



# **2020-2021 Annual Report on**

## **The Social-Organizational Psychology Program at Teachers College, Columbia University**

### **Initiatives on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Antiracism (DEIA)**

**2020-2021**

# The SOP DEIA Annual Report

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- The Context of this Initiative
- The 2020-2021 Objectives
- Our Process-to-date
- General findings on what is working, priority challenges and current actions
- Prioritized Action Plans by Unit
- Conclusions

# The Context

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- **In the Summer of 2020...**
- In response to the ongoing harms and injustices being inflicted on women, recent immigrants, Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and members of other marginalized groups in America.
- In recognition of the deeply and historically “racialized” nature of many of America’s institutions of higher education.
- In light of **Teachers College Diversity Mission** instituted in 1999 by the *Task Force on Community and Diversity*, and the *SOPP’s legacy of research, practice and education on social justice*.

# The Context

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- Inspired by the DEIA reform agendas of the *Athena Leadership Project* and the *AAAS SEA Change initiative* in higher education.
- Informed by empirical studies of effective DEIA (Kalev, et al, 2006), Wing Sue's criteria for Culturally Competent Organizations, complexity-science informed models of institutional reform (Coleman, et al, 2017) and methods of Collective Impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011).
- **The SOP faculty, students and staff launched a 1-year working group on DEIA.**

# The SOP DEIA Objectives

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The aim of this initiative was to systematically **listen** to members of our community – students, faculty, staff and alumni – and then reflect and act on *concerns, challenges and opportunities for better promoting DEIA in our own program.*

The central objective is to eventually **institutionalize** this work as a core component of the *in-role activities* of all members of our community, and to *establish a mechanism (e.g., standing committee)* that will continue to take **responsibility and provide accountability for promoting, measuring and reporting on this agenda.**

# The 2020-2021 SOP DEIA Components

**Established a core team for the working group** to coordinate the initiative, supervised by the SOP Cabinet (Debra Noumair, Caryn Block, Sarah Brazaitis, Gina Buontempo, Peter Coleman and John Handal).



# The TC SOP Core Team of the DEIA Working Group

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- Molly Forgang (PhD Program Liaison)
- Stephanie von Numers (MA Program Associate)
- Ronald Taylor (MA Program student)
- Varshini Srinivasan (MA Program student)
- Joseph Dillard (XMA Program Associate Director)
- Kelvin Riddle (ELDP Program student)
- Danielle Coon (MD-ICCCR Associate Director)
- Jaspar Leahy (MD-ICCCR Education Program Coordinator)
- John Handal (SOP Senior Program Manager)
- Peter T. Coleman (Faculty Chair and Director, MD-ICCCR)
- SOP Faculty Advisory Board (Debra A. Noumair, Director, SOP Program and XMA Program; Caryn Block, Director, PhD Program; Sarah Brazaitis, Director, MA Program; Gina Buontempo, Director, ELDP and BLDP; Peter T. Coleman, Director, MD-ICCCR)

# The SOP DEIA Components

- **Listening.** We offered several avenues (student-led peer groups, town halls, surveys, anonymous drop box) to solicit input and feedback from all of our stakeholders regarding the DEIA climate, challenges and potential remedies.
- **SOP Town Hall** = 145 participants including faculty, staff, students, alumni in confidential break-out sessions explored program strengths and concerns re DEIA. Audio recorded, transcribed and coded for themes



TEACHERS COLLEGE  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
A Graduate School of Education, Health & Psychology

SOCIAL-  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGY

## VIRTUAL TOWN HALL ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ANTIRACISM

Thursday, October 29th  
5:00-6:30pm  
Zoom Registration to follow

For Students, Faculty, Staff,  
and Alumni of the Social-  
Organizational Psychology  
Program at Teachers  
College

**This will be an open space for us to  
listen to your questions and thoughts  
on the DEIA climate within the SOP  
program. Please plan to join us!**







# The SOP DEIA Components

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**Collected demographic data.** Conducted a demographic review of employee hiring and promotion and student recruitment and funding trends by demographic groups over the last 5-10 years.

**Generated unit-specific feedback reports.** Provided feedback reports to each of the subunits regarding the DEIA-relevant strengths, challenges and potential remedies gleaned from survey and town hall discussions.

**Generated SMART action plans for each unit.** Generation of action plans for each program unit that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. Included metrics.

# The SOP DEIA Components

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**Launched series of educational offerings** featuring SOP students and alumni working as internal or external consultants on DEIA reforms.

Hosted a program by the **Office for Diversity and Community Affairs** to inform our community of TC DEIA-related resources and policies.

**Developing a SOP DEIA website** to communicate the activities of all SOP DEIA efforts and outcomes (to be launched in fall, 2021).

Exploring offering an **SOP DEIA Community Dialogue Forum**, a facilitated space for open dialogue and sharing. We envision this as a time to reflect upon personal experiences, connect, share concerns, and foster inclusion and support across our community.

# **General Findings from Listening Sessions**

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# The Following Major Themes Identified

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## **1. Need to diversify faculty and student body**

1. Enhance diversity through recruiting. Develop an effective marketing and recruiting strategy that can provide us with more access to prospective BIPOC students & faculty

## **2. Need to go deeper into DEIA – weave into all aspects of programs**

1. Faculty leadership on DEIA
2. Develop protocol and conduct multicultural audits on courses (every 3 years)
3. Provide ongoing DEIA professional development training for faculty/community
4. Increase psychological safety within the classroom for DEIA discussions
5. Provide practical methods for DEIA work in courses. Explore offering a DEIA concentration.
6. Offer ongoing DEIA learning events
7. Conduct needs assessment regarding our Adjuncts and DEIA strengths and challenges
8. Continue research on DEIA

# The Following Major Themes Identified

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## **3. Examine SOP Program processes and procedures**

1. Admissions and Financial Aid
2. Who we help—formally and informally
3. Communications

## **4. Institutionalize DEIA work**

1. Develop a DEIA vision and mission
2. Develop a comprehensive DEIA Strategy
3. Develop and conduct DEIA surveys. Measure and track impact
4. Communicate DEIA topics regularly
5. Establish DEIA mechanism for accountability (e.g., standing committee)

# The Following Major Themes Identified

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## 5. Formalizing support for students:

1. Address burden of informal grievance processes on BIPOC
2. Establish affinity groups

## 6. Enhance Program Work Climate

1. Make reparations and address past issues that are in the way of moving forward; then, focus on present and future pathways: what do we commit to doing from this day forward?
2. Establish psychological safety
3. Greater transparency
4. Need to function more as a coherent program across the units



# Recommendations

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- Develop a more strategic approach to DEIA program-wide and within each subunit as opposed to numerous stand-alone and ad-hoc measures.
- Review of recruiting strategy for all relevant subunits.
  - Marketing materials, targeted outreach to diverse populations, selection procedures etc.
- Effective dissemination of existing resources and opportunities
  - Focus communications on relevant courses, events and so on with DEIA-specific messaging.
- Need for inclusive leadership
  - Improved recruitment of diverse faculty
  - More Professional Development opportunities on DEIA for faculty
- Multicultural audit of curriculum.
  - PhD, MA, XMA programs.

# Priority Actions

Below are our list of priorities, however we are in the process of reviewing and finalizing the specific actions for the SOP

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- Advocate tirelessly for faculty diversity hires.
- Establish metrics and gather baseline data for action planning around DEIA.
- Create a process and find/offer support for multicultural audits of the entire Program curriculum.
- Engage the faculty, adjuncts and staff in a process of personal/professional development on DEIA.
- Provide support and training on addressing microaggressions, bias and managing difficult conversations in the classroom. Get support from TC.
- Continue to listen and learn from our community.
- Continue to offer educational events and forum for DEIA.
- Establish a protocol for just-in-time responses to injustice-related events in our community/society.

# Conclusions

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The activities of the 2020-2021 SOP Working Group on DEIA were both a continuation of the ongoing work in this area within the SOP, as well as a time of reset and reprioritization of these efforts.

There is considerable work to be done to help establish and ensure a more welcoming and inclusive climate in our programs. However, the faculty, staff, students and alumni of the SOP program remain deeply committed to this work, and feel reenergized to do so in the most inclusive and efficient ways possible.

As the work continues, we ask that our community remain in communication with us, so that we can all benefit from the experiences, insights and energy that emanates from the SOP community.