



Recommendations for Race, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan

Executive Summary

July 2017

Challenging events occurred in the University of Washington School of Public Health (UW SPH) community during spring 2016, calling increased attention to how UW SPH will respond and address issues of race, equity, and inclusion in the School. ORS Impact was asked to develop a strategic plan to address race, equity and inclusion in the UW SPH. To develop a data-driven strategy, one-to-one interviews, focus groups, listening sessions, strategic planning sessions, and trainings were conducted; meetings of the UW SPH Diversity Committee and Subcommittees were observed; and students, staff, and faculty were invited to participate in an online survey to inform the strategic planning. This report is a summary of our findings and recommendations.





The following key findings are based on data collection that included an online survey, interviews, focus groups, listening sessions, strategic planning sessions, trainings, and observations.

Key Findings

- Generally, **faculty, staff, and students** report being comfortable with the climate at UW SPH, even though **many report having observed or experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct.**
- **Faculty** are most often the source of observed and experienced exclusionary, intimidating, offensive, and/or hostile conduct as reported by students, staff, and faculty. **Race, ethnicity, and/or gender** were most frequently identified as the **basis for such conduct.**
- **Students of color** are not as comfortable in class as their fellow white classmates.
- Nearly 40% of **students, staff, and faculty** report encountering racism in SPH “at least occasionally.”
- Students, faculty, and staff clearly articulated the need for a **full-time staff person** to lead race, equity, and inclusion work. It was well understood this person should report to the UW SPH Dean to have the utmost authority needed to ensure transformational change.
- Students, faculty and staff expressed the **need for a platform to voice concerns** about race, equity, and inclusion and be heard in a safe space.
- Resources for **conflict resolution** are lacking.
- Resources for **mental health support** are lacking.
- Classroom **environment can be particularly challenging and isolating for students of color** when issues of race and equity surface.
- UW SPH **needs to back up “talk”** about equity and inclusion **with action.**
- **Communication in the School could be improved**, not only for information regarding race, equity, and inclusion.
- The **power differential** for some faculty, staff, and students is a significant factor that **hinders progress to advancing work** on race, equity, and inclusion.
- **Concern exists about UW Police and greater UW Campus issues** with respect to race.
- Many report **not having a sense of closure** regarding the School’s challenging events from 2016.
- **UW SPH’s new competency on race and equity influenced the Council on Education for Public Health’s new requirement** that all graduates of accredited schools will be able to “discuss the means by which structural bias, social inequities and racism undermine health and create challenges to achieving health equity at organizational, community and societal levels.”
- Some **efforts to advance to race, equity, and inclusion in the curriculum** have been **met with pushback.**





The key findings from the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data informed the development of the following recommendations to address race, equity, and inclusion in the School.

Recommendations

- Hire an Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Hire diverse faculty and staff
- Recruit and retain diverse students
- Restructure the UW SPH Diversity Committee
- Create a diverse, equitable, inclusive workplace
- Create an equitable school climate/culture
- Train and educate faculty, staff, and students around race, equity, and inclusion
- Continue to build race and equity content into departmental curricula
- Improve the classroom environment
- Ensure access to support resources (e.g., academic, professional, mental health, conflict resolution)
- Improve communication (e.g., two way communication, mechanism for information sharing, equity website)
- Increase funding for racial equity and inclusion efforts
- Evaluate progress toward advancing racial equity and inclusion





In Closing

The data-driven recommendations presented for addressing race, equity, and inclusion in the School are in alignment with the UW SPH mission to:

1. educate and prepare outstanding, innovative, and diverse public health leaders and scientists,
2. research to advance public health science and policies, and
3. promote the health and well-being of communities locally, nationally, and globally.

Advancing work to successfully address race, equity, and inclusion in the School will complement implementation of the UW SPH Strategic Plan to “Strengthen our Core” and “Meet Emerging Challenges.” It will also best position the School to implement its new twenty-five year Population Health Initiative which will call for the SPH community to be well-equipped to address race-based health disparities, among others. Implementing this work will also demonstrate the School’s commitment to work in alignment with the campus-wide UW Race and Equity Initiative, and the UW Diversity Blue Print, 2017-2021.

Transformational change is needed to ensure long-term, sustainable improvements regarding race, equity, and inclusion in the UW SPH. It is important to prioritize this work because it is morally and socially just to promote equity and health as a human right. It will be up to the UW SPH leadership to shepherd this work, and it will be necessary for all members of the UW SPH community to demonstrate commitment to ensuring its success.

