

Commitment to Racial Equity and Inclusion Timetable

Otterbein University Department of Theatre and Dance
Updated September 2021

This documents lists key pledges made in the Departmental Commitment to Racial Inclusion, Healing, and Equity, and the anticipated start date and current progress for each.

Commitment	Target Start Date	Status
Communicating more Thoroughly and transparently with our students	Immediately	In Progress
Continue our dialogue with our Black Alumni	Immediately	Stalled, but reestrating Fall 21
Active Listening Chair Meetings	October 2020	In Planning
Anonymous Suggestion System	October 2020	In Planning
Learning more about implicit bias, how privilege manifests itself, and how to recast our work from an anti-racist perspective.		Faculty member attended Anti-Racist Creative Practice training with Nicole Brewer, sponsored by United Scenic Artists Union, Fall 21
Engaging Office of Social Justice & Activism for education and training	Immediately	Inclusive Leadership training Fall 20, Survey of Students Spring 21
Co-sponsoring annual diversity training	Fall 2021	In Planning stages, Financial commitments made by Theatre/Dance Department and Office of Social Justice and Activism
Exploring/Utilizing Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center	October 2020	Contact person and entry point identified, Several Faculty/Staff engaged
Incorporating anti-racism training into the hiring process	Spring 2021	Anti bias training, expanded postings for diverse pool, diversity question, diversity contribution weighted as a qualification implemented spring/summer 21

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<p>Examining ourselves and our curriculum through the lens of the BIPOC communities to identify and remedy bias, microaggressions, and inequity.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Surveying coursework for bias, diversity of voices, seeking counsel, surveying students ongoing</p>
<p>Engaging our BIPOC students as individuals in a way that provides a safe space, is supportive of their ethnic identities, and which prepares them for entry into the theatre business specifically as persons of color.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>In progress through student survey,</p>
<p>Exploring what it means to shift from a “color-blind” approach to a “color-conscious” approach to teaching, casting, and producing.</p>		<p>Survey of students, exploring responses Spring-Fall 21</p>
<p>Engaging our students, alumni, and industry/community resources to help us determine what a color-conscious approach means within educational theatre, and how it can be implemented in a department that is early in the journey to greater diversity.</p>	<p>Spring 2021</p>	<p>Survey of students, exploring responses Spring-Fall 21</p>
<p>Examining representation holistically, looking at representation within each individual production, across the season as a whole, and as a total experience for each student over their four years at Otterbein.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Identifying Methodology</p>
<p>Finding avenues for producing work by playwrights of color, plays that address the range of BIPOC experiences, and plays that provide significant roles for our students of color</p>	<p>Soft Start Fall 2020, progressive implementation</p>	<p>Connected and encouraged student theatre group (11th Hour) with BIPOC Alum Playwright 20-21, Commissioning play by Black playwright for workshop in 22-23, production in 23-24, creating slot for guest director each season targeting voices absent on faculty/staff, created play reading groups to expand the plays available for production beyond that which is familiar to Faculty/Staff, and/or canonical</p>

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Adjusting our casting practices to allow greater freedom to choose plays with significant roles for people of color	Immediately	Identifying issues, working for solutions to complexity of contingencies 21-22
Providing, within the financial constraints of the University, appropriate role models of color in all areas.	Immediately	Offerings this season have been diverse, planning an intentional "Artist Series"
Updating our curriculum to embrace diversity, recognize all students, reflect history more accurately and inclusively, and address people of diversity with more sensitivity and knowledge, especially in the teaching of history and design.		20-21 Surveying plays studied/experienced in our curriculum, encouraging expansion of the voices present
Examining our curriculum for White-centric bias	Immediately	Inclusive leadership training Fall 20, Student survey Spring 21, Plays surveyed across curriculum Spring 21, Workshops attended: "Re-Dressing the Narrative – Decolonizing the Costume History Syllabus, June 2020" "Bridging the Gap: A Look Into African American Hair, July 2020," "Bridging the Gap: A Look into African-American Makeup, September 2020"
Broadening our students' experience of plays beyond the traditional white canon		Spring 21: Survey of plays taught, incorporation of diverse playwrights into Fundamental of Theatre Fall 20, examining across curriculum ongoing
Encouraging students and faculty to utilize our newly purchased access to the New Play Exchange	November 2020	In progress

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Surveying the plays being taught across our curriculum and adjust as needed to ensure that they represent a diversity of playwrights	Spring 2021	Spring 21, Will survey every year, and encourage change as appropriate
Continuing to develop recruiting strategies to make Otterbein more available to all students and to broaden our pool of BIPOC candidates.		
Continuing to speak with prospective students of color that choose to go elsewhere to determine what factors would have led them to choose Otterbein, and will build this into a more formal, actionable process.	Spring 2021	Working with recruiting team and admissions to formalize this process 21-22
Exploring audition and interview options including, but not limited to, online options which remove the financial barriers to application for all students.	October 2021	Maintaining virtual audition option ongoing, providing waivers of application fees
Working with the Office of Social Justice & Activism to seek untapped recruitment locations and strategies to increase our availability to prospective students of color.	October 2021	Discussions have started
Continuing to advocate for our individual students in financial aid matters.		
Continuing to advocate loudly for increases in the University limits to financial aid/scholarships to make Otterbein more accessible.	Immediately	We have reallocated endowed scholarship to target students of color with financial need, have negotiated enhanced aid for diverse candidates to help remove barriers and make us more competitive with other institutions. Looking for additional opportunities for directing endowed funds to attract diverse candidates
Working with the Office of Social Justice & Activism to determine how best to hold a dialogue with all our students to:		

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<p>Articulate the Department's stance on diversity</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Common hour roll out Fall 20, Updates provided to students and alums twice per year starting fall 21</p>
<p>Encourage understanding and support of our diversity efforts</p>		<p>Common hour roll out Fall 20, Updates provided to students and alums twice per year starting fall 21</p>
<p>Encourage understanding and recognition of implicit bias and privilege</p>	<p>Spring 2021</p>	<p>Inclusive leadership training Fall 20, HR implicit bias training spring 21, working with Diversity Officer to fund/schedule annual training</p>
<p>Encourage understanding of the experiences of BIPOC and other marginalized individuals at Otterbein and in society at large</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Student Survey Spring 21, ongoing individual conversations, interface with proposed student group</p>
<p>Help eliminate the incidents of racist statements and behaviors among the student body</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Working on non-departmental reporting mechanism, swift and sensitive reaction. Target implementation Spring 22</p>
<p>We commit to handling any racist incidents with empathy and accountability.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Inclusive Leadership training Fall 20, Student Survey Spring 21, Working on non-departmental reporting mechanism, swift and sensitive reaction. Target implementation Spring 22</p>

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<p>Diversifying the faculty/staff to enrich the University and curriculum with a diversity of viewpoints and experience, to improve representation of the spectrum of diversity in our world, and to provide our students with role models of color.</p>		
<p>Seeking out candidates of color</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Addition of a multitude of posting locations to draw the most diverse candidate pool Spring 21, critique postings for excessive qualification requirements, bias, gender code</p>
<p>Seeking diversity in the faculty</p>	<p>University Dependent</p>	<p>We will be implementing anti-bias training, diverse postings, new Diversity demension of qualifications, etc. in our Fall 21 search for Faculty Scenic Designer, We have developed methodology in staff hires Spring-Summer 21</p>
<p>Building upon and increase our efforts to find opportunities to bring in PT Faculty and guest artists/speakers of color, within the financial constraints of the University.</p>	<p>Immediately</p>	<p>Offerings this season have been diverse, we have intentionally sought out diverse adjuncts, successfully utilizing online BIPOC artist directories in Spring-summer 21, planning an intentional "Artist Series" for 22-23</p>