Racial Equity Task Force
Outreach/Pedagogy Subcommittee

Fall 2020 Academic Unit Anti-Racism Survey Results

Subcommittee Membership

Christa Agiro
Paula Bubulya
Nicole Carter
Sharon Lynette Jones
Carol Meija-LaPerle
Sarah McGinley
Leslie Neyland-Brown
Nimisha Patel
Marie Thompson
Emily Yantis-Houser

In early fall 2020, the Outreach and Pedagogy subcommittee developed a 6-item survey for faculty and staff in academic units; the survey focused on anti-racism. On October 13, 2020, representatives from the subcommittee presented the survey to WSU Department Chairs, who were subsequently asked to share the survey link with their respective academic units. Data were collected during the remainder of the fall term. Data were analyzed after the end of fall term and the following report was generated.

In total, 72 faculty/staff from academic units across the university responded to the survey. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed. In some instances, individuals provided a response to a question, but the response did not address the question being asked. In these cases, the response was coded as 'not applicable' on the tables.

For each survey item, you will find a table summarizing the quantitative analyzes and a bulleted list or narrative of the qualitative analyses for each item. A set of recommendations is provided at the end of the report.

Subcommittee Recommendations

Structures
- Create an official anti-racism committee in each college to facilitate professional development
- University- and unit-level audit of policies and practices and their relationships to racism and anti-racism
- Institutional level development of consistent and clear guidelines regarding language that should and should not be used
- Acknowledge that hostile faculty are out of step with institutional goals
- Provide clear, focused, and appropriate institutional responses to racist policies and practices
- Ongoing efforts at accountability to support and promote an equitable environment.
- Identify a university-level 'point-person' who specializes in diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-racism as a resource for faculty/staff/students
- Specified goals from the Office of Inclusive Excellence, shared with the entire WSU community, focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-racism
- Ensure that departmental, college, and all unit (academic and non-academic) level leadership are meaningfully invested in work on anti-racism – make it a position requirement
- Creation of center, network, or institute on campus (perhaps as part of VP Inclusive Excellence office) to provide ongoing professional development, innovation, and resource sharing. See Faculty/Staff Professional Development section for specific ideas.
- The need for structural and systemic support is essential to long-term sustainability. Sole individuals cannot carry the load or responsibility for necessary institutional investment.
- WSU Leadership can begin by examining practices and soliciting expertise from those departments that are currently, consciously invested in ant-racists practices.

Faculty/Staff Professional Development
- Roadmaps for how to talk to students and other faculty members about complicated racial topics
- Expanded opportunities to increase knowledge about anti-racism: strategies, methods, and practices
- Education on systemic, chronic, intersectional role of race and identity in creating considerable barriers to academic success for Black and minority students and barriers to professional advancement for Black and minority faculty, staff, and students
- Cultivating racial literacy through book discussions, syllabi sharing, and anti-racist practices
- Training to improve awareness of existing policies versus what is NOT in place currently
- Offering language or templates can be added to by colleges or departments and that reflect WSU's commitment to a safe, support, and inclusive environment for students likely to encounter racism. This includes: providing feedback on developed language; addressing discipline-specific/professional concerns, etc.
- Campus-wide film series/book club/awareness forums (compensating facilitators for time/expertise)
- Support small-group mentorship and affinity networks throughout the year, on an on-going basis
- Hear stories of racism from students/staff/faculty who witnessed it - benefit from using these stories as case studies for discussion
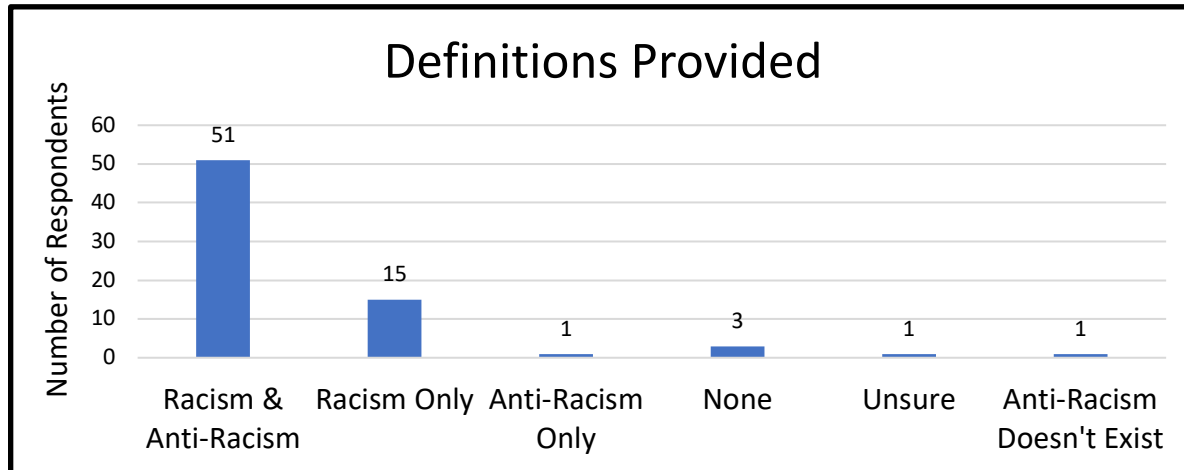
Individual Practices
- Engage all involved in higher education (administers, faculty, and staff) in self-reflection about feelings and biases with regards to race, diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Facilitate reality that change and responsibility lies with each individual

Other
- Expand survey to engage and include non-academic units, modifying questions as needed
- Create a survey for students to gather their needs/ideas/perspectives on diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and anti-racism

Q1: What does racism and anti-racism mean to you?

Definitions Provided

Number of Respondents

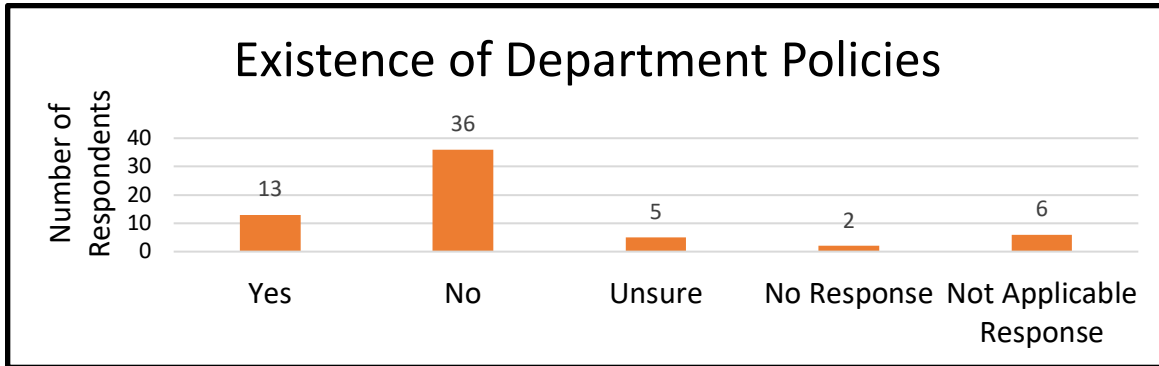| Category	Value
Racism & Anti-Racism	51
Racism Only	15
Anti-Racism Only	1
None	3
Unsure	1
Anti-Racism Doesn't Exist	1

Q1 Key Findings

<u>Racism</u>
- When referenced, targets of racism are described as those identifying as minority populations, difference in "skin color" (which seems to stand for "not white"), religious difference, ethnicity, cultural beliefs, physical difference, "genetic background" and national background
- The most telling distinction in answers regarding the definition of racism is that these fall under broad categories of "systemic" vs "subjective."
  - *Subjective* - individual ("someone") showing or experiencing - included: preference/bias/oppression; treatment, thoughts, assumptions, behaviors, judgements; hate based on difference; discrimination, distrust, fear, avoidance of others not like you; conscious & unconscious; lack of compassion or empathy or respect; negative stereotypes that result in treating differently or with disdain; "believing, thinking, and portraying oneself above another"

  - *Systemic* – structures and **power-based** - included: "othering"; structures of unequal access; System designed to "favor whites over others"; injustice; political and social implications; privileges vs barriers to success; policies
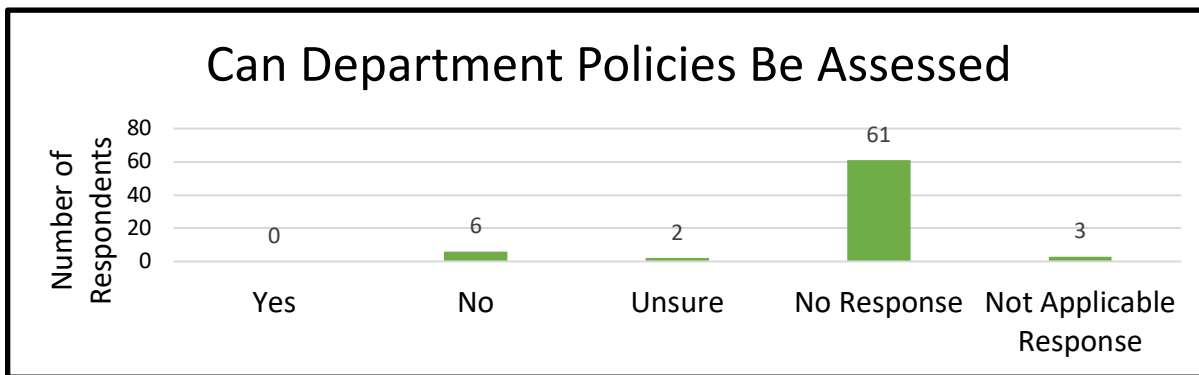
<u>Anti-Racism</u>
- Definitions typically "opposite of" or opposition to" or "action against" or "counter" racism
- Overall, individual and group efforts of racism involved some version of the following: respect and recognition of difference: respect and tolerance of ethnic customs, religious views, genetic background, justice, complexity of experiences; act and speak against injustice; stand for equality and inclusion; change beliefs; embrace differences; aware of entrenched biases; Engage in "dangerous discourses"; Awareness and stopping "a racist act"
- Systemic changes: dismantle systems of oppression; break down structures; active development to overcome learned biases; improving equity and opportunities; undo racist policy, actions, outcomes

Q2a: Are there department/in-house policies to protect black, brown, and indigenous peoples? Can you assess their effectiveness/outcomes?
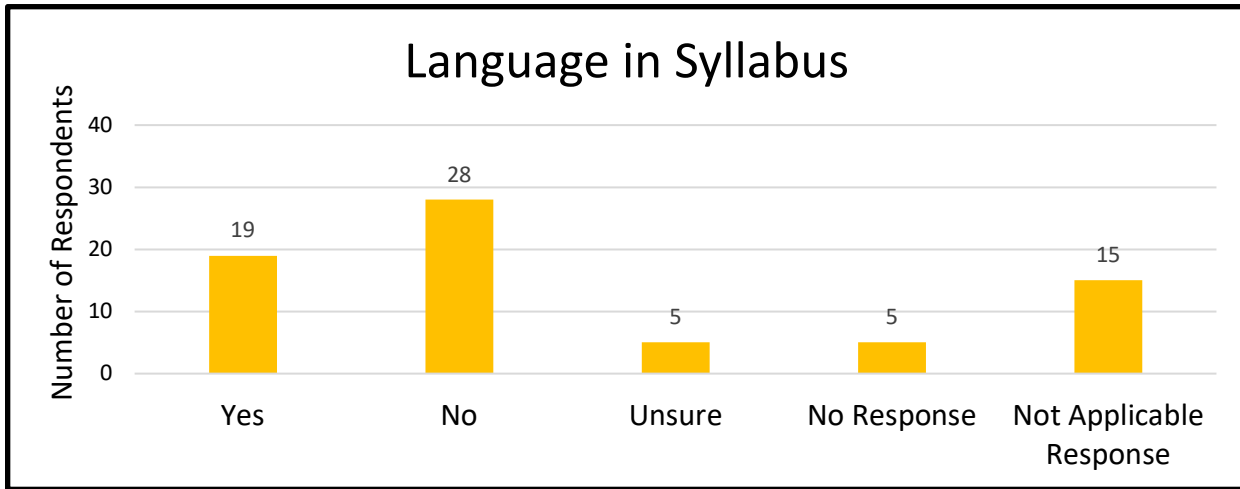
Existence of Department Policies

Response	Number of Respondents
Yes	13
No	36
Unsure	5
No Response	2
Not Applicable Response	6

Q2b. Can you assess the effectiveness/outcomes of department/in-house policies to protect black, brown, and indigenous peoples?

Can Department Policies Be Assessed

Response	Number of Respondents
Yes	0
No	6
Unsure	2
No Response	61
Not Applicable Response	3

Q2 Key Findings

- More than half of respondents reported that there were not any policies to protect black, brown or indigenous peoples in their department or that they were unsure if such policies existed.
- About 1/3 of respondents reported that there were polices in their department but no specific reference to such policies were made. Many respondents referenced policies provided by HR, the CBA and other university policies, but not specifically at the department level.
- Two respondents reported that their departments were currently working on policies.
- Work is more from individuals rather than groups/departments
- Apparent confusion about what the question was asking (which groups are targeted by the question, who needs to be protected from what, are we asking about university policies or department policies)
- Known policies referenced were vague & generalized such as "AA, EOE, HR", implying very limited knowledge for most responders. One comment referenced specific Wright Way Policies by number, or referencing the CBA, and a few indicated work is in progress in their department.
- Responses were evasive, including a broader inference (e.g. sexism, other harassment, discrimination due to disability), or offered random comments tied to racism and not necessarily around policy.
- Many 'yes' answers didn't have specific reference to policy, while at least one referred to rationale of accreditation requirements (the same could be made for any federally funded research program)

Q3. **For faculty, in what ways does your syllabus expressly reflect an environment of safety, support, and inclusiveness for students who are more likely to encounter racism?**

Language in Syllabus

Number of Respondents

Yes	19
No	28
Unsure	5
No Response	5
Not Applicable Response	15

Q3 Key Findings

- Of the no answers, many expressed either a desire to do so, but indicated anxiety about how to do so
- Other responses evaded the issue or shifted responsibility onto students.
- 7 respondents indicated no intention of including language in his/her/their &included dissent or hostility.
- Many faculty members see themselves as supportive, but fail to include language in their syllabus.
    - Faculty have no clear idea about what a direct expression might entail
    - Faculty would appreciate assistance in creating language
    - Faculty create their own equivalents that may not be clear to students
- Some faculty are not supportive.
    - They do not see the issue as systemic and see the responsibility as residing with of individual students
    - They disagree there is an issue
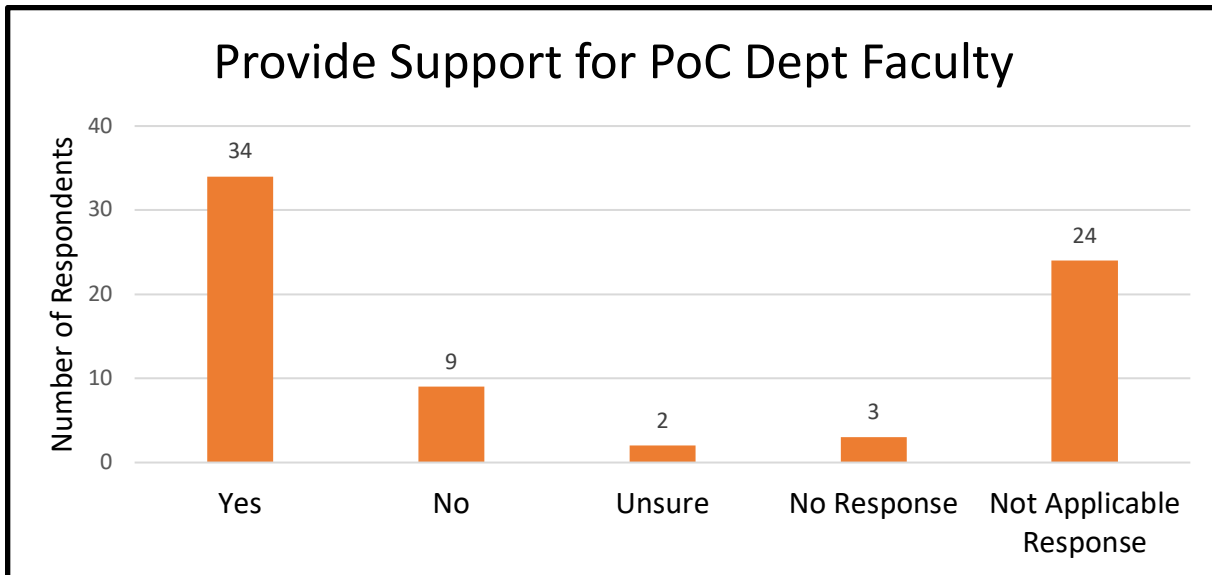   - They do not see it as the university's role to engage with the issue

Q4. Can you identify difficult situations around race where you needed more knowledge/skill to confront intentional or unintentional racism towards students, faculty, and staff of color (in classrooms, in the office or other places throughout the university)?

Identify Difficult Situations
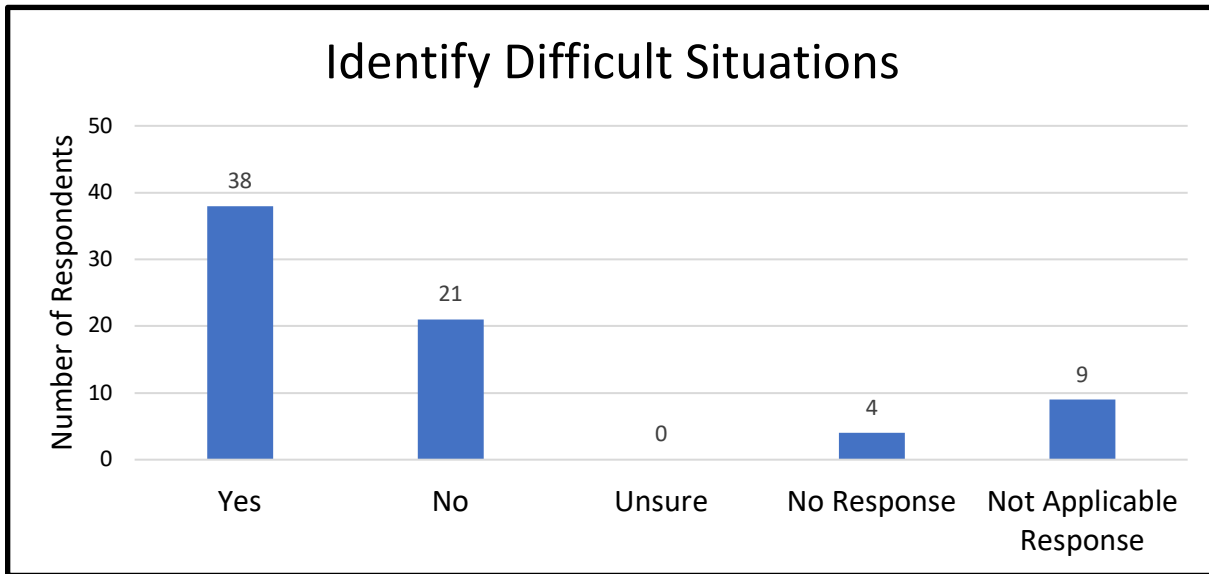
Q4 Key Findings

- A large number of respondents had seen problematic situations from students, faculty, and administration. Most did not respond in a way that they thought was sufficient or effective.
- Respondents who identified difficult situations nearly all said that they need more training, that they questioned the way they or others handled complicated racial situations, or that they let students handle it or left it unaddressed because they did not know what to say.
- Some people knew that they had encountered instances of racism but either could not remember them or could not explain exactly what was wrong in these moments.
- Many noted that students were not good at noticing when acts of racism occurred.
- It is also clear that many believe racism does not impact students and does not exist.
- Many expressed a need for a place to go for resources and to have discussions about how to handle racial issue.
- One person recounted addressing racism and leadership responding in a way that created a more hostile work environment; others mentioned faculty and administrators saying or doing racially problematic things that they did not address.
- Quote that exemplifies the problems at WSU: "Yes. But it's really not about color. I reject the notion that colored students encounter the same problems because they are colored. This notion is racist…."

Q5. In what ways do you consciously express support for people of color in your department?

Provide Support for PoC Dept Faculty

A bar chart titled "Provide Support for PoC Dept Faculty." The y-axis is labeled "Number of Respondents" and ranges from 0 to 40. The bars are:
- Yes: 34
- No: 9
- Unsure: 2
- No Response: 3
- Not Applicable Response: 24

Q5 Key Findings

Three overarching themes emerged:

Colorblindness:
- The majority of responses were categorized under the theme of colorblindness. More than half (17:23) of the responses in this theme fell under belief that it was more important/helpful to ignore race than to address the impact of color/race on a person.
- Respondents also suggested that being 'nice' and/or 'Christian' was a sufficient response to racism
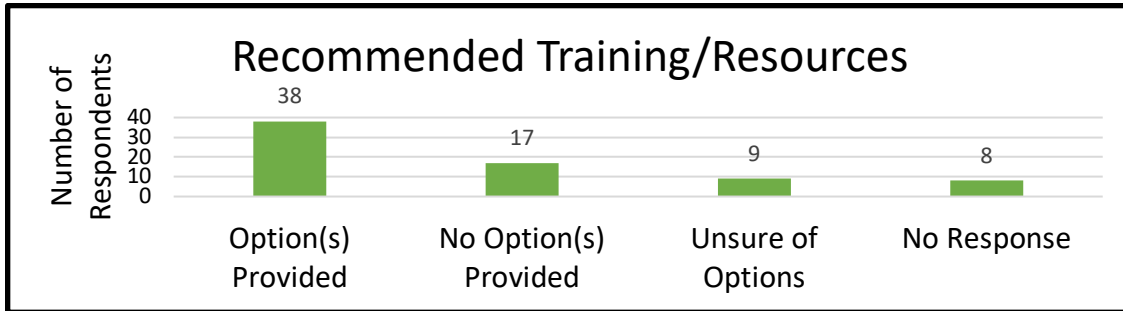- Others suggested that they had not observed systemic racism.

Support/Actions that seem to involve an entire department, or an individual creating projects for and/or around the department:
- Some departments are intentionally and consciously involved in mitigating the impact of racism by creating spaces where BIPOC's needs and support might be openly be addressed. Specific efforts noted attempts to create anti-racist vison statements that linked to value and action statements.

Individual Efforts:
- These comments reflected an individual's specific efforts both in and out of the classroom. These comments stood apart from representation of department efforts. They were more personal, involving mentoring, showing up for events sponsored for and by BIPOC, representation that includes BIPOC scholarship in the classroom, and other specific anti-racist pedagogical practices.

Q6. What specific front-line anti-racist training or resources do you think is necessary for anyone working with students?

Recommended Training/Resources

Category	Number of Respondents
Option(s) Provided	38
No Option(s) Provided	17
Unsure of Options	9
No Response	8

Q6 Key Findings
- Respondents acknowledge their limited knowledge and report a willingness for learning opportunities
- Additional training on Anti-Racism, such as methods, strategies, and practices to support anti-racism, equitability, and accountability measures, was requested
- Additional resources, such as books, campus-wide programming and workshops, external experts, etc., should be readily available for faculty and staff was requested
- There is interest in implementing anti-racist practices in order to increasing instructional effectiveness, including with respect to evaluating/assessing students
- There are concerns about: legality, distribution of resources, and involuntary compliance related to anti-racist practices