



FINAL REPORT OF

THE SPH TASK FORCE ON

RACIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

DECEMBER 9, 2020

MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE

Chair

Collins O. Airhihenbuwa

Members

Travis Chambers

Denise N. Gouveia

Harry J. Heiman

Katherine E. Masyn

Amar Mohamed

Carlos A.O. Pavão

Kim Ramsey-White

Shannon Self-Brown

Shaunda Scruggs

Christine E. Stauber

Christa Young Wright

Staff

Souvann St. John-Brown

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

May 25, 2020, marked a historical day of racial reckoning in the United States as the world saw the video of the horrific killing of a Black man by a white police officer. The killing of George Floyd by the police was the culmination of years of racist violence on Black and Brown bodies and the resulting outrage and protests over other police killings including that of Breonna Taylor and many others. The protests in cities in the US and around the world led to a demand for immediate actions to address structural racism in policing and all US institutions. The frustration and outcry over the murder of George Floyd was exacerbated by the escalating cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic, which in the US disproportionately affects Black and Brown populations, further revealed the persistence of structural racism. Of particular concern is the impact that COVID-19 has on the lives of essential workers, most of whom are people of color. The reality for many people of color, both domestically and abroad, was the need to confront two pandemics (racism and COVID-19) that were disproportionately killing Black and Brown persons with untold costs in physical and mental health, hence the outcry and protests.

In the wake of these protests, Interim Dean of the School of Public Health, Dr. Rodney Lyn sent a message to the School of Public Health community denouncing these killings and announcing that the School would be taking actions to address issues of structural racism both within our academic institution and in the context of reopening our university campus in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. On June 2, 2020, Dean Lyn announced the establishment of the SPH Task Force on Racial Equity and Inclusion, to be chaired by Dr. Collins Airhihenbuwa. The Task Force was charged to: *Identify specific actions that the School of Public Health at Georgia State University can take to address and reduce systemic racism and police violence against Black people and other underrepresented groups at the University and in society.* Areas of focus were to include, but not be limited to, curricula for academic programs, admissions, hiring and promotion/tenure, faculty and staff training, research, student supports, and community engagement and partnerships. Ultimately the task force needed to identify and make short, intermediate and long-term recommendations that SPH could use to frame our response to anti-racist practices that promote social justice through our curriculum, research, student recruitment, hiring, and community engagement.

On June 12, 2020, a School of Public Health Town Hall was held to address issues on Racial Equity and Inclusion. Dean Lyn discussed the legacy of racism in the United States and the negative impact structural racism has had on health outcomes for Black and Brown populations and communities. The accumulation of the violent deaths over the years and disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is what led to the anger and frustration expressed in the national outcry for a racial reckoning in the country. The Dean noted that this was an inflection point that called for action on the part of everyone and that SPH was positioned to lead in taking appropriate actions in our teaching, research and community engagement. Task Force chair, Dr. Airhihenbuwa, echoed the urgency for action and noted that it will take a commitment from everyone in SPH to have meaningful and sustainable solutions to unpacking and ending structural racism. The School of Public Health Town Hall provided an opportunity for open dialogue to identify the steps that our community can take to strengthen the School's commitment to racial equity, anti-racist practices, and inclusion of all people.

On June 17, 2020, Dean Lyn announced the other members of the School of Public Health Task Force on Racial Equity and Inclusion, and with this announcement informed the SPH community that "the Task Force will begin its work immediately, making recommendations that can be implemented in the short, medium, and long term. The success of this effort will be dependent on all of us, the members of the SPH community." The first meeting of the TF was held on June 23, 2020, within one month from the date of George Floyd's murder.

PROCESSES AND MEETINGS

The 12 members of the Task Force (TF) included 8 faculty (5 Tenure Track and 3 Non-Tenure Track), 2 staff, and 2 students (1 graduate and 1 undergraduate). In addition to the 12 members, a staff member was assigned to provide administrative support to the TF. Following the June 23, 2020 inaugural meeting, the TF met as a group every other week with subcommittee meetings held in interim weeks. The last meeting of the TF was December 2, 2020. From June 23, 2020, through December 2, a total of 10 full committee TF meetings were held to deliberate and craft the recommendations to be made to the Dean.

SUB COMMITTEES

On June 30, 2020, the second meeting of the TF was held and three subcommittees were created. The subcommittees were created to focus on each of three priorities outlined in the charge by the Dean. The composition of the subcommittees was designed to ensure a mix of student, staff, and faculty of different ranks, where possible. Each subcommittee selected their chair. Two of the three subcommittees were chaired by staff, while a third was chaired by a student. The three subcommittees were:

Curriculum and Training: Amar Mohamed (chair); Kim Ramsey-White; Shannon Self-Brown

Recruitment, Admission, Retention: Denise Gouveia (chair); Katherine Masyn; Shaunda Scruggs;
Christine Stauber

Community Engagement and Partnership: Travis Chambers (chair); Harry Heiman; Carlos Pavao; Christa Watson-Wright

RECOMMENDATIONS

Over a period of six months of deliberation and discussion by members of the TF, three sets of recommendations were sent to the Dean. The first sets of recommendations were sent to the Dean on July 21, 2020, and the last recommendations were sent October 30th, 2020. These sets of recommendations, and the Dean's prompt response, are numbered below in the order in which they were presented to the Dean, and his response.

1A: First sets of recommendations submitted July 21, 2020:

Curriculum and Training:

- Exploring approaches to increase access between students of color and faculty, especially in the area of research.
- Consider an immediate training for all SPH faculty prior to the start of the fall semester focused on the book entitled *Racism: Science and Tools for the Public Health Professional* – or any other training material that others may feel is a good training tool to introduce our faculty to getting comfortable addressing issues of race in the class room.

Recruitment, Admission, Retention:

- Eliminate the GRE for graduate admission into SPH
- Implicit bias training for faculty and staff who participate in admissions
- Requiring a statement of Diversity and Inclusion as a part of the application process for faculty positions in SPH.

Community Engagement and Partnership:

- Faculty education and engagement –community conversations or journal clubs: invite all SPH faculty to be part of small facilitated (10-12 person) discussion groups that provide a safe space to discuss issues relevant to racial and health equity. (Recommending these groups be launched at the time of the proposed faculty training in the Fall)

Ensure equitable reopening plans for GSU/SPH

- Make sure that the needs of all students, faculty, & staff are considered in planning
- Ensure that University testing and surveillance planning includes equitable consideration of all members of the University community
- Ensure that all in-person classes have capacity for live-streaming and recording
- Ensure that faculty and students with household COVID-19 risk (based on family member health conditions, etc.) have the option of virtual learning.
- Ensure that students are not penalized for not attending in-person classes (given above and desire to not have students attend in person if they or a family member or contact are symptomatic or COVID-19 positive)
- Develop contingency plans to support and protect international students

Final Immediate Recommendation:

Given that implementation of the actions above are beyond the scope of the TF, we recommend that you appoint a designee/advisor with the tasks and responsibilities to lead implementation of these and subsequent recommendations from the task force that demand action to advance our SPH commitment to racial equity and inclusion.

1 B. Dean Lyn's response to the recommendations on August 3, 2020:

Dean Lyn acknowledged receiving the recommendations. Following his review and discussion of the recommendations with the School's Executive Committee, he offered his *response* to each of the recommendations to provide an update on *next steps* regarding the recommendations. Below is a list of each recommendation with corresponding next steps.

Immediate Recommendation:

We recommend that you appoint a designee/advisor with the tasks and responsibilities to lead implementation of these and subsequent recommendations from the task force that demand action to advance our SPH commitment to racial equity and inclusion.

- *Next steps: Dean initiated the development of a job description for the position of Advisor to the Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Position will be announced and applications invited by the beginning of the 2020 academic year. The position is to guide implementation of many of the recommendations, including those that are yet to be made by the Task Force.*

Curriculum and Training:

- ❖ Exploring approaches to increase access between students of color and faculty, especially in the area of research.
 - *Next steps: The Dean noted that research on student success indicates that out-of-class contact between students and faculty is vital. The DEI adviser is to work with our two department chairs and our Associate Dean for Research to develop options to ensure high levels of engagement of students of color with faculty in the area of research.*
- ❖ Consider an immediate training for all SPH faculty prior to the start of the fall semester focused on the book entitled *Racism: Science and Tools for the Public Health Professional* – or any other training material that others may feel is a good training tool to introduce our faculty to getting comfortable addressing issues of race in the class room
 - *Next steps: The Dean committed resources to support the purchase of the text titled above for each faculty and staff member who requested a copy.*

In response to a question asked by the Dean about whether we should determine our training approach before purchasing the book or buy the book first, the TF concluded that the initial kick-off event should be a three-hour training. This should begin with a keynote lecture by Dr. Chandra Ford, followed by two-hour break-out sessions. A copy of the book (hard copy or electronic) was purchased for any faculty or staff who requested a copy.

Recruitment, Admission, Retention:

- ❖ Eliminate the GRE for graduate admission into SPH
 - *Next steps: The Dean noted that the authority to change admissions policies must be initiated by SPH. However, authority rests with the university on this matter. SPH must review and approve such a change in its Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) and with a majority vote of the faculty plus support from the Dean. To begin the process, the Dean asked the chair of the SPH Academic Affairs Committee, Dr. Katherine Masyn, to begin discussion of this proposal as a part of the Committee's business. If the AAC approves, this proposal will be presented to faculty in SPH for discussion and a vote. If approved by SPH faculty and dean, the proposal would be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School and the University Senate Committee on Admissions and Standards. If approved, SPH would implement the recommendation.*
- ❖ Implicit bias training for faculty and staff who participate in admissions
 - *Next steps: The Dean supports such training and asks that we begin identifying options for such a training. The Dean will reach out to the Dean for the Graduate School and the Office of the Provost that such a training be considered university-wide.*
- ❖ Requiring a statement of Diversity and Inclusion as a part of the application process for faculty positions in SPH.
 - *Next steps: The Dean asked the SPH Director of Human Resources to determine whether there are policies regulating such practices. If not, SPH will develop a requirement for a statement on Diversity and Inclusion for faculty applications. If so, feedback will be shared with the Task Force while Human Resources will work with relevant stakeholders to determine next steps.*

Community Engagement and Partnership:

- ❖ Faculty education and engagement – community conversations or journal clubs: invite all SPH faculty to be part of small facilitated (10-12 person) discussion groups that provide a safe space to discuss issues relevant to racial and health equity. (Recommending these groups be launched at the time of the proposed faculty training in the Fall)

- *Next steps: The Dean is committed to having more engagement and conversation on diversity, equity, and inclusion. More discussion and planning is needed on the goals and desired outcomes of these activities. Desired outcomes will inform planning and structure. The Advisor to the Dean for DEI, once named, will have responsibility for planning and implementing this activity in collaboration with the dean.*

❖ Ensure equitable reopening plans for that GSU/SPH

- *Next steps: The Dean is actively engaged in the SPH and GSU return to campus plans. He plans to advocate for these recommendations with relevant parties in SPH and at the university level and share information with the TF.*

2 A: Second sets of Recommendations submitted August 13, 2020:

❖ Recommended that the current Revisions to Promotion and Tenure (P&T) for Tenure Track (TT) and Non-Tenure Track (NTT) Manuals should address issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion as presented below.

- Immediate recommendation to Dean Lyn regarding revision to P&T manual
We are aware that the Promotion and Tenure Manual and the Non-Tenure Track Promotion manual are currently undergoing revisions to enhance clarity. While the process is still happening, we strongly support more substantive revisions to the current manuals. In particular, we would like to see revisions to the manuals that prioritize and strengthen the use of diversity, equity and inclusion in the process of promotion and tenure. We feel that these manuals should identify better ways to prioritize faculty research, teaching, and mentoring that are related to health equity and social justice as well as increase the value placed on mentoring; teaching; diversity, equity, and inclusion-related service to the university and the profession; community-based research; collaborative and interdisciplinary research; and other scholarly pursuits that may not directly translate to external grant funding (particularly PI roles on large federal grants).
- We recognize that the current ad hoc committees working on the revisions had a narrow charge that did not include making any substantive changes to the manuals or the criteria themselves. Thus, it may be necessary to convene a subcommittee (with overlapping or non-overlapping membership) to address these potential changes. It is important that any changes to our criteria (including the valuing and weight of these other scholarly pursuits) are (1) consistent with the university's manuals; (2) made explicit in instructions sent to external reviewers; and (3) made explicit in the internal review committees' letters for each candidate. We strongly urge that these revisions to be proposed and approved through the necessary channels in order to be in effect by the next P&T cycle, beginning in 2021.
- Below is an essay that discusses rationale for the need to revise the manuals.
<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2014/01/13/essay-calls-reform-tenure-and-promotion-system>

❖ TF recommends that attendance for the two-hour kick off training with Dr. Chandra Ford be mandatory. The recommendation is for faculty and staff to be required to attend synchronously (live) or asynchronously (viewing the recorded video within a period of two weeks). There are ways to monitor attendance. For example, faculty and staff can be asked to complete a short survey following participation whether live or later after the video is viewed. Students are not required to participate but encouraged to do so.

2B: Dean Lyn's response to the recommendation of August 14, 2020.

Dean Lyn agrees with the recommendation to revise P&T manual to address racial equity and inclusion and would initiate action on it noting that it requires a deeper conversation. On the recommendation to mandate training, the Dean would like to have further discussions noting that making something mandatory sends a message about its importance. However, there is evidence that mandating trainings doesn't always make things better and in some instances, it could make them worse. Moreover, it is not clear if the Dean has the authority to mandate participation in training. If the training is not a condition of employment, can we enforce it if there are not consequence for not participating?

Final thoughts. We could consider asking faculty to assert their role in shared governance if training is something they believe all faculty in SPH should have. There could be a motion from the faculty affairs committee, discussion at the department level, and a vote by SPH faculty that relates to the onboarding of new faculty. There would need to be a specific training required, assuming that there are not legal or HR policies against it.

3A: Third and final set of recommendations submitted October 30, 2020

- ❖ Virtual Roundtable Discussions/Webinars Series (including speakers/panelists from SPH & GSU faculty and community-based organizations) – to serve as a forum for both education & healing
- ❖ **Goals and Desired Outcomes for Faculty Education and Engagement**
 - **Goals**
 - Provide forums to highlight and address issues related to racism and racial inequities targeted to the campus and broader community; focus is on community outreach and engagement
 - Topics to be targeted to bring a public health lens to current events/issues related to systemic racism, racial inequities, police violence, mass incarceration, etc.
 - Engage with colleagues from GSU USI, Criminology, Education, Law, on interdisciplinary issues around social justice
 - Include outside organizations such as Georgia Budget & Policy Institute, Voices for Georgia's Children, Georgia Equality, Atlanta Legal Aid, and members of Atlanta City Council related to local issues
 - Leverage SPH PRC in Clarkston to support cross-cultural learning opportunities—including SPH faculty, students, staff and CBOs and community members
 - Engage with law enforcement and the carceral system—i.e. Atlanta Police Dept., GSU Police Dept., and others to possibly formulate healing and better community understanding
 - Utilize Kreuter-Katz Lecture as a springboard for these GSU- and community-facing forums
 - Encourage student attendance by integrating content into SPH courses
 - **Desired Outcomes**
 - School of Public Health community and community partners will have increased knowledge and understanding of issues related to racism and racial equity
 - School of Public Health will demonstrate leadership in facilitating conversations related to racial equity with community partners and stakeholders
 - School of Public Health will broaden dialogue and collaboration with GSU and external partners on issues related to racism and racial equity

3B Dean Lyn's response to the recommendations on October 30, 2020:

Dean commended the TF for work done and noted that Dr. Kim Ramsey-White has been hired as the DEI advisor to the Dean, based on recommendation from the TF. The Dean pledged to continue to work with our SPH leadership and broader community to engaged in actions related to all the recommendations.

ACTIONS RESULTING FROM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Presentation and workshop: *Racism in Public Health* ft. Dr. Chandra Ford

- Virtual Presentation with Dr. Ford for Georgia State Community
Tuesday, September 15, 2020, at 1:00pm – 2:00pm
- Dr. Chandra Ford led a virtual presentation on racism in public health. Founding Director of the Center for the Study of Racism, Social Justice, and Health and Professor at UCLA, Dr. Ford is an internationally recognized expert on the relationship between racism and health disparities.
- The virtual lecture by Dr. Ford was attended by over 250 (247 on zoom and several viewers on Livestream) faculty, students, alumni, friends of GSU/SPH and community members. **Facebook analytics of the event Livestream showed an estimated reach of 2,100 and Number of Unique views of 731.**
- Following the virtual presentation, Dr. Ford and the TF led a 1.5 hours workshop with 44 SPH faculty and staff to discuss applications of the points made during the virtual lecture, as well as to discuss key content from the book.

2. Position of Adviser to the Dean on DEI

- Kim Ramsey-White was appointed to the role of Special Advisor to the Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

3. Elimination of GRE from admission requirements

- a. Temporary waivers for GRE admissions requirement granted for all SPH graduate programs through admissions for Fall 2021.
- b. Proposal to permanently eliminate the GRE requirement for DrPH admissions unanimously approved by the DrPH subcommittee of the AAC. Courtesy review and discussion conducted by both SPH departments. Proposal discussed and unanimously approved by the AAC. Proposal will be presented to the full SPH faculty for discussion and vote on December 11, 2020.
 - i. If approved by the full SPH faculty, proposal will be reviewed by the SPH Dean.
 - ii. If approved by the SPH Dean, proposal will be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School, the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Programs, and the Faculty Senate Committee on Admissions and Standards for final approval.
- c. Proposal to permanently eliminate the GRE requirement for MPH admissions approved by majority vote of the MPH subcommittee of the AAC. Proposal will be presented to each SPH department for discussion and vote in January 2021.
 - i. If approved by each department, the proposal will be presented to the AAC for discussion and vote.
 - ii. If approved by the AAC, will be presented to the full SPH faculty for discussion and vote.
 - iii. See 3.b.i.

- iv. See 3.b.ii.
- d. Proposal to permanently eliminate the GRE requirement for PhD admissions approved by majority vote of the PhD subcommittee of the AAC. Proposal will be presented to each SPH department for discussion and vote in January 2021.
 - i. See 3.c.i.
 - ii. See 3.c.ii.
 - iii. See 3.b.i.
 - iv. See 3.b.ii.
- 4. Diversity Statement required from job applicants

This recommendation is consistent with a recommendation made by the GSU Task Force on Racial Equity and Inclusion on which both Dean Lyn and SPH TF Chair Dr. Airhihenbuwa are members. Any action on this recommendation, therefore, is likely to be informed by a new GSU policy on future faculty and staff hiring.

NEXT STEPS AND FUTURE DIRECTION TO BUILD ON SPH TASK FORCE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Do not lose momentum particularly for Racial Equity and Inclusion as we expand to DEI
2. The need to engage in integrating racial equity and inclusion into curriculum and training
3. The need to be committed to ensuring spaces for staff support relative to REI and DEI
4. The need to commit to training of faculty, staff and leadership in unconscious bias
5. The need to develop a mentoring and professional development plan for faculty in the School

Supporting Information:

Meeting Dates:

July 14, 2020

Each subcommittee will further discuss immediate recommendations.

July 28, 2020

Discuss some additional immediate recommendations. Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs, Dr. Dan Whitaker, will also join to discuss some promotion and tenure expectations.

August 11, 2020

Discuss Dean Lyn's Email response to recommendations including response to points for which the Dean has asked for clarifications. For example, the nature of training to be had before purchasing a book. Also discuss invitation of Dr. Ford, confirm a date for lecture and workshop.

August 21: Dr. Ford's Workshop planning

September 9: Dr. Ford's presentation final planning

September 15: Lecture by Dr. Ford

September 30, 2020

Post lecture and workshop discussions including review of feedback from attendees.
Updated/additional Recommendations

October 28, 2020

Final meeting of the TF and drafting of the Report for the Task Force. Update from Adviser to the Dean (Kim Ramsey White) on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Additional recommendation to the Dean from the Community and Engagement Subcommittee.

December 2, 2020

Final Meeting to discuss any outstanding issues and finalize the final report.
Dean Lyn joined this final meeting.

SPH FACULTY DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Rank and TT/NTT	White F/M	Black/AA F/M	Latino F/M	Asian F/M	Multi F/M	Total F/M
TT - 32						
Professor	3/4	0/1	1/1		0/1 (Asian/White)	4/7
Assoc Prof	6/0	1/2		2/1		9/3
Assist Prof	5/3	1/0				6/3
NTT -13 Clinical						
Professor	0/1					0/1
Assoc Prof	0/1			0/1		0/2
Assis Prof	2/1	5/1	0/1			7/3
NTT – 8 Research						
Professor	0/2					0/2
Assoc Prof	1/2					1/2
Assist Prof	2/1					2/1
NTT - 3 Academic						
Professional	1/0					1/0
Senior Aca	1/1					1/1
Total - 56	21/16	7/4	1/2	2/2	0/1	31/25

SPH STAFF DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER

Staff Title	White F/M	Black/AA F/M	Latino F/M	Asian F/M	Multi F/M	Total F/M
Academic Advisors, assistant	1/1	2/1				3/2
Admin Lead/Coordinators		4/0				4/0
Mgr/Dir/Specialists, Admin and Academic	2/0	2/2				4/2
Business, Finance and Development	0/2	1/0				1/2
Human Resources Officers		2/0				2/0
Technology and Computer support	0/1	1/1		0/1		1/3
Communications, publications	1/1					1/1
Postdoctoral Research Associate AC	1/1					1/1
Sponsored program Office – SPH budget	1/0	2/0	1/0			4/0
Sponsored externally-Funded Professional	20/4	14/2	1/0	1/0		36/6
Total = 74	26/10	28/6	2/0	1/1		57/17

SPH STUDENTS DATA BY RACE/ETHNICITY AND GENDER

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Fall 2016</u>		<u>Fall 2017</u>		<u>Fall 2018</u>		<u>Fall 2019</u>		<u>Fall 2020</u>	
	Male	Female								
Domestic										
<i>White</i>	23	76	23	101	27	109	40	115	35	132
<i>Black</i>	33	153	56	231	37	293	81	291	85	350
<i>Asian</i>	9	41	13	57	20	67	22	76	20	91
<i>Am Ind/AA</i>										
<i>Natv</i>	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0
<i>Not Reported</i>	1	9	4	7	2	5	2	5	0	5
<i>2 or More</i>										
<i>Races</i>	2	9	4	20	3	30	5	35	5	31
<i>Hispanic (not included in racial numbers above)</i>	3	10	5	20	10	37	7	67	14	72
International	15	26	12	29	12	33	14	35	9	32
Total	86	325	118	466	112	574	172	624	168	713