

President's Working Group on Diversity & Inclusion
Report to Miami University President Gregory P. Crawford
May 2018

In the spring 2018 semester, Greg Crawford, 22nd president of Miami University, established a Working Group on Diversity and Inclusion and prompted the group toward action with the following statement:

This past fall, we had one very visible incident on campus where a student used a derogatory and inflammatory term on social media. These behaviors violate everything we believe and practice in our Code of Love and Honor that guides us to uplift and respect our community members.

We must stand together against words and actions that denigrate and divide. We must make clear to our students that we support each and every one of them. Dialogue among students, university leadership, faculty members and staff has produced a set of questions that I believe will enable us to do more. Responding to these questions will complement the results from the campus climate survey completed last fall. They include:

1. How can we use our existing mechanisms, such as orientation and transition programs, to help the Miami family recognize and combat bigotry and intolerance?
2. Are there new ways available to equip our students, faculty and staff to work positively toward an inclusive campus environment?
3. How can we best leverage our faculty expertise in many disciplines in this effort?
4. How do we engage the entire Miami community with our efforts?

As the Working Group began its tasks several things became immediately apparent. A search through the *Miami Student* archives demonstrates a cyclical pattern that has existed here for decades. For example, as early as 1968, black students challenged Miami to change its “Whites only” image, and a black student argued, “Miami moves only when they feel us putting on the pressure.” As a result, in April 1968, President Shriver ordered Miami’s first Racial Climate Study. The report concluded that Miami’s climate exhibited subtle or covert forms of racism; harassment and discrimination were less visible than indifference, marginalization, and isolation.

Ironically, similar conclusions were made three decades later. In 1998, after a series of racial assaults, vandalisms, and posting of racist flyers, students demanded change. Following a series of protests, the University conducted a climate survey, which concluded that our university climate consisting of several racial, sexualized, cultural and gendered “islands” where like-minded and similarly identified students congregate. In addition, when crises occur, they tend to relate directly to various underrepresented identity groups who become even further marginalized. In the process, the survey documented that Miami’s “chilly” climate was decidedly

indifferent, insensitive, and ambiguous— particularly for students of color. Another task force, in 2005, concluded, “Students of color connect, for the most part, with ‘multicultural resources’; women students feel they must conform to an ‘image,’ and LGBTQ+ students remain invisible.”

A random posting of flyers expounding racist, misogynistic and homophobic views and ideas surfaced in 2006. In 2010, homophobic attacks, both on and off campus, nooses in dorms, and off campus “ghetto” parties and festivals highlighted the continued and multi-pronged set of struggles facing LGBT students and students of color. This decades-long history of incidents underscores the constancy of victimization of our underrepresented students.

It should be stressed that the University does not function within a vacuum. What happens within U.S. society impacts upon the climate within the University. As racially-charged insensitivity and unrest build within the wider society, ripples can be felt within the university. Consider, for example, the first of the identified cycles in 1968 which was one of the most tumultuous periods in U.S. history. Internationally, North Vietnam launched the Tet Offensive, which was so devastating that it effectively signaled the end of the U.S. involvement in the War. Nationally, we lost two champions of social justice with the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy. And lastly, a highly visible demonstration against racial discrimination in the United States was staged when two black athletes conducted a silent protest during the Summer Olympics. It is no wonder, therefore, that multiple forms of protests ranging from riots and civil unrests, to demonstrations and calls for substantive change, were witnessed not only across the country but here at Miami University as well.

During the next cycle in 2004-2005, the country was moving—with President Bush’s support—to constitutionally ban same-sex marriages. During this time frame, the nation dealt not only with the aftermath and protests following Hurricane Katrina, but also massive anti-war protests as an estimated 300,000 people packed our nation’s capital, calling for an end of the war. To compound matters, some of our most vulnerable populations experienced spikes in harassment. GBLT students at Miami and elsewhere were often the targets.

More recently, the movements related to Black Lives Matters, Standing Rock, Me Too, and Charlottesville, along with one of the most contentious presidential elections in history, again provide the national context in which student protests at Miami must be understood. In all of these situations, Miami provided several institutional responses associated with specific sets of social protests.

Although these cycles of racially-charged incidents at Miami are aligned with large social and political crises and events in the U.S., they do point to a serious concern. Each incident seems to be followed by a new study or report which offer a similar set of findings related to our climate. This pattern of findings may suggest two important insights:

1. Miami may be experiencing a “cohort” effect. Every four years we have a substantially new set of students at Miami who needs to be sensitized and socialized to the problems associated with various forms of bias.
2. Miami’s past responses to the climate problems may be insufficient. We may need a more deliberate, holistic and sustainable strategy to promote inclusion, equity and diversity with each new cohort of students along with new faculty and staff.

It is critical to explain what this report represents and what it does not. This is a “developmental” document, meaning it is the first step in a longer process of building a

welcoming Miami community. Set in motion by President Crawford in November 2017, this process will continue as we seek to broaden input from the entire Miami community and more formally with the work of an implementation committee. We believe that only through such input can we garner significant buy-in to promulgate institutional transformation.

This initial document reflects the work of a small number of Miami students, faculty, and staff who were selected not randomly, but because of their work or perceived interest in this topic. The committee members conducted research, compared Miami against peer institutions, and solicited input from a broader slice of the Miami community—typically connecting with others from the division or the group with which each member is most formally affiliated. In turn, each committee member submitted a summary of findings and a set of recommendations that reflected the research, information and impressions gathered. Finally, each committee member identified a subset of recommendations believed most immediately needing implementation. The committee members quite intentionally neither vetoed nor significantly modified the input received from others, as the goal was to have as inclusive and open process as possible.

Therefore, this report is not an attempt by this committee to explicitly evaluate and reach consensus on the most significant gaps that prevent Miami from achieving a more welcoming community, nor is it a resulting set of prioritized recommendations that reflect a critical evaluation of the pros/cons and the resource feasibility of each idea. It is a broad exploration of current research, trends, and possibilities the institution might pursue. Again, this report is not the last step; it is the first step.

The goal now is to encourage input from everyone on campus—from students to faculty, from support staff to the COAD—from any and all who have ideas about ways we might build a more welcoming community. After receiving campus-wide input, the next steps in the process can commence: (i) a conceptual/thematic sorting and refinement of ideas/recommendations; (ii) an evaluation of feasibility and potential efficacy; (iii) a priority ranking of ideas based upon that input as well as the implied timeline; and (iv) regular updates to the campus community about the status of all ideas—even those that are ultimately rejected because of cost, logistical, or other concerns.

It is clear from our work since November that we believe that we—Miami—can and must make changes that will enhance the intercultural competency and overall inclusivity of our community. Along these line, however, it is perhaps most important that each of us recognize that “Miami” is not some abstract, uncaring “other.” In fact, for all of us, both individually and collectively—we are Miami. Fundamentally, it is our attitudes, behaviors, and choices that will make this a more welcoming community. As such, and as we move forward, we accept that the larger process of building and maintaining a welcoming community will forever require all of us working collectively to make this a reality.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS: (Note: in Bold and Parenthesis are the Specific Presidential Charge Items these relate to.)

1. Require all first-year students to complete an online module diversity and inclusion prior to orientations. This strategy would mirror our approach to alcohol and sexual assault and interpersonal violence. Use orientation continue this discussion by linking them to “love and honor” and Miami community values. **(Charge Item: 1, 3, & 4)**

2. Integrate domestic and international students in UNV 101. Currently, no international students take UNV 101, since they are enrolled in a different transition course. It is critical that international and domestic students begin to interact productively at Miami immediately after arrived. **(Charge Items: 1, 3, & 4)**
 - a. Faculty with expertise in diversity and inclusion should be engaged with the redevelopment of a UNV 101 like course that has a major emphasis on diversity and inclusion, the Miami Code of Love and Honor, and the expectations of a Miami student and graduate. **(Charge Items: 1, 3 & 4)**
3. Enact more visible community support, such as visible signs of the predominant community support in response negative occurrences on campus. Pride flags are an example of such highly visible support, as are tweets or letters of support.
 - a. Explore how social media, apps, etc, can be better positioned, utilized to accomplish this. **(Charge Items: 1, 2, 3, & 4)**
4. Create an Inclusive Excellence Certificate designed:
 - a. to develop competencies in global leadership, diversity, and inclusion. Pilots spring 2019 in EHS/EDT. Draws on existing curricular and co-curricular programming and includes reflection components. Offered and coordinated by the Center for American & World Cultures. See attached "Inclusive Excellence Certificate: Program Proposal" (PDF of PPT). **(Charge Items: 1, 3, & 4)**
 - b. To develop competencies in issues regarding domestic diversity and inclusion. Students who attend a certain number of diversity and inclusion speakers, programs or events would receive a division recognition as diversity and inclusion advocate. Students would use the badge system as an additional mechanism to impress employers with their cultural competency. Faculty and Staff who receive diversity training or attend workshops could be designated as a diversity & inclusion advocate. **(Charge Items: 1, 3, and 4)**
5. Promote Intergroup Dialogue Theory and Structured Conversations for Relationships across Difference. The Center for American and World Cultures will promote, leverage, and serve as a hub for programs embedded with "Inter/Intragroup Dialogue" (IGD) theory and practice across the curricula. IGD is a social justice and dialogue-based educational model. See attached: *Intergroup Dialogue at Miami University* (PDF of PWPT). **(Charge Items: 2, 3, & 4)**
6. Develop a Virtual Clearinghouse. The Center for American and World Cultures will serve as a campus hub by collecting and posting, in one place, all Miami multicultural, intercultural, and diversity curricular and co-curricular programming. **(Charge Items: 2, 3 & 4)**
7. Work to develop [inclusive](#) classrooms that foster engaged learning for all students. **(Charge Items: 2, 3, & 4)**
8. Create clear protocols about incident reporting for students. Many students are unaware of the hearing process at Miami University. Creating a flowchart or some type of visual that depicts the basic process and outcomes. This could help students feel more comfortable and confident in reporting an incident. **(Charge Items: 2)**
 - a. More awareness about resources and the location of the offices that oversee incident reporting. In many cases the information needed is out there but students do not know where to

find it. For example, bias reporting is on the red emergency card given at orientation. However, this is not helpful if students do not know it is there or have no other convenient way to find them when they are needed. **(Charge Items 1, 2)**

9. Additional tabs on the mymiami page that take a student directly to a reporting form instead of linking to various other informational pages to make reporting different incidents more accessible. Having the report tab link directly to an online form would allow for convenient and prompt incident reporting for students if they are not sure where to go. **(Charge Items: 2)**