A Follow-Up Report on the Status of Minorities at the University of Kansas

Submitted by the Subcommittee on the Status of Minorities

January 27, 2016
A 2014 report released by the Subcommittee on the Status of Minorities mandated a yearly analysis of the status of minorities at the University of Kansas. As the report stated, the impetus behind the report was to analyze and discuss how changing admissions standards would affect the number of students from underrepresented populations that ultimately would attend the University of Kansas. The changes considered possibly problematic to minority students have been to the admissions standards for assured admission into the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. These now require 21+ ACT (980+ SAT) and 3.25+ GPA or 24+ ACT (1090+ SAT) and 3.0+ GPA.\footnote{“U.S. Freshmen Requirements | Undergraduate Admissions.” U.S. Freshmen Requirements | Undergraduate Admissions. Accessed January 25, 2016. \url{https://admissions.ku.edu/apply/requirements/usfreshmen}.}

The previous report cited that the average ACT score for Kansas minority students who had applied to the University of Kansas was 20.9.\footnote{(2) Student Senate Taskforce on the Status of Minorities. "A Report on the Status of Minorities at the University of Kansas." May 7, 2014. Accessed August 1, 2015. \url{https://studentsenate.ku.edu/sites/studentssenate.ku.edu/files/files/Taskforce%20on%20Status%20of%20Minorities%202014%20Final%20Report.p}.} This is well below the bounds set with these new standards.

The 2015 Diversity and Equity Report published by the University of Kansas indicated that there was a small decrease from 2014 in the number of minority first-time freshmen.\footnote{The University of Kansas. "Inspiring Diversity, 2015 Diversity & Equity Report." University of Kansas. January 19, 2016. Accessed January 19, 2016. \url{http://diversity.ku.edu/sites/diversity.ku.edu/files/files/KUDiversityEquityAnnualReport_2015.pdf}.} According to the report this decrease was seen primarily in Black students and students that identified as more than two races. Hispanic first time freshman saw a slight increase.

Comparisons between the numbers of first time freshmen students split by race can be found on the University of Kansas’ 2015 Diversity and Equity Report. For first time freshmen on the Lawrence campus, the report cites an N of 4,084 students and in 2015 an N of 4,187 students. According to this report, for undergraduate first-time freshman student head count by race and sex, for American Indian females there was an increase of 6 students, for American Indian males there was a decrease of 2 students, for Asian females there was an increase of 13 students, for Asian males there was a decrease of 8 students, for Black females there was a decrease of 34 students, for Black males there was a decrease of 34 students, for Hispanic females there was an increase of 10
females, for male Hispanic there was a decrease of 24 students, for female Native Hawaiian there was a decrease of 1 student, for male Native Hawaiian there was a decrease of 5 students, for two or more races there was an increase in females by 2 students, for males of two or more races there was a decrease of 2 students (from 2014 to 2015). There was an increase of nonresident alien females of 47 students and an increase in nonresident alien males by 95 students (from 2014-2015). The total number of minority students on the report has decreased from by 1.3% (from 2014-2015).

According to the report, in 2015, 22.3% of the Lawrence campus first-time freshmen were considered minority students (including two or more races). In this same year, 70.1% of Lawrence campus first-time freshmen were white.4

For graduate students, 13.7% of the graduate student population on the Lawrence Campus was cited in the Diversity and Equity Report to be comprised of minority students, with 65.1% cited to be white.5

First semester retention rates for minority first-time full-time freshmen was cited to be 90.3% and was 92.4% for white students. First year retention rates for first-time full-time minority freshmen was 72%. First year retention rates for first-time full-time white freshmen was 82.4%.6

The subcommittee feels that the University of Kansas should expand the Diversity and Inclusion report in future years to include outcomes and statistics regarding students with disabilities at the university, students who do not identify as male/female, students who identify as LGBT+, and students who are identified as coming from low socioeconomic status backgrounds.

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4 The University of Kansas. "Inspiring Diversity, 2015 Diversity & Equity Report."
5 The University of Kansas. "Inspiring Diversity, 2015 Diversity & Equity Report."
6 The University of Kansas. "Inspiring Diversity, 2015 Diversity & Equity Report."
Climate on Campus

The summer of 1970 at the University of Kansas was one of racial divide, tension and violence. Black lives were lost and threatened that summer, and the violence continues today. People of color at the University of Kansas feel unsafe on campus, off-campus and beyond the confines of the campus community. The hatred toward people of color, specifically- but not limited to- anti-black racism, can be seen on social media. This manifests in racist tweets and twitter accounts. This manifests in Yik Yak posts. This manifests in complicit likes, shares and Facebook posts. Even more blatant racism can be seen from a fraternity window where a confederate flag was spotted. People of color have reported micro-aggressions used against them inside and outside of the classroom setting. Minority students have had acts of violence committed against them. All of these things are inexcusable. The University of Kansas is complicit in these actions for not taking steps to change campus climate.

In order to address retention issues the University has acknowledged that the administration must address the toxic climate on campus. The following report will outline areas the University can improve, in order to make the University of Kansas a more inclusive space for students. The Climate Study is a great start to getting data on the prevailing atmosphere at the University. The information collected must result in actions that will make the University a more inclusive space.

Application

The admissions process via the application is one the first places that students have the opportunity to interact with the University of Kansas as an establishment. As the application now stands, the race and ethnic portion has a checkmark style set-up. The first portion asks prospective students to answer, yes, no, or no response to whether they identify as Hispanic or Latino. This type of set-up may hinder students from properly expressing their identity. For example, a student may have one parent who identifies as Latino, and one that does not. This could easily be fixed with the addition of a comments box in this section, to allow students to clarify their meaning. Allowing people to identify

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consistently with how they personally identify to a particular ethnic or racial group promotes the fact that the University of Kansas values inclusivity and wants students to feel as though they can properly express their intersectional identities as Jayhawks.

Furthermore, there are five options for race including American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and white. The fact that multiple boxes can be checked is crucial and it is commendable that the application does have this feature. However, once again an “other” box with a comment option would likely continue to promote inclusivity, as students would be able to more properly express exactly how they identify their own race. For example, first generation students from certain middle-eastern countries with parents who immigrated to the United States are considered white, however may identify much differently than a white person whose parents are not immigrants of a different country. Once again, this option would promote an inclusive application and hence provide a first look at KU for prospective students that will not hinder them from proper self-expression (see Appendix A for picture).

Furthermore, on the application there are only two options for gender: male or female. This excludes students who may not identify within this binary. Adding an “other” section with a comments option would help solve this problem8 (See Appendix B). People who do not identify in the gender binary will also receive wrong preferred pronouns on documents from the University of Kansas because they cannot select their gender identity.

Leadership Symposiums

In 2015, there were two KU leadership symposiums offered for minority students. One was the Latino Leadership Symposium and the other was the Black Leadership Symposium9. Although this subcommittee commends these efforts in recruiting students from diverse backgrounds to have interest in the University of Kansas, the subcommittee feels that prospective applicants who identify as more than one minority race may not feel included in either of these symposiums. This subcommittee not only encourages the addition of other symposiums for other races/ethnicities, but also feels that an additional

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symposium titled “Minority Leadership Symposium” would help recruit students who identify with multiple minority groups, but may feel uncomfortable at one of these particular symposiums.

**Cultural Competency in the Classroom**

After a meeting with the multicultural student groups’ President’s Roundtable, a consensus was reached that there was a need for educational opportunities within the curriculum that promote diversity, cultural understanding and social justice. It has been suggested to do an online course that freshmen can take before they come to KU but, as alcoholEDU would suggest, this is not a successful tactic. During the President’s Roundtable it was suggested that courses within majors that already exist be utilized and additional courses be created as necessary. The following is a list of courses offered in the spring 2016 catalog for every major. These are courses that have some sort of emphasis on social justice, cultural understanding and diversity. Some of these courses are very minimal in this teaching, however. Therefore, the Status of Minority Subcommittee suggests that the University of Kansas expands its course offerings in all majors of courses that have a component of diversity, cultural understanding or social justice. Once that happens it is then the Status of Minority Subcommittee’s suggestion that either a Goal 7 is added to the core that would require a completion of one of these courses, or that the student be required to take one course within their major that provided diversity, cultural understanding or social justice. When this is expanded, the courses should take on a more intense social justice focus.

We also suggest that the KU core creates a social justice certification that would incentivize students taking one of the following courses within their major. A certificate could be administered if a student takes a course from another major that can fulfill a requirement for a social justice certification. Other things they could do in combination with this course would be to go through cultural competency, ability or safe zone training and go to a social justice based retreat (i.e. Colors of KU, KUnity, Men and Masculinity, Women of Color Collective, QUEST, etc.).

- School of Education: ELPS 250
- School of Business: BUS 200
· School of Journalism: JOUR 201, JOUR 534
· School of Music: None
· School of Architecture: Arch 552
· School of Engineering: Chief of Staff has discussed this with the school and they are looking at starting Intro engineering class social justice classes.
· School of Pharmacy: Phar 509 (if added social justice in this)
· School of Social Welfare: Most courses specify on social justice, could look at courses that are more intensive.
· School of Law: Law 886
· CLAS- AAAS: AAAS 306, AAAS 565
· CLAS- AMS: AMS 110, AMS 534
· CLAS- ISP: ISP 348,
· CLAS EVRN: EVRN 336, EVRN 385
· CLAS WGSS: WGSS 327, WGSS 335, WGSS 521, WGSS 563
· CLAS CLSX: CLSX 516
· CLAS EALC: EALC 105, EALC 363
· CLAS ENGL: ENGL 308, ENGL 318 (Topic: Lit of Social Justice), ENGL 328 (Topic: African American Fiction to Film), ENGL 337, ENGL 340, ENGL 571
· CLAS FREN: None
· CLAS ITAL: None
· CLAS GERM: GERM 132, GERM 320
· CLAS HIST: HIST 308, HIST 319, HIST 321, HIST 343, HIST 351, HIST 353, HIST 368, HIST 390 (Slavery from the Slaves Point of View)
· CLAS HA: HA 566
· CLAS HWC: HWC 320, HWC 348, HIST 505, HWC 600
· CLAS PHIL: PHIL 180, PHIL 360, PHIL 368, PHIL 370, PHIL 622
· CLAS REL: REL 171, REL 373, REL 374, REL 377
· CLAS SLAV: none
· CLAS SPAN: SPAN 170, SPAN 346, SPAN 463
· CLAS PORT: PORT 300, PORT 347
· CLAS ANTH: ANTH 108, ANTH 160, ANTH 162, ANTH 308, ANTH 360,
ANTH 363, ANTH 372, ANTH 501, ANTH 595
· CLAS ABSC: ABSC 310, ABSC 311, ABSC 350, ABSC 509, ABSC 535
· CLAS COMS: COMS 201, COMS 202, COMS 246, COMS 450, COMS 551, COMS 552
· CLAS ECON: ECON 582
· CLAS LING: LING 320, LING 421
· CLAS POLS: POLS 562, POLS 619 (Topic: Contemporary US Social Movement)
· CLAS PSYC: PSYC 350, PSYC 360, PSYC 361, PSYC 465, PSYC 499, PSYC 521, PSYC 689
· CLAS PUAD: PUAD 436, PUAD 601
· CLAS SOC: SOC 110, SOC 150, SOC 160, SOC 220, SOC 306, SOC 326, SOC 332, SOC 342, SOC 352, SOC 364, SOC 450, SOC 534
· CLAS SPLH: none
· CLAS CHEM: None
· CLAS GEOG: GEOG 100, GEOG 102, GEOG 142, GEOG 145, GEOG 552
· CLAS GEOL: none
· CLAS MATH: MATH 410
· CLAS PHSX: PHSX 594
· CLAS ASTR: none
· CLAS BIO: BIOL 116
· CLAS DANC: DANC 330
· CLAS FMS: FMS 313
· CLAS THR: none
· CLAS ART: none

This is a current list of every major at the University of Kansas and the courses that have any sort of nonwestern culture, diversity or social justice curriculum. In many of these courses, the narrative seems very limited and needs expansion. We believe having a course requirement that has a focus on social justice or diversity will help open up students to new ideas. Since there are already a few courses that have a framework that can be expanded, then they should. Ultimately, we believe the goal should be to have a social justice focused course in every major and potentially make it a new goal in the
Mental Health Trends Among Diverse Students

In addition to various other challenges, students who come from diverse backgrounds often have additional difficulties accessing mental health resources, despite often having a greater need for these resources.

When students are targets of discrimination, their mental health is affected greatly. For instance, in a 2014 study that looked at the correlation between discrimination and mental health among college students who identified as a minority sexuality, they were 7.23% more likely to have moderate or severe anxiety symptoms, and 7.4% more likely to have moderate or severe depressive symptoms. The 2013 Healthy Minds Survey—a survey of over 18,000 college students that assessed their mental well-being—compared responses among students who self-identified as transgender or non-transgender. 42.8% of transgender students reported a diagnosis of depression compared to 19.4% of non-transgender students, and 31% of transgender students reported a diagnosis on the anxiety spectrum, compared to 19.7% of non-transgender students.

A different 2014 study compared overall well-being between white and minority students at a predominately white college (PWC) and a college where ethnic students comprised the majority of students (MMC: majority-minority college). The authors found that “being a racial or ethnic minority, regardless of majority/minority status within the college community, predicted poorer mental health outcomes, including greater loneliness, depression, and past suicidality.” They also noted that being a female student was a predictor for depression, past suicidal attempts, and current suicidal ideation.

A 2009 study focused on mental health among bicultural students. The authors defined bicultural individuals as “persons who have been extensively exposed to two different cultures and may have internalized or developed two cultural knowledge

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Many of the participants in this study were immigrants. The findings of this study consistently link a low self-perception of one’s ability to “perform personally significant tasks” in the culture on their campus to depression symptoms and, to a lesser degree, anxiety symptoms.\(^\text{13}\)

The well being of students with disabilities is also an area of concern. For example, a 2014 study found that when compared to students without chronic illnesses, students with chronic illnesses had a lower quality of life related to their health, and greater loneliness.\(^\text{14}\)

This issue was compounded by the fact that many of these students were not in connection with on campus resources, or their peers who had chronic illness.

One solution for this problem would be to create an on-campus resources (especially groups where students could interact with peers in a similar situation) for students with disabilities where they do not exist and advertise those resources heavily. Numerous studies have shown that students who receive counseling services are significantly more likely to remain enrolled at their institution. The Student Senate Counseling and Psychological Services Student Advisory Board’s 2015 report outlines trends specific to KU: “Of the 120 freshman who received services at CAPS in Fall 2011, all of them continued their enrollment at KU in Spring 2012 and Fall 2013. Of the 100 CAPS clients who were randomly surveyed at the end of Fall 2014, 55% indicated they were more likely to stay in school, and 58% indicated they were more motivated to stay in school.”

Diverse students at have a greater need for mental health care, and the mental health professionals they interact with must be culturally competent in order to effectively treat them. When students receive proper treatment, they are more likely to stay at the University.


LGBTQIA+ Lack of Statistics

According to a study done at Columbia University, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans students have been excluded from the recent trends to track why underrepresented students are not being retained by their higher education institutions. Universities have been trying to track the reasons for attrition for groups in relation to race and disability. Universities are tracking minority student retention rates because there has been a strong salience of the cost universities are paying by not having their campuses be hospitable for multicultural students. LGBT students have not been included in these statistics at most Universities even though they drop out of Universities for most of the same reasons that other minority student’s drop out.

Currently, when a student applies to the University of Kansas you cannot choose to select a non-binary gender identity (See Appendix B). Also, The University of Kansas does not use retention statistics for LGBT+ students. They do not ask if a student identifies as a sexual minority anywhere in the application\textsuperscript{15}. Therefore to look at retention risks for LGBT+ students, we have to look to other records. Also if a student does not identify with their gender at birth, they will not have their preferred pronouns on admissions or scholarship letters from The University of Kansas. According to 2010 State of Higher Education for LGBT people Report, 33% of all LGBT students and 38% of trans students have considered leaving their higher education institution due to reasons surrounding their orientation or gender expression. In 1994, J.M. Sherrill and C. Hardesty of New York University conducted a study on LGBT students in undergraduate and graduate schools. They found that 31% of sexual minority students left school for a semester or longer and 33% of LGBT students that dropped out altogether said it was due to harassment or other issues surrounding their orientation or gender expression\textsuperscript{16}.

What are the attrition risks to LGBT students at the University of Kansas? One of the main risks illustrated in the Columbia University report is socio-economics. Many LGBT students are not out or out to their parents due to their fear of being disowned by their families. Many LGBT students who do come out or are outed are financially cut off.

\textsuperscript{15} University of Kansas. "University of Kansas Admissions Application."
Another attrition risk, which is mentioned in the Columbia University report, is mental health. According to a 2004 study, LGBT students, particularly those who are not out, have a heightened level of stress due to the fact that they are basically living a heteronormative life and a secret life they want to be living. This duality also negatively affects identity development.

Intersectionality is the last issue that the University of Columbia project conducted that this report will look. In a study done in 2010 by *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, sexual minorities who are women face heightened sexism and heterosexism in their college experience. Race and sexuality is another intersection that affects retention. According to a 2007 study done by the *Journal of Higher Education*, LGBT people who are racial minorities face greater struggle and adjustment issues then white LGBT students. Also, in a 2003 study done by Campus Pride, LGBT students of color found it harder to find “out” spaces amongst both their own racial group and amongst other racial groups.

To address the first concern of LGBT student retention, which is economics, the Status of Minorities Subcommittee will work with administration to help create an emergency fund for LGBT students who have been cut off by their families due to their sexuality. Many universities, including the University of Missouri Kansas City and Kent State University, have such emergency funds that have been set aside in case a student should find themselves in this situation. The committee will contact schools that have these programs, such as these two schools, to figure out how those schools got this scholarship and how we can bring it to The University of Kansas.\(^\text{17}\)

To address the second concern, the status of minority committee will work with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) to see how we can assist the psychological needs of gender and sexual minorities. One potential course of action is creating an identity based counseling group with CAPS.

To address the last concern, the committee will work with the Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Office of Diversity and Equity and the Office of First Year experiences to help figure out how there can be more safe spaces and better counseling for LGBT that have other minority intersectional ties.

One suggested course of action is letting more incoming freshman know about LGBT related resources on campus. Particularly students of color or students coming from underrepresented backgrounds. Potentially, there could be LGBT related information during such programs as Options, Hawk Link, and Student Tours (both by ambassadors and by the Multicultural Recruitment Team). Also we think it is important that the ambassadors in both programs are safe zone trained.

The Fifteen Demands

On November 11, 2015 the University of Kansas hosted a town hall meeting on race, respect, and responsibility. The meeting, moderated by Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little, was arranged as a response to the increasingly tumultuous racial climate in the Midwest, that catalyzed protests at the University of Missouri which took place to bring attention to the startling lack of action taken by the University of Missouri as it pertained to working towards preventing and punishing acts of racially motivated violence and aggressions. The town hall meeting was to address issues on campus, specifically pertaining to race, as well as act as a preventative measure to ensure that a campus wide movement demanding change from the University of Kansas, because of a lack of action against mounting racial tensions on campus and in the midwest, would not take place.

However, at the town hall meeting, a grassroots campus organization of KU students called Rock Chalk Invisible Hawk—a name that was inspired by the hashtag of the same name that brought to light the prevalence and impact of issues pertaining to marginalized students in years past— took the stage to demand change of KU. The demands are as follows.

Demands for the University of Kansas Governing Bodies

1. Director of OMA hired by December
2. Mandatory, intense “inclusion and belonging” training for all levels of students, staff, faculty, and administration
3. Issue Campus Climate Survey by February 2016

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4. Train and rehire IOA staff and implement accountability measures
5. Increase consistent hiring of diverse faculty and staff
6. Increase the percentage of underrepresented domestic and undocumented students
7. Immediate amendments to Senate election code
8. Increase aid and assistance to active military and veterans
9. Establish team of multicultural counselors to specifically address severe mental illnesses and the needs of students of color by Fall 2016
10. Ban concealed weapons from campus
11. Remove all professors who assault, sexually harass, or engage in abusive relationships with students. Immediate expulsion of those that commit sexual assault.
12. Open investigation into [REDACTED] et al. case as hate crime, beginning with IOA
13. Reopen investigation into the murder of Rick “Tiger” Dowdell
14. Establish Multicultural Student Government independent of current University of Kansas Student Senate
15. Thorough plan of action from Administration by January 19, 2016

The demands stand as a comprehensive set of solutions, conceived and curated by KU students themselves, to prevent, alleviate, and work towards fundamentally solving problems pertaining to prejudicial exclusion and systems of discrimination and disadvantage. Additionally, the demands serve as a reflection of the status of minorities on KU’s campus at this time. It is obvious, as reflected in the necessity and content of the demands that the status of minority students on campus is extremely concerning. The university as a whole fails to meet standards of cultural competency, minority representation and inclusion, cultivation of non-discriminatory environments, and considerations for marginalized students. Demand Number Six explicitly addresses the admissions of domestic and undocumented underrepresented students to The University of Kansas. This is important to note because increases of International students at the University of Kansas have manipulated numbers of underrepresented domestic and undocumented students. By utilizing this report to create action based change and by
standing in solidarity with marginalized students through support of Rock Chalk Invisible Hawk, Black Lives Matter and other movements led by the voices of marginalized students, the University of Kansas and the University of Kansas Student Senate can make positive, tangible changes to the system of oppression and injustice that so intensely exists on campus and across the nation to create a space for the voice and the existence of marginalized students.

**Conclusion**

This report was conducted by the Subcommittee on the Status of Minorities in good faith. This is meant to be an action plan for the 2016 year. Members of the committee find these particular issues to be some of the pressing issues to admissions and retention of underrepresented students at the University of Kansas. Members of the committee did attempt to extensively search for the avenues that need change, however this is not an exhaustive list and any other problems noted should be pursued. We call upon university administration, Student Senate, and student leaders to engage in actions that will help make these goals a reality.
APPENDIX A¹⁹

Race & Ethnic Background

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

☐ Yes, I am Hispanic or Latino
☐ No, I am not Hispanic or Latino
☐ No Response

What is your race?
(select one or more races)

☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native
☐ Asian
☐ Black or African American
☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
☐ White

APPENDIX B¹⁸

Gender *

☐ Female ☐ Male