for promoting diversity” (Whittaker et al 2015).

   See: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4521729/

Other sources:


3. I love the idea of UNM responding to this anti-black racist act by actively moving to promote Africana Studies to full departmental status. Can the administration please comment on this?

A request has been made to Dean Peceny to provide a response.

4. For Cinnamon Blair, why didn’t UNM issue a message directly to faculty about this BEFORE tweeting a public video?

Thank you for your question. In order to be as accurate and comprehensive as possible, we needed to ensure that we had all of the information that was provided to OEO and PD on all of the attacks that occurred and who may have been directly affected. The President’s video was to address the attack on Dr. Becknell, since the media had published an article that day. I am happy to speak with you further at any time: 505-259-7114 or cblair@unm.edu.

5. Thanks so much to the panelists and artists. What concrete actions can be taken to hold administrators accountable to protect faculty of color?

The rapid response team and truth commission will be established to enhance accountability. These efforts have begun and become more visible by fall 2020. We are also working with OEO to check with UNM PD about whether they have a policy of escalating to FBI if hate crime is directed to an individual. As a part of the Rapid Response Taskforce, we will advocate building this escalation into UNM standard operating procedures.

Further, the Truth Commission will be charged by Pres Stokes and will offer recommendations to address concerns raised by your question. The Townhall included the following speaker to ensure representation by both UNM black faculty and UNM administration and other appropriate offices. It was also intentionally organized into three section to facilitate information sharing and provide a basis from which we can establish substantive next steps.

UNM Town Hall Speakers (in order of appearance):

**Opening Remarks:**
President Garnett Stokes
Vice President Assata Zerai

**Part 1, The history of anti-Blackness at UNM: Survivors Speak (4:45-4:55pm)**
*Dr. Kathy Powers, Black Faculty Alliance, Africana Studies Affiliate*
*Dr. Kirsten Buick, Prof of Art History, and Associate Dean, College of Fine Arts
*Part 2, Institutional Responses to anti-Blackness at UNM (4:57-5:12pm)
*Francie Cordova, Esq, Dir of OEO – Coordinating Hate Crimes Investigations at UNM
*Jeff Gassaway, UNM IT – IT responses to online threats and harassment at UNM (slide deck)
*Detective Michael Lawrence Gonzales, UNM PD – Ways that UNM PD works to protect students, faculty and staff at UNM from hate crimes
*Cinnamon Blair, Dir UCAM – Emergency communications planning

Part 3, Moving beyond being reactive when events occur (5:15-5:30pm)
*Dr. Stephanie McIver, SHAC – Mental health support to UNM when attacks happen
*Brandi Stone, Director, African American Student Services and Special Assistant to the President on African American Affairs – Students’ experiences of secondary effects from witnessing anti-Black racism and hate crimes against Black faculty and staff
*Frankie Flores, Director, LGBTQ Resource Center – Programming to build resilience in intersectional communities
*Lorena Blanco-Silva, DEI Director of Diversity Programs – Vision for a holistic response to crises, leading with communication and transparency: the Rapid Response Taskforce

Closing Remarks, *Provost James Holloway

6. Hi, I am a student in CCS and NAS. If we are going to confront anti-Blackness and defend Black faculty and students at UNM’s campus wouldn’t it be in the Dean of Arts and Sciences best interest to give Africana Studies the department status which has been long overdue? I have heard enough about the “long process” of getting department status. But let’s be real, Africana Students is not a department for a reason. We are not just a “Hispanic serving institution”. Department status for Africana Studies would be a solidarity move and hold accountability of UNM’s & NM’s deep anti-Black history. (Asked twice)

A request has been made to Dean Peceny to provide a response.

Black Faculty/Dr. Becknell

1. Where can we find the historic reports Dr. Powers refers to? It’s so alarming!
   Note: A response to this question is pending.

2. I have seen this firsthand at UNM: “Black Faculty arrive only to find no support or active antagonism within their departments.” These faculty will leave after a short time without anyone knowing what
happened. Besides support for the new black faculty, is there a way to hold the departments/programs accountable?

Our new postdoc and faculty hiring programs are built to hold departments accountable by strengthening routes to tenure-track appointments for faculty from underrepresented minority groups.

In the 2040 UNM strategic plan, we will set diversity benchmarks and implement a number of strategies to address a number of challenges, as noted below.

- To addressing implicit bias in hiring: UNM will purchase DiversityEdu license and require all faculty search committee members to complete the online course every 3-4 years (main campus; available to HSC & branch campuses)
- To build a roadmap to the professoriate for URM postdocs and visiting scholars: Inclusive Excellence Postdoc Program (main campus)
- To provide bridge funding to support tenure-track faculty during probationary period: Bridge Funding to promote hiring of URM faculty and women in STEM (main campus)
- To retain faculty and support their scholarly endeavors: UNM has purchased the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity Institutional Membership (available university-wide, including HSC & branch campuses); DEI is offering Faculty Success Program Scholarships (main campus tenure-system faculty)

3. Has Dr. Becknell released a statement about this incident &/or will he be joining us today?

Dr. Becknell will be speaking at the African American Complete Count Committee Town hall on 4 June at 6pm. Link: https://www.facebook.com/events/live-on-youtube-fb/aaccc-census-2020-virtual-statewide-town-hall/1443967602448521/

4. Will we get a status update on Dr. Becknell’s case?

Lt. Bitsoih provided an update on the case during the townhall. Once the transcript becomes available, we will post his response below.

5. How can staff members support black faculty, staff and students and encourage respect in the workplace?

Ryan Gregg, noted that additional optional and mandatory diversity training will become available through HR. See https://learningcentral.unm.edu/
The UNM Staff Council has a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee. Contact Grace Faustino [gfaustin@unm.edu] for more details. Also see https://staffcouncil.unm.edu.
Also, a number of training opportunities are available for faculty and staff at HSC. See: https://hsc.unm.edu/programs/diversity/faculty-staff-support/index.html

6. How will this town hall benefit the situation at hand of ending the perpetuation of Afrophobia at UNM for Faculty, Staff, and Students? We have been having this conversation for too long, with many “townhalls” and no change or plans implemented or actually addressed. I know I have been a part of this struggle since 2016 when I was an undergraduate. I am tired of seeing reactive events like these and want to see a proactive approach of policies and other measures to actually prevent and try to end the perpetuation of hate crimes, discrimination, and systematic oppression of Black faculty, staff, and students. What will the plan be after this townhall? Will we take a proactive approach of coming up with a plan and continuing the work to bring Equity & Inclusion to UNM across the whole system?

As noted before, the rapid response team and truth commission will be established to enhance accountability. These efforts have begun and become more visible by fall 2020. Pres Stokes will charge a truth commission. We are currently analyzing the multiple data sources collected via past faculty surveys to take a look at stories faculty have shared concerning past harms. We will also summarize whether policy changes were made on the basis of past studies and identify gaps in follow-through. Please see responses above that address related issues.

Racism Questions

1. Please let us know if faculty and staff are required to attend this and/or any other required trainings or strategic, ongoing education or anti-racism, specifically anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism.

Not required currently. However, HR is working on required training for staff and DEI is working with ADVANCE and the Provost’s office on required training for search committee members.

2. However, it also may not be students. There may be faculty behind this. I had a faculty member aggressively talk to me in a racist way. Have folks considered that faculty could be involved in this?

The UNM-PD, UNM-IT security team, ABQ PD, and FBI are exploring all possibilities. Given that this is an ongoing investigation, there is a limit as to what can be shared.

3. I know this conversation is focused on hate crimes toward faculty, but how do we track or record incidents of hate in the workforce toward staff? How can staff safely report? I have used Conflict Resolution and Mediation, but that doesn’t change a person’s racist intention. There is an undercurrent of racism that is intentionally hidden and we has black people feel it daily.
There are a number of reporting sites. And we are always willing to help you brainstorm ways to address issues in your units. Contact DEI at diverse@unm.edu to set up a meeting. Please see reporting sites below.

UNM Police Department, Hate/Bias Reports  

Lobo Respect and Advocacy  
https://loborespect.unm.edu/

Office of Equal Opportunity  
https://oeo.unm.edu/forms/index.html

UNM Ombuds  
https://ombudsforstaff.unm.edu/

UNM Dean of Students  
https://care.unm.edu/?_gl=1*172o09u*_gcl_aw*R0NMLjE1ODk1NzlxMDQuQ2owS0NRanctX2oxQIJEaOFSSXNBsmNmbVRFaEJMdzJ1R2R0OEFzYTFEd1FjcTFqRW5GQXhYSURIUDRGVFlyX1N2dGNnSTF4Rnl6V0IZQWFBdDI5RUFMd193Y0I.

Title IX Concerns  

Hazing Reports  

4. What concrete steps will be taken to truly create an anti-racism taskforce at UNM? Will individuals be appointed to this taskforce? How will this work? How do we deal with the institutional racism that is rampant at UNM? What tangible steps are being taken to address those dynamics mentioned earlier on with Drs. Power and Buick?

We will work with the Black Faculty Alliance, University Libraries, Division of Equity & Inclusion, Diversity Council, and our many supporters, including our University Administration to create the taskforce. We will provide reports on the progress on the DEI website.

5. When are we going to implement a critical organizational systems theory that goes beyond palliative treatments (which have a place at the individual level) and invoke a population prevention framework for mitigating and dismantling institutionalized racism?
Please see responses above regarding our next steps. We feel confident that the truth commission will propose strong recommendations. Further, DEI staff are working with units to set plans in place for addressing systemic concerns.

6. This isn’t directed at the Provost but more of a general question. We pride on ourselves on being a minority serving institution, it is without a doubt a huge asset of the university. What are some core competencies of constructive discord and elements of social justice do we practice in our serving our students, staff, and faculty? I’m asking both as reflection on what has been done but also what can we do to be proactively disrupting culturally learned and internalized prejudice?

These are great questions. This work has happened at UNM for decades, led by faculty in ethnic studies and research centers and staff in ethnic centers. As a part of our 2040 University Strategic plan, we are implementing a Gateway Equity initiative that build upon the good work of colleagues in ethnic studies and research centers and ethnic and cultural resource centers. Our goal will be to increase the success of all students in gateway courses in math, chemistry, and writing that currently have high fail and withdrawal rates. We hope that for all courses, that intervention will be implemented in order to promote student success and students’ sense of belongingness.

7. How can the community/city work together with UNM to take action against anti-Blackness and work towards being an anti-racist community?

We will work with City of Albuquerque Office of Equity & Engagement, and other partners to coordinate Undoing Racism Workshops let by the People’s Institute to Save Humanity and Beyond (PISAB). And we will work with collaborators and accomplices to plan for sustained engagement.

UNM PD

1. With the current state of over policing and communities of color, specifically violence against black bodies by law enforcement, is over policing really the right step? Is this really promoting safety for UNM’s Black students and students of color in the ethnic centers?

Dean of Students, Nasha Torrez has been working on a campus safety council. See following link for more information. https://dos.unm.edu/resources/safety.html
We will be working with the UNM Police Department to understand their model for community policing and steps they are taking to promote safety for UNM’s Black students and students of color.

2. Where would people report hate/bias incidents when the perpetrators are UNMPD?
These were answered above. Please see Q3 in the “Racism” section above for an exhaustive list. Also please see Response 6 in the OEO section at the beginning of this document.

3. A question for the UNM PD. How do we ensure that bulletin boards that feature the scholarship of faculty-of-color are protected from offensive remarks that target not only faculty, but the ideas, concepts, and information presented? Bulletin boards on the second floor of Hokona Hall have been the target of tagging and offensive remarks in the past.

“I can have additional patrols from our officers and security officers at the location”. – Lt. Bitsoih.

HR

1. We have HR preferred qualifications for hires both of faculty and staff that have demonstrated experience working with diversity populations. How can we make this a requirement for all hires at UNM? Situations like these demonstrate how we need to be at the forefront and not lagging behind.

    Armando, that is a great question. I would like us to bring this into the strategic plan goals/strategies. Let us work on that in the Diversity Council. We will also bring this concern to HR and the Staff Council DEI Committee.

HSC/Branches

1. As a family medicine resident at UNMH, I can speak from experience that racism is a daily occurrence in the health realm here. Could you possibly extend your trainings, work and findings to our office here? I have a sense there is not a sense of urgency surrounding racism here, nor an understanding of the actual daily mortality risk of racism or microaggressions.

    We are working closely with DEI at HSC. Soon, they will require annual diversity trainings of faculty and staff. We will post their policy here once it is available. In the meantime, see https://hsc.unm.edu/programs/diversity/faculty-staff-support/index.html
    Thanks for your question!

2. How will the branch campuses be included in these efforts?

    DEI/OEO is expanding outreach to branch campuses and encouraging appointments of representatives to the Diversity Council and Lead Council.
3. I would like to echo a previous question with an additional comment. UNM Health Sciences Rio Rancho Campus is lacking in diversity/racial education. It would be in our best interest to include all branch campuses in the trainings or implementations that have been discussed throughout this town hall.

We absolutely agree! UNM DEI is working closely with HSC and the branch campuses. As noted above, HSC will soon require annual diversity trainings of faculty and staff. We will post their policy here once it is available. In the meantime, see [https://hsc.unm.edu/programs/diversity/faculty-staff-support/index.html](https://hsc.unm.edu/programs/diversity/faculty-staff-support/index.html)

VPEI Zerai is currently meeting with all chancellors from branch campuses to understand their plans for diversity education. DiversityEdu online education concerning implicit bias will be offered to the branch campuses. We are checking in with UNM HR to see whether their opportunities for diversity education are available to branch campuses.

Miscellaneous

1. Can you post at the end of the event how many of us attended?
   
   Sure thing; Approximately 300 attended on Zoom. Unfortunately, the Zoom link we received limited the number of participants.

2. Will the recording and presentation be available on DEI’s website? Thanks!
   
   Yes. The recording and closed captioning is available on the UNM DEI website [diverse@unm.edu]. Thank you.

3. Thank you for holding this important Town Hall. As the Chair of the City of Albuquerque’s Human Rights Board, I will be bringing up this important issue at our next meeting on May 19th.

   Thank you! FYI this video and the slide deck are available on our DEI page. It will also be captioned.

4. Would any of you be willing to do quarterly mentoring Diversity and Equity workshops for staff & faculty?

   DEI is currently evaluating our training & outreach, in hopes of collaborating with CTL and HR to further develop programming. LGBTQ RC offers safe zone training and El Centro offers Dream Zone training. HR is offering a number of diversity education, including professional development for women leaders. In the future, DEI will partner with HR in these efforts. In the meantime, we welcome you to visit us and set up meetings to discuss mentoring with VPEI Zerai.
Also, our monthly Diversity Council meetings are open to all. That is another opportunity for diversity mentoring. Those meetings occur 11:30a-1pm the first Wednesday of every month during the academic year.

5. How do we ensure that this type of training and information gets to all parts of UNM? All campuses, all entities that operate under the “UNM Brand” including UNMMG, UNMH, UNM-HSC, etc. And how can this and other trainings be required versus optional? We need cultural shifts throughout UNM. Thank you!

For information security and privacy training, this will be added to all employee’s learning plans, we are working with UNM’s Training Management Platform managers (Learning Central) to get those trainings configured and added to all employee learning plans. For students, we are researching which way to deliver this training to UNM students;

6. I also want to understand how this will impact or protect graduate student instructors as well? I have two separate incidences of harassment and fear because I teach a class that directly tackles anti-blackness and white supremacy. In both cases, they were “investigated” but the student that was threatening was allowed to stay in my class because of “his right to an education” – where do we as grad students, and especially as grad students of color who are also targeted, fall into this conversation?

The safety of graduate student instructors is vital. DEI will work with OGS to discuss protection and support, this includes developing policies and procedures, in collaboration with OEO, Ombuds, the Dean of Students, DEI, the Provost’s office and the Office of Graduate Studies (OGS). See Q Please see Q3 in the “Racism” section above for an exhaustive list concerning reporting concerns. Also please see Response 6 in the OEO section at the beginning of this document.

7. Many thanks to our organizers and panelists. Two questions – will the webinar be posted on the UNM website? (I have family and friends who are interested in tuning in.) Will some of the panelists be sharing their PowerPoints or main recommendations? If would be great to share the content of this important discussion with our colleagues and students in our various colleges across campus, including the Law School.

These have been added to the DEI website.

8. A comment rather than question: I think the questions themselves are super-important and should be recorded for the record. They give an indication of folks’ experiences who might not be represented in the data.
I agree, these were questions recorded and within this document we have answered them electronically as we ran out of time during the townhall.

9. Are we still going to have time for the QnA? (2 similar Qs)

So sorry we ran out of time. We answered Q/A electronically in this document on the DEI website.

Incomplete list of references concerning gender and race bias in student evaluations of teaching (see Q1 in Administration/Leadership section)


