

**Campus Climate Literature Review and Report**  
November 2017

Prepared by USC Shoah Foundation

## Table of Contents

Context.....	3
Acknowledgments.....	4
Executive Summary.....	4
Introduction to Campus Climate.....	6
Campus Climate and Race.....	8
Key Terms.....	12
Best Practice Recommendations.....	22
Key Term Recommendations.....	27
Conclusion.....	29
References.....	31

“Universities should be spaces committed to showing the promise of diversity and helping everyone recognize, appreciate, and respect differences. USC has long strived toward this goal, teaching students that part of being a member of the Trojan community is learning what it means to be a good citizen in a global context – a person appreciative of all cultures; a person committed to fairness, respect, and equality for all.” –Provost Quick (2015).

## **Context**

This report grew out of conversations over the past two years at USC. The highly visible debates, activism, and encounters across university campuses nationally, as well as questions on matters of race and discrimination and campus sexual and gender violence focused attention on the values that universities cultivate and instill in their student and faculty bodies. Higher education’s history has been built on dominant narratives that privilege white, heteronormative, masculine and upper-middleclass perspectives that are changing and require new language, narratives, and norms of behavior. USC as well as many other colleges and universities responded to recent events by launching a variety of diversity initiatives, including the formation of the Academic Senate’s Campus Climate Committee as a way to discuss faculty concerns and to make key improvements to the campus community life as a whole.

Recent events of Charlottesville highlight a continued and urgent effort to confront the legacy of hate-filled ideologies and how those beliefs and actions permeate our institutional structures. The contingency of antisemitic, white supremacist rhetoric displayed in Charlottesville on the University of Virginia campus, including the fallout and loss of life is part of a much larger continuum of privilege, access, power, and violence that is not unique and is best addressed through the promotion of a healthy climate for all of our community.

This report offers an avenue to begin a larger discussion, to hold the entire university community accountable, and to engage with the tenets of belonging to a university community that supports and creates policy to sustain inclusion and diversity.

Stephen Smith  
Rob Parke  
Campus Climate Committee Co-Chairs 2016-17

## Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Campus Climate Committees who discussed many of the suggestions outlined below; to Campus Climate Co-Chairs Dr. Ruth Chung and Dr. Renee Smith-Maddox for providing a number of key resources and insights that enhanced the report; to Sociology PhD Candidate Alfredo Huante who prepared much of the research and case studies for this report, and to Dr. Lara Bradshaw who as Campus Climate research secretary supplied much of the initial reflections and guidance from the committee in completing this report.

## Executive Summary

In the landmark case *Grutter et al. v. Bollinger et al., 2003*, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the consideration of race (among a series of factors) in the admissions process at the University of Michigan Law School. The majority in the decision viewed diversity as a compelling state interest. Numerous amicus briefs filed on behalf of the university demonstrated campus diversity *improved learning outcomes* for all students, developed a more prepared workforce, and produced benefits that reached various industries and society as a whole. Indeed, the benefits of diversity were most recently reaffirmed in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, 2016*. Since the Michigan case, post-secondary institutions across the nation have worked towards setting and reaching appropriate diversity programs and practices.

Given its significant impact on affirmative action policies the Michigan decision has served as a template for the ways higher education institutions could best meet diversity goals by considering race as part of the holistic admission process. Similarly, the literature generated by the case itself has provided a foundation for public and private campuses across the nation working to improve campus-wide diversity frameworks as well as achieve diversity throughout campus life. This report includes related literature seeking to help the committee advance its promise of diversity by presenting opportunities and challenges faced by post-secondary institutions across the nation working towards diversity.

The goal of this report is to identify the following:

- To examine research on diversity and campus climate.
- To understand faculty, staff, and student perspectives related to campus climate work (See Best Practice Recommendations for more details)
- To examine and make connections from the fields of higher education, critical theories of race, and sociology to help inform broader policies, initiatives, and programming towards diversity and inclusion.
- To identify key terms related to Diversity and Inclusion with the aim of revising the language to better engage with the pluralities and realities of those terms as they are experienced by students, faculty, and staff.

- To identify key recommendations, including an internal USC campus-wide report that brings key statistical data and qualitative insights to light.

Collectively, the research suggests achieving a diverse and inclusive campus entails comprehensive and long-term institutional commitments. Practices, for example, which lead to diversity across students, faculty, and staff, develop curriculum that reflect the contemporary and historic experiences of people of color, and ensure students of color and other marginalized groups feel faculty and administration are responsive to their concerns. While campus climate studies are often seen as one-time surveys and/or reports, long-term commitments not only supply adequate resources to see recommendations through but also embed periodic reassessments into campus climate studies to revisit these studies over time to ensure sustainability.

As the Campus Climate Committee proceeds to fulfill its charge, it is appropriate to anchor the campus climate discussions and the geographic context of USC in Los Angeles and, specifically, in South Los Angeles. Education scholars have noted the importance of understanding the urban environment of schools to better inform educators and best serve students who often come from backgrounds with limited economic resources (Milner, Murray, Farinde, Delale-O’Conner 2015). Similarly, Gadsen and Dixon-Román (2017) argue that meaningful pursuits towards change in K-12 schools and the ways we prepare educators and students for such endeavors are tightly related to the ways we conceptualize the urban environment in which schools are situated. Extending this scholarship to post-secondary institutions, campus climate studies benefit from beginning with the geography of USC.

Having recently marked the 25th anniversary of the Los Angeles Uprising earlier this year, such an event is a powerful reminder of the costs associated with decades of economic, political, and racial exclusion of South Los Angeles. While USC’s campus weathered the riots largely due to their history of positive community engagement, the legacy of these systemic exclusions continues to hamper South Los Angeles into the present day. Assessing the extent of progress since the Uprising took place, a recent study found “improving the lives of those in the most affected areas has been elusive in the face of growing income and wealth inequality, and gentrification driven displacement” (Ong, Cheng, Pech, and Gonzalez 2017). Acknowledging the persisting challenges in South Los Angeles, and Los Angeles broadly, remain pertinent to ongoing efforts to better prepare campus faculty and administrators to address the needs of students and understand the community in which the university is embedded.

The legacy of the community can also impact students, particularly African American students, even when they are not on campus. In May 2013 when the Los Angeles Police Department dispatched 80 officers, some in riot gear, to a student house party near campus many saw the response disproportionate and offensive. Attended by a majority of African American students, many questioned

why their party generated such a police response while a party across the street, attended by a majority of white students, had not. Such an event points to the ways the community and its history; particularly the contentious history of police in the surrounding communities quickly becomes salient in the lives of students and, by extension, the university (Meraji 2013, Jennings, Blankstein, and Chia 2013).

As this report outlines, the audiences of students, faculty, and staff are key constituents that inform a larger campus community experience. It is imperative moving forward, to consider each audience and their various intersections with one another as part of a larger experience. As scholars have pointed out, the staff experience on university campuses tends not to be the focus of Campus Climate work (Mayhew, Grunwald, and Dey 2006). The turn toward analyzing staff experiences reveals a number of indicators and intricacies to university culture, and student and faculty relationships with staff members. The role of staff as part of the makeup of key gatekeepers and decision makers is central to the university as a thriving organization. Staff hold key positions in multicultural centers, degree programs as advisors and other forms of support for the university system. Understanding the influences that staff members make on university campuses is critical to assessing these positions, and how to address unique issues for this particular audience.

## **Introduction to Campus Climate**

### *Background*

Campus climate research emerged in the wake of the Los Angeles Uprising in April 1992. In addition to bringing deep economic and racial inequalities to the city's collective consciousness, it also generated racial tension on local campuses. In the first and most widely cited study on campus racial climate, Hurtado (1992) evaluated college students' perceptions of race relations on a university campus. Hurtado found institutional commitments to diverse learning environments were less credible among marginalized students on campuses with heightened racial tensions as opposed to campuses with low racial tensions. Moreover, larger universities without resources for individual students were more likely to foster heightened racial tensions. The larger campus climate literature took root and sprouted from Hurtado's study, helping higher education scholars, practitioners, and policy makers define, understand, work towards multi-cultural, pluralistic learning environments at post-secondary institutions.

Campus climate research has since grown to move beyond its initial focus on race to include gender, sexual orientation, disability, and religious experiences. The ensuing literature review, however, follows the bulk of the campus climate literature on racial and gender aspects of diversity. In a similar vein, most campus climate studies take students, often Black and Latina/o students, as their focus. Researchers have pointed to the need for additional research that will help understand campus diversity in ways that include students, staff, and faculty, as

well as a growing international student and faculty population (Hurtado et al. 1999, Harper and Hurtado 2007, Hurtado et al. 2008).

### *Definition and Framework*

A working definition refers to campus climate as “part of the institutional context that includes community members’ attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and expectations around issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity” (Hurtado et al. 2008). This report also adds to the discussion the intersections of gender, class, and ableism, which are equally significant towards understanding the internal and external factors that composite the campus racial climate, Hurtado et al. (1999) advance the following framework:

### *External Forces*

- (a) Impact of government policy, programs, and initiatives.  
e.g. Financial aid policies and programs, state and federal policy on affirmative action, etc.
- (b) Impact of socio-historic forces on campus climate.  
e.g. Outside influences that influence how diversity is viewed in society, or the current political moment hostile to marginalized communities at the national scale.

### *Institutional Context*

- (a) An institution’s historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion of various racial/ethnic groups.  
e.g. At predominantly white institutions’ (PWI) history of exclusion significantly influences the campus racial climate and, as a result, transparent efforts to challenge this history can lead to wide support among marginalized groups and help these students view institutional diversity efforts as sincere efforts.
- (b) The structural diversity, or the numerical representation of various racial/ethnic groups.  
e.g. Influences and supports opportunities for inter-group contact which, in turn, shape educational outcomes.
- (c) The psychological climate of perceptions and attitudes between and among groups.  
e.g. Individuals experience campuses differently. For example, minority students that perceive campus racial climate as hostile experience a decline in educational outcomes.
- (d) The behavioral climate of campus intergroup relations.

e.g. This element includes efforts to assess intergroup relations at a campus scale as well as diversity interactions. These might include informal interactions or campus-facilitated interactions between different racial or ethnic groups.

Hurtado et al. (1999)

### **Campus Climate and Race**

There often can be ambivalent conceptualizations of campus climate. This framework identifies distinct elements, which can be utilized by campuses to allocate policy and pragmatic efforts across different areas. As is often noted throughout the literature, increasing representation of underrepresented groups is a start towards improving campus climate but frequently becomes the sole effort—risking meaningful progress in campus climate for diversity.

Over the last 25 years, Campus Climate scholars have noted that most surveys have sought to gain a sense of tension levels between racial groups. These efforts, however, might not adequately capture the way campus climate for diversity influences student outcomes, including learning, intergroup relationships, and civic engagement (Holoien 2013). Similarly, Hurtado et al. (2008) advanced a framework encompassing the following educational outcomes: “*cognitive skills* (students’ thinking skills), *socio-cognitive* outcomes (dispositions that incorporate both social awareness), skills and dispositions for *multicultural citizenship* (ability to interact with a variety of social identity groups), and *values and attitudes* (tolerance and beliefs about diversity issues and topics)” (p.214-216). These set of outcomes aim to capture the social and personal responsibility, which are necessary characteristics for a pluralistic society.

Moreover, this assessment of campus climate surveys reveals remarkable advancement in connecting educational outcomes in relation to subtle forms of discrimination and the value of diverse intergroup experiences. These areas expanded on psychological and behavioral dimensions, respectively, of the campus climate model (p. 214). In doing so, they emphasized, assessing campus racial climate surveys and their overall findings helps scholars better understand the ways racial campus climate affects communities of color within post-secondary institutions.

**For Hurtado (2007), transforming undergraduate education to better prepare students for pluralistic society, she argues, requires diversity as integral to higher education.** From a theoretical standpoint, diverse learning environments help students become better multicultural citizens. This opportunity is achieved through university-facilitated group interactions that are grounded in democratic skills and sensibilities. For example, faculty and administrators might focus on curriculum that offers opportunity for students to engage with different races and ethnic, gender and sexual orientation through both diversity

requirements as well as major requirements across both the STEM and Humanities fields. Together, the rationales for transforming the campus racial climate through diversity remain integral to higher education's goal of advancing social progress.

### *Barriers to Campus Climate*

While the mission to prepare undergraduate students and the larger campus community for a pluralistic society may seem self-evident such objectives are, at times, difficult for administrators to accept and to implement effectively even as they recognize the importance of campus climate studies.

Reflecting on a decade of campus climate assessments for post-secondary institutions across that nation, Harper (2015) shared his experience delivering commissioned climate studies at various campuses only to have administrative clients ask him to revise his study to reflect a less “harsh” campus climate so as to avoid the negative public perceptions associated with poor campus climate assessment. **Indeed, ignoring the campus racial climate, Harper argues, further minimizes the uncomfortable and oppressive experiences faced by students, faculty, and staff on campus, thus rendering campus climate studies symbolic rather than intentional and meaningful efforts.**

Transparency is key to avoiding such superficial undertakings. Evaluating fifteen years of campus climate research and findings from a qualitative, five-campus study, the authors highlight nine themes persisting in predominantly white institutions.<sup>1</sup> The report highlights the following points:

1. Cross-race consensus Regarding Institutional Negligence
2. Race as a Four-Letter Word and an Avoidable Topic
3. Self-Reports of Racial Segregation
4. Gaps in Social Satisfaction by Race
5. Reputational Legacies for Racism
6. White Student Overestimation of Minority Student Satisfaction
7. The Pervasiveness of Whiteness in Space, Curricula, and Activities
8. The Consciousness-Powerlessness Paradox among Racial/Ethnic Minority Staff.
9. Unexplored Qualitative Realities of Race in Institutional Assessment

Collectively, these themes point to the need for systematic efforts to address persisting racial realities – or hostile racial climates – on campuses that require much more than assessments. Instead, meaningful diversity requires systemic and

---

<sup>1</sup> Scholars have regarded secondary institutions as White spaces (Feagin, Vera, Imani, 1996) due to the pervasiveness of whiteness in campus culture. Frankenberg (1993) defines whiteness as “a set of normative cultural practices...visible most clearly to those it definitely excludes and those to whom it does violence. Those who are securely house within its borders usually do not examine it.”

sustained efforts across departments and the administration to transform the entire campus.

Without campus-wide funded initiatives situated to complement verbal commitments to diversity, campus climate evaluations may be relegated as limited responses to highly publicized, embarrassing and, often, repeating incidents on campus (Harper 2007, Harper and Hurtado 2015). In these cases, rather than long-term commitments diversity taskforces, Gutierrez y Muhs et al. (2012) observe, “spring up like mushrooms after a rain in the wake of racist incidents” which, they argue, generate little more than “files of paper that are then stored until the next scandal.” Without engaging racism, a hostile racial climate persists for marginalized populations on campuses.

**Case study:**

In late 2015, a student-led movement at the University of Missouri, named Concerned Student 1950, organized to collectively air grievances against a hostile campus racial climate and petition the administration to acknowledge and address their concerns.

The protests led to the resignation of university system president and campus chancellor. Two years since Concerned Student 1950 began their protests the university has seen its incoming freshman class decline by 35 percent (Hartocollis 2017). Citing anti-Black racism and antisemitism at Mizzou, prospective students in the region have forgone attending Mizzou and instead turned to neighboring campuses. The cumulative impact of these decisions by prospective students has forced the University of Missouri to close dormitories and terminate positions as a result of lost tuition dollars.

This case is quite exemplary of the costs of inaction and unwillingness to address racist incidents on campus that are often times larger than embracing and undertaking diversity on a campus-wide scale. As one professor at Mizzou noted, “I think we squandered a rare opportunity that we had to be a local, regional, national, global leader in terms of showing how a university can deal with its problems, including related to race relations” (Hartocollis 2017). Rather than shy away from protests, scholars argue, these events and movements provide opportunities for campuses to rearticulate commitments to excellence, integrity, and community (Barnhardt and Reyes 2016). Most campus leaders however have moved to improve campus racial climates, rather than ignore them.

A recent survey of 1,500 college and university presidents noted that 56 percent of respondents identified race as a priority compared to four years ago (Chen 2017). The American Council on Education's Center for Policy Research and Strategy conducted a separate report on the views of 567 presidents on campus racial climate and noted that about a third of

respondents identified efforts to (re) develop curriculum in response to racial conflict at their respective campuses. Additionally, some presidents have noted the role of faculty-led listening circles wherein faculty listen to student-led questions and responses as helpful in increasing understanding of student concerns on campuses (Deruy 2016).

Calls for engaging racism, importantly, are not limited to administrators. Understanding racism and its influence in campus climate studies remains difficult for academics – both at the professorial and at the graduate levels to acknowledge and address. Harper’s (2012) study of a decade of campus racial climate studies published in top journals noted discussions of racism amongst faculty were largely absent.

Whether as a factor shaping the experience of students of color on campus or as an analytical tool in research, discussions on racism were instead omitted for descriptions or analysis on race relations that appeared as “not as emotionally loaded or politically risky” (23). Words such as “alienating” and “hostile” to describe campus environment, for example, were used in lieu of describing contexts as racist, while “racial tension” was used as a stand in for racist experiences faced by students of color.

Harper and Patton (2007) posit three reasons for why race and racism remain taboo subjects on campus:

- There is a general hesitancy by those privileged by their race or position on campus to face “guilt, discomfort, and frustration.”
- Reluctance in having to reconcile one’s own racist practices or the privileges experienced by members of a racially dominant group.
- Racial awareness requires personal responsibility that would entail “surrendering portions of one’s own privilege and unearned social assets...[to] share with others” (3).

Refusing to engage in discussions of racism works against campus racial climate scholarship and policies. Improving campus racial climate, **then, requires intentional and ongoing engagement with critical race scholarship that increasingly focuses on developing marginalized voices.**<sup>2</sup> This form of engagement effects every aspect of university life from cultivating graduate students, to hiring more faculty of color to better represent the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century campus body, to integrating courses and texts that highlight marginalized

---

<sup>2</sup> Introduced in the 1970s by legal scholars, Critical Race Theory posits that racism is integrated into the fabric of American life. One of the key tenets to this theory is the significance of voice and giving voice to traditionally marginalized populations. Additionally, CRT offers a framework for understanding the institutional structures that produce racism and how it manifests across society as a whole.

authors as part of the general knowledge production that forms the ideal of an inclusive university environment.

### **Key Terms & Definitions:**

To help navigate the landscape of campus climate and diversity, the report includes additional “key terms, “Best Practice Recommendations,” “Key Term Recommendations,” and a “Reference Section” to provide language for inclusion in policy discussions. This section is a work in progress, but reflects an attempt to think through language as integral to diversity and inclusion, and how to structurally build these terms into the core values of USC’s mission.

#### *Campus Climate:*

“The institutional context contains four dimensions resulting from educational programs and practices. They include an institution’s historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion of various racial/ethnic groups, its structural diversity in terms of numerical representation of various racial/ethnic groups, the psychological climate of perceptions and attitudes between and among groups, and the behavioral climate dimension, characterized by intergroup relations on campus. We conceive the institutional climate as a product of these various elements.” (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen 1999)

#### *Diversity:*

Often used to describe student body composition or as analogous to multiculturalism, Milem, Chang, Antonio (2005) define diversity as “engagement across racial and ethnic lines comprised of a broad and varied set of activities and initiatives” (4). For the authors, this definition affirms projects and efforts seeking to restructure power relations towards more equitable arrangements rather than symbolic celebrations of cultural differences.

Without robust definitions and rationale for diversity, well-intentioned strategies for improving campus experiences for all groups might burden marginalized students. One recent Op-Ed titled *How and Why You Diversify Colleges* argued elite colleges should increase working class student populations because “It’s a plus for richer students, who are then exposed to a breadth of perspectives that lies at the heart of the truest, best education” (Bruni 2016) Such rationalizations burden already marginalized students by relegating their presence for the benefit of other, wealthier, students.

Understanding diversity on college campuses and how to measure it is central to how diversity as a term and a tool reflects a larger community experience. Quantitative diversity studies look at the numbers, which includes the number of students, numbers of programs, number of heads of programs, number of grads,

number of tenure track faculty. The qualitative approach allows for researchers to examine diversity experiences through language and culture, and understanding the impact of campus climate for students.

Currently, USC's Diversity Website offers a definition stemming from Provost Quick's "Access and Opportunity, Diversity and Inclusion" memo to the campus community:

"Universities should be spaces committed to showing the promise of diversity and helping everyone recognize, appreciate, and respect differences. USC has long strived toward this goal, teaching students that part of being a member of the Trojan community is learning what it means to be a good citizen in a global context – a person appreciative of all cultures; a person committed to fairness, respect, and equality for all."

USC has taken steps to actively engage with diversity as part of a larger campus push to represent an international and pluralistic community. In 2016, USC enrolled the most underrepresented minority students compared to other private universities across the US (Lipinski 2016).

#### *Inclusion:*

The Association for American Colleges and Universities (AACU) has defined inclusion as: "The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions."

The framing for "Inclusion" is deeply connected to a definition of diversity, and the qualitative experiences of diversity as a methodology rooted within the fabric of universities and their approaches to the community experience.

#### *Equity:*

The Association for American Colleges and Universities (AACU) has defined equity as: "The creation of opportunities for historically underrepresented populations to have equal access to and participate in educational programs that are capable of closing the achievement gaps in student success and completion."

### *Access:*

The term “Access” in higher education developed in the 1970s as a way to address the inequalities that arose between students in public and private universities. Access more generally accounts for the ways educational institutions ensure that students receive equal opportunities to resources to make decisions about their higher education. Access is equally entangled in the language of “affordability,” which administrators and those in higher education ground in upper-middle class student enrollment and how to make college affordable for this population. With the rising costs of college education, access and affordability are fundamental for low income students and families, as well as the value placed on college education as a gateway to entering into the middleclass. For more information, please refer to Donald E. Heller’s Introduction in *The States and Higher Education Policy*.

### *Opportunity:*

Opportunity is closely aligned with the term ‘access’ and the benefits of receiving a Bachelor’s degree. The rhetoric behind opportunity also identifies how lower income students and families benefit from higher education degrees, but the limits and obstacles in obtaining those degrees, and the unequal burden of costs that lower income students carry vs. their middle-class peers. Opportunity considers the deeply rooted structures in place that make achieving equal access to higher education difficult. Another important policy decision related to opportunity is the role of Affirmative Action and creating opportunity for historically disadvantaged groups. For more information, see Stanford’s Equality of Opportunity and Education page: <https://edeq.stanford.edu/sections/higher-education>.

### *Microaggressions:*

Microaggressions are a form of everyday racism that are “(a) verbal and non-verbal assaults directed toward People of Color, often carried out in subtle, automatic or unconscious forms; (2) layered assaults, based on race and its intersections with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname; and (3) cumulative assaults that take a psychological, physiological, and academic toll on People of Color” (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2015).

Coined by African American psychiatrist Chester Pierce in 1970, “Microaggressions” describe how racism is experienced by people of color through “subtle blows,” and “delivered incessantly” can accumulate overtime. Rather than small and ephemeral form of racism, microaggressions seek to capture the cumulative aspects of racism (Watson & Pérez Huber, 2015).

In addressing racism, Solórzano & Huber (2015) argue racial microaggressions serve as important theoretical and pedagogical tools by helping name, understand, document otherwise overlooked forms of slights. Indeed, combating racial microaggressions benefits from a robust and inclusive campus racial climate. Importantly, not all microaggressions are racial and not all take the same form. Examples are provided here:

Microinsult	A Black male college student at a highly selective university is asked what sports he plays, with the underlying assumption that he did not gain admission based on his academic credentials, but rather his athletic ability.
Microinvalidation	A Latina administrator is described as “spicy,” which culturally and sexually objectifies her while diminishing her effectiveness as a leader. An Asian American professor is asked where she is from, and when she replies “Kansas,” her student responds with, “No, seriously, what country are you from?” suggesting that she was not born in the U.S.
Microassault	A Muslim student sits in a class where a professor makes Islamophobic comments during his lecture.

(Examples directly from Crandall and Garcia 2016)

USC’s Bias Assessment & Report defines microaggression as: “everyday insults, indignities and demeaning messages sent to historically marginalized groups by well-intentioned members of the majority group who are unaware of the hidden messages being sent.”<sup>3</sup> This current definition presents a helpful starting point for which to consider how both the victim and perpetrator experience the complexity of current forms of intolerance. The difficulty in defining microaggression centers on the everydayness of perceived and experienced “indignities” and slights that are both conscious and unconscious.

The dilemma in defining discrimination and its multiple forms, and especially the specificity of this form of intolerance on college campuses requires one to consider subtler expressions of racism and sexism that exist. Through the tropes of postfeminism and postracism, there is a popular sentiment expressed in the news and through other social avenues that sexism and racism are over and

---

<sup>3</sup> For more detailed information, see USC’s Student Affairs Website: <http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/examples-of-bias/>

outdated, and that sexism becomes silenced through a culture of choice.<sup>4</sup> Addressing bias and discrimination in the current environment requires understanding how intolerance operates and becomes internalized, and the contradictory messages that many groups face in understanding their identity in the world.

### *Race & Racism*

Race scholars such as Bonilla-Silva (2013) and Omi and Winant (2014) have described the post-civil rights era as one in which, rather than post-racial, racism has transformed from overt racial views and practices to seemingly non-racial responses and antecedents that persist in maintaining racial inequality.

Importantly, the author argues ideologies of colorblind racism are not limited to whites as they are also adopted by communities of color to collectively maintain the politico-economic system of white supremacy.

### *Gender, Sexism:*

A comprehensive discussion on campus climate also involves the evolution of gender and sexuality as part of a cohesive community environment. USC Student Affairs defines Sexism as “prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in sex/gender.” In order to better define and understand sexism as it currently manifests itself in society and on college campuses, it is useful to consider more precisely how particular “prejudiced thoughts” and “discriminatory actions” become part of the everyday occurrences of sexism. The University of Carleton underlines this point in the university’s Equity Services website by stating that sexism:

“is more than personal prejudice. It involves carrying into effect one’s prejudices, resulting in discrimination, inequity and/or exclusion. Sexism is understood as the negative valuing and discriminatory treatment of individuals and groups on the basis of their sex. Sexism can be manifested in both personal attacks and insults, and in the structure of social institutions. It can be expressed by behavior of individual members of the University community and in the policies, procedures and practices of the University.”<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Calder-Dawe, Octavia, and Nicola Gavey. "Making sense of everyday sexism: Young people and the gendered contours of sexism." In *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 55, pp. 1-9. Pergamon, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, visit: <http://carleton.ca/equity/human-rights/gender/gender-discriminationharassment/>

This definition accounts for both the individual and institutional forms of sexual discrimination. In other words, it is both the actions of individuals and systems that are in place regarding how more often than not, women are subordinated in the context of cultural attitudes regarding physical attributes, the consequences of pay gaps, unfriendly work place policies to family leave, and other forms of prejudice that are at the center of being treated unequally. At the same time, it is important to recognize that sexism incorporates different experiences and types of gender identities that construct the dynamics of sexual discrimination and intolerance.

In general, addressing sexism as a form of bias requires universities to also think about the conditioning of female students, and the inherent biases that can cause damage in educational classrooms. According to Columbia University's Graduate School Teaching Center guide, the fact that over half the population that receives Bachelor degrees are now women, female students still face gender bias, albeit in subtler forms. The guide outlines examples from recent studies that look at speech patterns, and larger inherent biases by instructors in perpetuating male superiority in the types of questions asked.<sup>6</sup> It is worth considering a discussion with university professors, teaching assistants, and other types of leaders to critically think about creating equal access environments and confronting subconscious biases that are at play on a daily basis.

A discussion on technology and digital platforms and apps that allow for anonymous comments and the proliferation of these apps as forms of informal communication is also part of the contemporary discussion on intolerance, and in particular, sexism. As Dr. Andrea Press recently wrote in an article entitled, "The New Misogyny" in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the proliferation of online forums for anonymous discussion like Yik Yak and ACB illustrates the cultural acceptability in featuring comments that rank women by "hotness," and the more general acceptability of sexist language.<sup>7</sup> In order to address sexism as a product that is structurally integrated into various institutions, a definition is needed that addresses the specificity of certain prejudices and the nature of institutional and individual forms of sexism. For example, Teaching Tolerance defines sexism as: "prejudicial attitudes and discrimination against women on the basis of their sex. Sexism ranges from the individual to the institutional level and includes (a) beliefs, (b) behaviors, (c) use of language and (d) policies reflecting and conveying a pervasive view that women are inferior."<sup>8</sup> The definition would benefit from examples that highlight in more detail how sexism affects both men and women. Alternatively, Michigan State University's Women's Resource Center articulates this point through a definition that points to particular forms:

---

<sup>6</sup> For more information, visit: [www.columbia.edu/cu/tat/pdfs/gender.pdf](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/tat/pdfs/gender.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Andrea Press and Francesca Tripodi, "The New Misogyny," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 2, 2014. <http://chronicle.com/blogs/conversation/2014/07/02/the-new-misogyny/>

<sup>8</sup> For more information, visit the Teaching Tolerance Website and the activity, "Sexism: From Identification to Activism," <http://www.tolerance.org/lesson/sexism-identification-activism>

“Sexism can occur in many different forms, from telling jokes that belittle women to believing that men are incapable of caregiving to maintaining policies that exclude transgender identified individuals. In general, sexism is the belief that one sex is superior to another.”<sup>9</sup> The ability for the university to tackle sexism and gender bias will depend on the specificity of how to define sexism and what counts as part of the current environment in which this form of intolerance is able to operate.

Key to discussions on Gender and Sexuality have also evolved over the past twenty years to account for the fluidity of identity, which include how they are constructed of multiple intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality. As Stewart, Renn, and Brazelton write, “It is important to recognize that students experience intersections of systems of oppression” (6).

In addition to addressing the specificity of sexism, the university might consider adopting a more thorough discussion on gender fluidity that accounts for the many ways in which individuals and groups identify themselves through a combination of factors including features, behaviors, orientations, and expressions. The university’s ability to counter homophobic language and other negative remarks is vital to ensuring a safe and inclusive intellectual climate. Michigan State University’s Women’s Resource Center provides an outline for gender-related terms and a discussion of definitions as a guide for students and the larger university community, including transgender, transsexual, gender nonconforming, gender variant, queer, cisgender, and a number of other terms to clarify the current climate of individuals and groups who face gender stereotypes and discrimination.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Antisemitism:*

USC’s Student Affairs website defines antisemitism as, “the fear or hatred of Jews, Judaism and related symbols.” Given the extent of the problem of antisemitism and the lack of understanding its true nature, we do not believe that USC’s current definition is extensive enough or transparent enough. Further, to support the development of a more inclusive campus environment, the definition must be articulated in a way so possible sanctions can be measured against it.

To counter bias, discrimination and any other form of prejudice among students, it is essential to establish a common understanding and language, which is why USC Shoah Foundation has undertaken an effort to define a working definition on antisemitism through the Institute’s Countering Antisemitism Through Testimony

---

<sup>9</sup> For more information, visit Michigan State’s Women’s Resource Center: <http://wrc.msu.edu/fastfacts/gender-discrimination.html>

<sup>10</sup> Michigan State Women’s Resource Center: <http://wrc.msu.edu/fastfacts/gender-sex.html>

program. It is based on the U.S. State Department's definition and adopted from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition:

Antisemitism –The negative beliefs and perceptions about Jews that manifest in intellectual, physical and rhetorical expressions of hatred towards Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, community institutions and religious facilities. When criticism of Israel demonizes, delegitimizes or holds Israel to a double standard, it is a manifestation of antisemitism.

The current state of antisemitism and how college campuses engage with this form of discrimination is worthy of attention and further detail. Recent events on UC campuses—including the defacement of a Jewish Fraternity and painted swastikas—inform the current climate of antisemitism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition to damage of property, the manifestation of antisemitism in its current form also entails acts of exclusion. This form of discrimination recently occurred when a UCLA student leader was publically discriminated against for being Jewish. The context for the event involved a Jewish student running for a student-body leadership position, and having her candidacy questioned due to her Jewish background. The main critique expressed by fellow students was the assumption that she would be unable to fairly judge incidents centered on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>11</sup> The student was later appointed to the position after public backlash; however, this example offers an important reminder to consider how antisemitism manifests in its current form, and as one reporter claimed, “This student was questioned, not for her political opinions, but for her politicized identity.”<sup>12</sup>

Over the past couple of years, the UC system has responded in part by grappling with adopting the State department definition of antisemitism. Even though the UC system did not adopt this definition, the October 2015 meetings involving UC regents, faculty, and leaders and the decision to create clear parameters for anti-bias policy is a step in acknowledging the complexity of antisemitism as a form of intolerance that effects the larger university community.<sup>13</sup>

Antisemitism is a form of discrimination that needs further scrutiny. In its current form, a graffiti swastika is recognized as antisemitism while a speech that

---

<sup>11</sup> UCLA Editorial Board, “Editorial: Objections USAC Judicial Board Appointment Discriminatory,” *The Daily Bruin*, February 12, 2015. <http://dailybruin.com/2015/02/12/editorial-objections-to-usac-judicial-board-appointment-discriminatory/>

<sup>12</sup> Arielle Mokhtarzadeh, “UCLA’s ‘Jewish’ Problem and the Rise of the New Antisemitism,” *Huffington Post*, May 24, 2015. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arielle-mokhtarzadeh/uclas-jewish-problem-and-\\_b\\_6934552.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arielle-mokhtarzadeh/uclas-jewish-problem-and-_b_6934552.html)

<sup>13</sup> Larry Gordon, “UC Panel Hears Competing Claims About Anti-Bias Rules and Free Speech,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 26, 2015. <http://www.latimes.com/local/education/la-me-ln-uc-tolerance-20151026-story.html>

denounces Israel is protected under free speech (even though the intent of the speech contributes to an environment that is hostile to Jewish students the same way the Swastika is). As a university community, it is vital to engage with a critical discourse with multiple opinions on Israel, and there are many criticisms of Israel policy; however, the point of this definition addresses a legacy of intolerance that Jewish populations have faced regarding their belonging and worth within particular societies. By acknowledging the root causes of this particular form of intolerance (i.e. denouncement of Israel, denial of existence, held up to a double-standard), we as a community can much more accurately point to these occurrences and find necessary ways of countering it through either a combination of education or disciplinary actions that ultimately educate the community.

*Islamophobia:*

Understood as indiscriminate negative attitudes or emotions directed at Islam or Muslims that result in unequal policies or practices against this group, Islamophobia has emerged as a significant civil rights concern over the last two decades. Organized efforts to advance bills and legislation targeting the Muslim community have sharply increased between 2010-2016 and fueled exclusionary practices against the Muslim community. Indeed, with ban on immigration in the Trump-era threaten to continue, practices seeking to include Muslim members into the social fabric should be heightened. In the meantime, college campuses are not immune to anti-Muslim sentiment, discrimination, and violence all of which have increased in the last few years.

Incidents of Islamophobia on campuses across the country have sparked concern among administrators and students alike (Siddiqi 2016). While administrators have often denounced Islamophobia incidents on their campus, a lack of effort to foster a campus climate which supports faculty, staff, and students of Muslim faith incidents will continue to put disproportionate pressure on students to bring about a safer climate (Bishop 2015). For example, since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and subsequent attacks by Extremist groups and the representation in new media cycle has created an atmosphere where Muslim students are made to feel they must be experts in Islam, and pressured to reassure their non-Muslim counterparts they are not terrorists.

Georgetown University's Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding offers the following definition on Islamophobia:

Islamophobia is prejudice towards or discrimination against Muslims due to their religion, or perceived religious, national, or ethnic identity associated with Islam. Like anti-Semitism, racism, and homophobia, Islamophobia describes mentalities and actions that demean an entire class of people. Jews, African-Americans, and other populations throughout history have faced prejudice and

discrimination. Islamophobia is simply another reincarnation of this unfortunate trend of bigotry.

Currently, USC's Student Affairs website offers a definition of Islamophobia as "the fear or hatred of Muslims, Islam and related symbols." While a starting point for identifying this form of bias, it would be useful for the Committee to consider an expanded definition of Islamophobia, and to also think about consulting with USC's Center for Education, Identity and Social Justice, which is conducting a survey of Muslim college student experiences in California.

*Ableism/Disability:*

Seen as a form of exclusion, students with disabilities have struggled to achieve satisfactory inclusion on campuses. Accommodating students often contrast conventional norms which offer all students same set of resources, inclining administrators and faculty to view students with disabilities as not trying hard enough to "overcome" their incapacities, especially when these are not viewed as "real" or immediately apparent. Disability scholars argue such perspectives perpetuate an egregious "myth of disability as deficiency" (Wood, Meyer, and Bose 2017). However, viewed as a form of diversity, accommodating students with disabilities prevents disparities resulting from pursuing equal treatment between disabled and non-disabled students ("Disability"). In this way, efforts to assist students through resources and validation not only helps students with disabilities articulate their needs, but also directly helps campus members respond and accommodate to those needs. This assistance in turn can foster a "warmer" campus climate where this group feels a stronger sense of belonging.

Students with disabilities who are encouraged and trained in self-advocacy report similar improved perceptions of the campus climate (Feliming, Oertle, Plotner, Hakun 2017).

*Homophobia & Transphobia:*

Credited as more than simply describing prejudice and discriminatory practices and policies aimed at non-heterosexual individuals and groups, homophobia's emergence in the middle of the twentieth century helped focus the crux of the social problem away from homosexually identified groups and on the dominant, heterosexual culture. In this way, homophobia capture both the discriminatory aspects as well as the conventional heterosexual cultural narrative.

Scholars, however, have noted that more precise language capturing the psychological, social, and cultural processes that underlie oppression faced by sexual minorities. Herek (2004) for example, argues antigay hostility is reproduced through sexual stigma, heterosexism, and sexual prejudice.

The term Transgender encompasses a range of identities and is an umbrella term that refers to any person whose gender identity or expression that is not generally associated with their sex assigned at birth. This term can include those who identify as genderqueer, gender non-conforming, transsexual, crossdresser, or androgynous (National Center for Transgender Equality, n.d.).

Currently, USC addresses both Transphobia and Homophobia as biases on the Student Affairs Website:

**Transphobia:** the fear or hatred of persons perceived to be transgender and/or transsexual

**Homophobia:** the fear or hatred of homosexuality (and other non-heterosexual identities) and persons perceived to be gay or lesbian

### **Best Practice Recommendations:**

This report begins to identify a range of issues pertaining to faculty, students, and staff as part of a larger effort towards diversifying the campus community through an array of policies and practices have been implemented across institutions. Below are some general recommendations:

#### *Faculty*

- ***An Internal USC Faculty Campus Climate Report and Study***

The Campus Climate Committee has discussed the possibility of doing a comprehensive faculty and staff survey over the past year. Setting aside appropriate funding and consulting with existing Institutes like USC's Race and Equity Center, led by Dr. Shaun Harper is fundamental to identifying the scope of the study and eventual report.

- Determining what type of focus and data to collect will help guide the direction of the initial report, including faculty and staff populations that might not typically fall under underrepresented minority faculty,
- Work with Office of Institutional Research to determine a timeline (a twenty-year analysis for example), statistical data analysis of existing Faculty populations, tenure promotion. It would also be useful to go to each individual school to analyze data related to these categories to better compare across divisions to see if there are discrepancies.
- Considerations for evaluating mentoring, departmental service work and the numbers and breakdown of faculty who take of this work.

- Considerations for tenure vs. non-tenure track faculty.
- Internationally diverse faculty and student body.
- Include quantitative and qualitative approaches that highlight key stats, as well as experiences (focus groups, surveys, informal interviews).

Amidst a transforming educational landscape the university labor force has witnessed a drop-in tenure and tenure-track faculty by 25 and 50 percent, respectively, over the last four decades. Given this structural concern, protecting full time faculty remains an overarching anxiety (Barnshaw 2016). For scholars engaged in public scholarship, such work can generate risks that put women and minority scholars in precarious positions that have not spared tenured faculty. Critical scholars speaking to ongoing inequalities in their departments or campuses and those making political comments at the national level have come under increased scrutiny for their views. As a result, these scholars, often women and people of color, have been subject to “academic blackballing” (Grande 2017) where faculty’s “skills—the ability to teach and conduct research in a manner suitable to [their] profession and [their] field— [are] called into question” (Grande 2017). Moreover, given the current political moment and digital age have produced hostile situations to marginalized faculty specifically through attacks from right wing or conservative groups. In the absence of university or college leaders protecting their faculty, comments critiquing political figures or simply stating facts are rendered material to be exploited on conservative websites, blogs or even media outlets like Fox News (Daniels and Stein 2017). Such unprecedented precariousness has highlighted a new opportunity for campus administrators and leaders to defend institutions of higher education as sites of critique. As Grande (2017) reminds us “We need to ensure that campus leadership understands that education has never been a neutral enterprise, diversity and inclusion are only starting points, and that study by definition requires struggle.”

- ***Attaining majority-minority faculty***

The law school at the University of California, Davis has gained wide recognition for their diversity efforts among their student body as well as their faculty. Recently, Dean Kevin R. Johnson, shared the law school’s approach to and experience in fostering a majority-minority faculty.

According to Dean Johnson, these factors included ensuring support from deans, diverse appointment committees, diverse shortlists, the retention of minority faculty. Johnson states that deans often play multiple roles in supporting diverse faculty including the hiring, participating in faculty-appointment committees, and providing institutional memory. In this way, deans who are supportive of the university’s and college’s diversity missions,

can help guide searches through the numerous processes. For Dean Johnson, faculty search committees replicate themselves and benefit from faculty of color and women joining each search. Relatedly, shortlists are not readily diverse, and require additional efforts to widening applicant pool. In this regard, “elite credentials” that conventionally play a significant role in the hiring process are deemphasized over other more diversity-ensuring practices such as identifying candidates who contribute to diversity mission of the school and university. For example, Supreme Court clerks are highly valued among law schools, however, since few minorities are afforded this opportunity, the criteria disproportionately disfavors qualified, minority candidates. Finally, retention of minority faculty is emphasized through a mentoring structure which pairs junior faculty with senior faculty in “mentoring” committees that help increase probability of achieving tenure (Johnson 2011 & 2016).

- ***Emphasis on Teaching***

The Campus Climate Committee recommends evaluating teaching practices, especially in creating a culture of accountability that rewards teaching and incentivizes it as critical to tenure and other forms of promotion. Faculty’s relationship with students as mentors, allies, and instructors is critical to the university’s success. Understanding how each school emphasizes teaching and its relationship to tenure is important to further determine how to change incentives around tenure and the publishing model, to better address student learning outcomes and to create high expectations for teaching as part of the university’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

- ***Institutionalizing faculty diversity***

In light of the multi-faceted aspect of increasing faculty diversity, some institutions have worked with university administration and campus organizations to develop official handbooks, briefings, and other resources to guide faculty searches and hiring. This institutionalization of the search and hiring process fosters transparency and creates baseline protocols for “best practices.”

The University of Michigan and, more recently, and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), for example, have developed pre- and post-search processes aimed at helping the search committees not simply understand their role in these committees, but also provide tools and practices that will achieve outcomes consistent with commitments to diversity, inclusion, and academic excellence.

University of Michigan’s handbook (“University of Michigan” 2016) on faculty searches and hiring offers an exceptional model for other universities

seeking to implement practices for increasing diversity among its faculty population. Noteworthy aspects relevant to the Campus Climate Committee is the pre-search processes and the checklist. The Michigan handbook encourages extended deliberation by the faculty search committee (which can be extended to departmental faculty outside of the committee) to assess the committee's charge, criteria for the position, and reflect on the extent to which methods adopted by the search committee integrate the department or school's diversity commitments. Evaluating the representation of marginalized groups among applicants, interviewees, and hires within a particular department's faculty search history allows for an intentional and valuable discussion regarding past steps taken (or not taken) to reach/recruit exceptional and diverse candidates and revising search processes accordingly.

The checklist serves as a practical method for search committee members to better assess appropriate conduct. UCLA's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion's (EDI) checklist has recently expanded to include feedback from the Vice Chancellor of EDI on aspects such as the search plan, on whether the search is adequately broad and inclusive, and whether the short list is sufficiently diverse. By including feedback loops with administrators at each stage of the search and hiring process committees are better situated to reflect on the recruitment efforts in relation to diversity commitments ("UCLA Academic" 2016).

Together, the handbook and tools such as the checklist help create institutional guidelines that keep priorities across departments and schools in line with overarching diversity and inclusivity. Towards keeping search committee members up-to-date on policies and practices relevant to equity, diversity, and inclusion, UCLA requires them to attend briefings and in-class trainings conducted by EDI every four years ("Office of Vice Chancellor" 2017). Such strategies could help ensure the institutionalization of diversity initiatives remain relevant and current with ever-growing research.

Aforementioned brief, but fundamental, examples of best practices can help advance USC's current commitment to diversity and inclusion as well as serve as a catalyst for bolder efforts towards equity that reify the university's commitment to excellence.

### *Student*

Student concerns are critical to campus climate and have been the most highlighted concerns regarding campus climate studies. Even though this particular report does not go into the detailed concerns of both undergraduate and graduate students, the committee recommends assessing both graduate level and International Student (undergraduate and graduate) interests, as these sub-groups make up a large audience that attends and participates in the intellectual life of USC's campus community.

- ***Graduate Student/Teaching Assistant***

Graduate students are the next generation of faculty within the university system. A major component to graduate student socialization to the professor career is working as a teaching assistant while completing the degree. It is a process that is two-way in that the graduate student interacts with their faculty mentor and students as part of the learning process. Understanding how each school/department monitors teaching, including training, evaluation, and peer support is key to making further recommendations on supporting graduate student professionalization. USC's Center for Teaching Excellence and the Graduate School offer more general resources on compliance and training seminars, and provide a useful baseline for articulating policy. A key next step is to address the classroom and lab experiences of teaching assistants, and how to adopt resources for interactions and scenarios that construct the teaching experience with an added emphasis on cultural training, and how to better address diversity and inclusion across a large university campus through diverse interactions and curriculum.

There are a number of aspects to graduate student life worthy of reflection and engagement, including the demands of the professor career and concerns with work/life balance. There are an increasing number of mental health issues, especially within the graduate student community, which requires evaluation and an increased awareness by departments in addressing stress and anxiety that can accompany this profession, as well as resources and additional ways to destigmatize mental health.

- ***International Students***

International students are substantive and diverse demographic that comprise both USC's undergraduate and graduate student bodies. With over 11,000 International students enrolled in the fall 2017 semester, it is vital for the university to be aware of the diversity of this community, including the national, ethnic, religious, educational training and other cultural differences. By addressing the pluralities of this community, university leaders will be better able to identify the specific experiences of International students in navigating American universities.

### *Staff*

Staff occupy key roles within the university ecosystem. To better understand the campus climate experience will require identifying and addressing strategic issues related to this audience. There are over 14,000 staff members currently employed at USC, which provides another audience to address concerns related to campus climate and inclusion. By addressing ways that staff can better participate in diversity and cultural competency training, as well as the breakdown of staff by race, income, gender, this assessment will acknowledge the particular needs of this community.

## Key Term Recommendations

### *A core philosophy on Diversity and Inclusion*

- The Campus Climate Committee come up with a definition on diversity and inclusion and how to implement it as part of a core philosophy for the university. Refer to UC Berkeley's [Catalyst For Change Initiative](#) as part of their diversity plan. Berkeley provides a model to consider what happens when an Institution shifts from “diversity crisis” to “diversity catalyst.” This model is useful because it offers both quantitative and qualitative insights, supported by data and policy, as well as programming across the university that connects departments, faculty, staff, and students with key resources under one umbrella. Questions to consider: How does the university envision itself as an ‘active’ supporter of diversity initiatives? How will the university connect with people, divisions, Institutes, and the larger community to highlight cross-departmental change? What does sustainable inclusion look and feel like?

USC has made a number of strides to address issues of access and equity with their pre-college and localized neighborhood programs like the Neighborhood Academic Initiative (NAI). Additionally, USC's promotion of student access through portals like USC Student Affairs and faculty sites like USC's Faculty Portal offer resources and guidance while at the university (student groups, wellness, faculty tenure process). It would be helpful for the Campus Climate Committee to consider more fully what the parameters of a term like “Access” means in light of the role of the university in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. What is the value of a college education, especially when considering student debt and the future of student debt in faculty recruitment? What are some of the long-term strategies in keeping the university a central space for learning opportunities, especially when it is politicized? What does retention look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and how will USC do this? How will USC follow-up on students from non-traditional, low income backgrounds to ensure they are receiving a quality educational experience?

### *Ableism and Disability Awareness*

- The committee may consider a partnership with USC's Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity, which provides enhanced academic support services and individual learning strategy sessions, and assistive technology for students with an identified learning disorder (LD), dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other learning differences. The Disabilities Services and Programs Office offers guidelines for students

with disabilities to receive accommodations. It seems that offering faculty and staff more training on what constitutes “Ableism” on college campuses, and how this bias can manifest in the form of language and discomfort around visible/invisible disabilities will help the raise awareness on providing effective and productive accommodations.

### *Renewed Focus on LGBTQIA Experience*

- A key consideration is to better think through the lived realities of the LGBTQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Questioning/Queer, Intersex, Asexual) community and how those fears of this community are manifested in the language, the architecture, the public and private spaces of the university that privilege heterosexism, as well as the most recent national-level reversal of transgender workplace protections and banning transgender individuals from military service. This is the time for USC to engage with its mission more directly and its commitment to student learning, safety, and inclusion as a core value.

The committee should consider reviewing current LGBTQIA protections and policies that are currently in place. USC’s LBGT resource center is a good place to start as there is information on health, community, social, housing, and other institutional resources to guide students while attending USC. The committee might also consider additional Instructor training on LGBTQIA issues, and oftentimes the hidden biases that inform much of the university’s structure and approach to learning and teaching.

### *Addressing Racism and Microaggressions*

- USC’s Student Affairs website defines racism as “prejudiced thoughts and discriminatory actions based on difference in race/ethnicity.” Part of the problem with this framework is the lack of clarity concerning the nature of particular individual vs. institutional “prejudiced thoughts,” and the nature of “discriminatory actions” that are rooted in a definition like racism. Racism and how it is experienced within the community can range from structural inequalities to perceived and experienced slights based upon one’s race.

To better address racism and its root causes, the field of Critical Race Theory considers how people of color experience inequality. In particular, this theoretical framework articulates how racism manifests within an educational and institutional setting, how race intersects with gender and

class, including ways to critically examine cultural hierarchies that overwhelmingly effect people of color.<sup>14</sup>

An alternative definition, proposed by scholars Daniel Solorzano, Miguel Ceja and Tara Yosso, identifies racism as “the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance” (61). In addition, the Calgary Anti-Racism Education website further defines racism through the multiple ways it can manifest regarding both institutions and individuals and systems of oppression that exclude persons of color. The two key definitions that illustrate this point is institutional and structural racism. Institutional racism in this context refers to “racial discrimination that derives from individuals carrying out the dictates of others who are prejudiced or of a prejudiced society.” Structural racism reflects, “Inequalities rooted in the system-wide operation of a society that excludes substantial numbers of members of particular groups from significant participation in major social institutions.”<sup>15</sup>

These two distinctions are important in assisting the USC community to develop a cohesive language by which to explain and examine how racism permeates higher education. By articulating racism as systemic, there is room for students, staff, and faculty to acknowledge the complex history of racism, and to think more critically about the implicit biases and forms of intolerance that are part of the everyday language and interactions at a university.

## **Conclusion**

This report begins a dialogue by thinking through the language and brief history of Campus Climate research and language as an effective tool to promote diversity and inclusion across higher education communities. The content of this report highlights race and its relationship to the legacy of Campus Climate language and initiatives. The intersections of gender, sexuality, religion, and class are equally important to creating an inclusive environment, and each have a complex history in relation to the university environment that deserve further unpacking. Below, are key considerations for moving the dialogue forward:

---

<sup>14</sup> For a useful framework and discussion on CRT, see Solorzano, Daniel, Miguel Ceja, and Tara Yosso. "Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students." *Journal of Negro Education* (2000): 60-73.

<sup>15</sup> For more information, see the University of Calgary's Anti-Racism Educational website with a variety of key definitions and ideas for training and support: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/cared/glossary#racism>

- To model an inclusive Campus Climate requires engaging with diversity and marginalized voices as part of a larger whole, across departments, disciplines, and courses
- The history of higher education in the United States is not neutral and requires a rigorous evaluation of its history and those that have been historically marginalized from it
- Addressing current events that involve racism, sexism and other forms of prejudice are fundamental to demonstrating the university's commitment to campus life.
- USC's commitment to diversity must also include a localized approach that better addresses its history and geography in relation to historically marginalized populations.
- Consider strategic partnerships and how this particular group can work with existing programs and leaders to leverage cross-departmental partnerships and to create opportunities for programming to benefit the entire campus community.

## References

- Barnhardt, C. & Reyes, K. (2016). Embracing Student Activism. Retrieved from the Higher Education Today blog: <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2016/03/02/embracing-student-activism/>
- Barnshaw, J. (2016). Facilitating institutional improvement through enhanced benchmarking. Higher Education at a Crossroads: The Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession. American Association of University Professors. <https://www.aaup.org/report/higher-education-crossroads-annual-report-economic-status-profession-2015-16>.
- Bishop, T. (2015). Being Muslim on campus: In the wake of terrorism, the burden of Islamophobia fall especially hard on students. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/muslim-students-university/416994/>
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. (2010). *Racism without Racists : Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Bruni, F. (2016). How and why you diversity colleges. The New York Times. Sunday Review. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/15/opinion/sunday/how-and-why-you-diversify-colleges.html?mtref=undefined&assetType=opinion>
- Crandell, J. & Garcia G. A. (2016). “Am I overreacting?” Understanding and combating microaggressions. Taken from the Higher Education Today blog on July 16, 2017: <https://www.higheredtoday.org/2016/07/27/understanding-and-combatting-microaggressions-in-postsecondary-education/>
- Daniels, J. & Stein A. (2017). Protect scholars against attacks from the right. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/06/26/why-institutions-should-shield-academics-who-are-being-attacked-conservative-groups>
- De La Cruz-Viesca, M., Cheng Z., Ong P. M., Hamilton D., and Darity, W.A. Jr. (2016). The Color of Wealth in Los Angeles. Duke University Research Network on Racial and Ethnic Inequality, The Milano School of International Affairs, Management and Urban Policy at The New School, and UCLA Asian American Studies Center.

- Deruy, E. 2016. What college presidents think about racial conflict on their campuses. The Atlantic.
- “Disability” (N.d.). Stanford Equity of Opportunity and Education. Stanford University.  
<https://edeq.stanford.edu/sections/disability>.
- Feagin, J. R., Vera, H., and Imani., N. (1996). *The agony of education: Black students at white colleges and universities*. New York: Routledge.
- Fleming, A.R., Oertle, K.M., Plotner, A. J., Hakun, J.G. (2017). Influence of social factors on student satisfaction among college students with disabilities. *Journal of College Student Development*, Volume 58, Number 2, pp. 215-228.
- Frankenberg, R. (1993) *The social construction of whiteness: White women, race matters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Grande, S. (2017). Academic blackballing. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website: <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2017/07/14/academics-who-speak-out-against-injustice-are-experiencing-backlash-essay>
- Gutierrez yMuhs G., Flores Nieman Y., Gonzales Carmen G., & Harris Angela P., Editors. (2012). *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia*. Boulder, CO: Utah State University Press.
- Halualani, Rona T., Hugh L. Haiker, and Christopher M. Lancaster. (2010). "Mapping Diversity Efforts as Inquiry." *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 32 (2): 127–36.
- Harper, S. R. (2015). Colleges should stop paying to ignore racial problems. Retrieved from Inside Higher Ed website: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/12/10/colleges-should-stop-paying-money-ignore-racial-problems-essay>
- Harper, S. R. and Lori P. D. (2007) *Responding to realities of race on campus*. New Directions for Student Services (Eds). San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass.
- Hartocollis, A. (2017). “Long after protests, students shun the University Of Missouri.” Los Angeles Times.
- Herek, George. (2004). Beyond “Homophobia”: Thinking about sexual prejudice and stigma in the twenty-first century. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 1 (2), 6- 24.
- Holoien, Deborah S. (2013). *Do differences make a difference?: The effect of*

*diversity on learning, intergroup outcomes, and civic engagement.*  
Princeton, New Jersey. Trustee Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity Princeton University. <http://www.princeton.edu/reports/2013/diversity/report/PU-report-diversity-outcomes.pdf>

- Pérez Huber, L., Solórzano, D. G. (2015a). Racial microaggressions as a tool for critical race research. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 18(3), 297–320.
- Hill Collins, P. & Bilge, S. (2016). *Intersectionality*. Malden: Polity Press, 2016.
- Hurtado, S., Griffin, K. A., Arellano, L., & Cuellar, M. (2008). Assessing the value of climate assessments: Progress and future directions. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 1(4), 204-221.
- Hurtado, S. & Harper, S. (2007). Nine themes in campus racial climates and implications for institutional transformation. *New Directions for Student Services*, 120, 7-24. doi: 10.1002/ss.254
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J., Clayton-Pedersen, A., & Allen, W. (1999). Enacting diverse learning environments: Improving the climate for racial/ethnic diversity in higher education. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 26(8). doi:<http://dx.doi.org.libproxy2.usc.edu/10.1037/a0014009>
- H. Richard Milner IV, Ira E. Murray, Abiola A. Farinde & Lori Delale-O'Connor (2015) Outside of School Matters: What We Need to Know in Urban Environments, *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 48:4, 529-548, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2015.1085798
- Hurtado, S. & Rona, H. (2014). Diversity Assessment, Accountability, and Action: Going Beyond the Numbers. <https://www.aacu.org/diversitydemocracy/2014/fall/hurtado-halualani>
- Jennings A., Blankstein A., and Xia R. (2013). Black USC students accuse LAPD of bias after party clash. *Los Angeles Times*.
- Johnson, K. R. (2011) The Importance of Student and Faculty Diversity at Law Schools: One Dean's Perspective. *Iowa Law Review*. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1769285>
- Johnson, K. R. (2016). How and why we built a majority-minority faculty. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from: <http://www.chronicle.com/article/HowWhy-We-Built-a/237213>
- Giancola, J., and Kahlenberg, R.D. (2016). True merit: Ensuring our brightest students have access to our best colleges and universities. Jack Kent Cook Foundation.

- Kezar, A. J., and Eckel, P. D. "The Effect of Institutional Culture on Change Strategies in Higher Education: Universal Principles or Culturally Responsive Concepts?" *Journal of Higher Education*, 2002a, 73(4), 435–460.
- Kezar, A. J., and Eckel, P. D. "Examining the Institutional Transformation Process: The Importance of Sensemaking, Interrelated Strategies, and Balance." *Research in Higher Education*, 2002b, 43(3), 295–328.
- Kezar, A. J., and Eckel, P. D. *Leadership Strategies for Advancing Campus Diversity: Advice from Experienced Presidents*. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 2005. Levin, S., van Larr, C., and Sidanius, J. "The Effects of Ingroup and Outgroup Friendships on Ethnic Attitudes in College: A Longitudinal Study." *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*, 2003, 6(1), 76–92.
- Leonardo, Z. (2013) *Race frameworks: A multidimensional theory of racism and education*. New York, NY. Teachers College Press.
- Mayhew, M. J., Grunwald, H. E., & Dey, E. L. (2006). Breaking the silence: Achieving a positive campus climate for diversity from the staff perspective. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(1), 63-88.
- Meraji, Shereen M. (2013). USC students allege racial profiling by LAPD. National Public Radio News. <http://www.npr.org/templates/transcript/transcript.php?storyId=182175917>
- Milem, J. F., Chang M. J., and Antonio, A. L. (2005). Making diversity work on campus: A research based perspective. American Association of Colleges and Universities. [https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/mei/milem\\_et\\_al.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/mei/milem_et_al.pdf)
- Office of Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. (2017). Faculty search process: Policy memorandum. <https://equity.ucla.edu/programs-resources/faculty-search-process/>
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*. New York: Routledge.
- Siddiqi, I. (April 7, 2016). Here are 6 incidents of Islamophobia on campus in the last week. *Mondoweiss*. Retrieved from <http://mondoweiss.net/2016/04/here-are-6-incidents-of-islamophobia-on-campus-in-the-last-week/>

- Stewart Dafina – Lazarus, Renn, Kristen A., and G. Blue Brazelton. (2015). Gender and Sexual Diversity in U.S. “Higher Education: Contexts and Opportunities ofr LGBTQ College Students,” *New Directions for Student Services*, Number 152 (Winter 2015).
- UCLA Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. (2016). UCLA recruitment and the recruitment process.  
<https://equity.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Faculty-Recruitment-Process-Trifold-rev2016.9.13.pdf>
- University of Michigan Office of the Provost. (2016). Academic Affairs Faculty Hiring Manual.  
<http://advance.umich.edu/resources/handbook.pdf>
- Watson, Kenjus T. and Pérez Huber, L. (2016). Micro in name only: Looking back to move forward in racial microaggression research. Center for Critical Race Studies at UCLA. Issue No. 3.  
[https://issuu.com/almaiflores/docs/kw\\_\\_\\_lph\\_research\\_brief\\_final\\_versi](https://issuu.com/almaiflores/docs/kw___lph_research_brief_final_versi)
- Wood, T., Meyer, C., Bose D. (2017). Why we dread disability myths. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.  
<http://www.chronicle.com/article/Why-We-Dread-Disability-Myths/240156?>