

Making the Changes We Need at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

Initial Findings and Recommendations from the DEIJ Coordinating Council

Spring 2021

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Charge from CSB/SJU Presidents March 31, 2021

- 1) conduct an audit of current DEIJ programs, services, and investments and
- 2) identify gaps that can be addressed through future DEIJ work.

Leadership that is deeply invested in advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) is urgently needed during this time of transition, challenge, and opportunity at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University (CSB/SJU). Our charge for the newly created DEIJ Coordinating Council was to conduct an audit of existing DEIJ initiatives and identify gaps for additional DEIJ work. Based upon this audit, a summary of which is included in this document, we have identified gaps and made recommendations for future DEIJ work to address these areas. The Council chose to highlight two institutional gaps that must be addressed in order to sustain and advance DEIJ efforts. A more comprehensive list of specific areas for future work is also included.

The Council recognizes the significant impact the Becoming Community initiative has had on CSB/SJU. Continuing the transformative change and broad-based engagement started through Becoming Community will require additional financial investment and institutional support. These investments: 1) align with our mission, 2) will make our institutions more attractive to prospective and current students, as well as employees, and 3) will ensure that all of our graduates -- not just underrepresented students -- are equipped with the knowledge and understanding of DEIJ issues that will advance their careers and lives. These investments are essential to our viability and relevance as competitive institutions of higher education in the 21st century.

- 1) Our missions as Catholic, Benedictine institutions impel us to be open, welcoming campuses for all. This is what it means to be places of true hospitality and community:
 - a. "No one is to pursue what is judged best for oneself, but instead, what is better for someone else." (Rule of Benedict 72.7)
 - b. "To work toward a just order in our immediate environment and in the larger society. . . that in all things may God be glorified." (RB 57.9)
 - c. "The concrete embodiment of DEIJ work is to fulfill the sacred duty of hospitality in which the schools have their roots, 'all guests are to be received as Christ.'" (RB 53.1)
- 2) "Colleges and universities that do not figure out how to enroll and retain the rising number of students of color not only will find it increasingly difficult to meet their enrollment goals, but also will put themselves at risk of becoming little more than social anachronisms." ([McGee, 2016](#))
- 3) Research shows that diversity in education improves the "intellectual engagement, self-motivation, citizenship, cultural engagement, and academic skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and writing – for students of all races." ([Tsuo, 2015](#))

Executive Summary of CSB/SJU DEIJ Efforts

While DEIJ efforts have been ongoing at CSB/SJU, the 2020 murder of George Floyd catalyzed heightened attention and action to transform CSB/SJU into anti-racist communities that walk the walk, not just talk the talk, of DEIJ. Many of these efforts have built upon Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller’s (2014) application of Pope’s (1993) Multicultural Change Intervention Matrix to frame multicultural organizational change on college campuses. Recent initiatives pursued first-order change by enhancing awareness, membership, and programming (see figure below). These efforts have also begun second-order change through individual level paradigm shifts and some restructuring and systemic change.

	First-order change	Second-order change
Individual	Awareness	Paradigm shift
Group	Membership	Restructuring
Institution	Programmatic	Systemic

Previous reports have produced excellent summaries and audits of historical and ongoing DEIJ efforts at CSB/SJU (see [“Actions Toward a More Inclusive CSB/SJU” 2020](#) and a working spreadsheet documenting progress toward meeting the demands of the [Student Senate’s 2020 Call to Action](#)). Therefore, this document synthesizes CSB/SJU’s progress toward second-order systemic change through a concise and accessible narrative in order to motivate action beginning in Fall 2021.

The Presence of First Order Change

First order change is change within our existing system at CSB/SJU. Individuals gain awareness, groups gain membership, and the institution embraces DEIJ programming.

Becoming Community is a strong example of success in advancing individual awareness of DEIJ, creating and gaining membership in dialogue groups, research initiatives, and professional development programs dedicated to advancing these issues, and demonstrating institutional support for DEIJ programming (see Mellon Report 2020 for details). Further examples include:

- Land acknowledgements becoming required components of Cultural and Social Difference Identity and Cultural and Social Difference Systems courses and more common in Fine Arts and student events.
- Redirection of fundraising priorities at CSB and SJU to support underserved students
- Anti-racist themes and high-profile speakers of the 2020-2021 Community Engagement Days, in response to the Student Senate Call to Action

- The CSB Cabinet's reflection on DEIJ through two rounds of completing the Intercultural Development Index

It is worth reiterating that over the course of this past year (May 2020 - May 2021), our institutions have seen significant increases in first-order changes. However, we would like to make these efforts part of the norm.

The Need and Urgency for Second Order Change

Second order change is transforming our system. Individuals shift paradigms, groups restructure, and systematic change occurs at the institutional level.

The examples noted above advance individual paradigm shift for individuals that make the choice to attend and engage with programming in a sustained way. Examples of restructuring that have the potential to lead to more systemic change are occurring in the realm of personnel, through the Search Advocate Program's diversification of the faculty and staff, and the addition of DEIJ criteria for faculty promotion and tenure. For administration and support staff, annual performance reviews now include diversity and inclusion reflections and Core Competency. In student development, examples of restructuring include the institutionalization of Q+, development and utilization of two Interfaith Prayer Spaces on each campus, and plans for the Multicultural Center. In academics, the Integrations Curriculum requires two Cultural and Social Difference courses and provides students with the option to specialize in the theme of Justice. In community relations, the institutions have sought and been awarded numerous grants devoted to solidarity work with BIPOC communities.

There are limitations, however, to these initiatives. Here are a few examples: The new DEIJ promotion criteria only apply to faculty who are going up for promotion, excluding both term faculty and senior faculty. Senior faculty have no formal accountability to DEIJ criteria. Q+, like the Institute for Women's Leadership, relies largely on student employees for programming and training. Q+'s programming, while meant to enhance inclusion for queer and non-binary students, exists within a binary institutional setting which erases non-binary students, some of whom are also students of color and first generation. Finally, no institutional funding exists for institutional level DEIJ visioning or organizing, which currently occurs through the volunteer labor of faculty and staff.

Institutional Gaps and Recommended Priorities for Additional DEI Work

Institutional Gap #1: INVESTMENT FROM LEADERSHIP

CSB/SJU's separate leadership structures have led to disparities in institutional commitments to DEI work. Differing approaches between presidents, cabinets, and boards produce inconsistent commitments and impede DEI efforts. Addressing this gap has the potential to lead to systemic change.

The president, boards, and cabinets must be equally committed to DEI.

Recommendations for future work:

- **Center DEI in Joint Presidential Search and hire.**
 - Hire a new president who will deeply invest time, financial resources, and staff positions of influence to institutionalizing DEI work.
 - A member of this DEI Council should be on the Search Committee for the new president.
 - This president should have a demonstrated record of success in advancing DEI in their previous employment.

- **Unite CSB/SJU leadership in pursuing DEI efforts.**
 - Center expertise and demonstrated success in advancing DEI in criteria for board and cabinet member selection.
 - Leadership should produce annual public reports on their progress toward leading and advancing DEI.
 - Greater transparency from the board, president, and cabinets would help staff, faculty, and students see and know how the institutional support exists.
 - Commit to institutional assessment that includes DEI analysis.

- **Invest in hiring and attracting a diverse applicant pool at all levels of administration, staff, students, and faculty.**
 - The Search Advocate program is reliant on Becoming Community and will need institutional support to continue.
 - Institutionalize permanent budget allocations to recruit/support students from traditionally marginalized groups (rather than relying upon external grant funding).

Institutional Gap #2: SENIOR LEVEL STAFF AND STRUCTURES TO ADVANCE DEIJ

While many peer institutions have administrative structures to support DEIJ efforts separate from direct underrepresented student services, CSB/SJU has traditionally collapsed these efforts under the same student-facing department despite that office lacking senior-level staff and institutional influence. The absence of senior level DEIJ staff and structures has resulted in a noticeable lack of accountability and makes many efforts ultimately unsustainable. Restructuring as outlined below is critical to advancing second-order change.

Sustaining DEIJ efforts will require institutional resources and support.

Recommendations for future work:

- **Hire a cabinet level, Coordinate Senior Diversity Officer (CSDO).**
 - Many people for many years have served on many committees with little to no funding, compensation, or support. Relying on specific personnel instead of a sustainable structure, this type of structure leads to duplication of work and loss of institutional knowledge as administrations, committee structures, and committee members change. A CSDO is critical for continuity in the coordination and implementation of the ongoing efforts that our institutions desire.
 - The CSDO would oversee and advance a DEIJ Council, which would serve as an advisory board that provides input on CSDO initiatives and broadcasts the work of the CSDO throughout campus.
 - The CSDO must have real leadership, expertise, decision-making power, and authority.
 - Eight out of eleven other MIAC schools have this position.

- **Build an office of the CSDO that models the work that Becoming Community has done.**
 - Hire, reassign time, or provide additional compensation to 2-3 staff or faculty to institutionalize this work, potentially from within our existing community.
 - Such an office could help create more extensive relationships in our broader community to jointly address prejudice, discrimination, equity, and other DEIJ concerns in St. Joseph, Stearns County, and beyond.
 - This staff should research and rely on the best practices from Becoming Community and other institutions that are long term leaders in DEIJ to inform decisions about most effective and sustainable DEIJ office structures.

Additional Areas for Future Work

Sustain on-campus anti-racism and interfaith efforts:

- CSB/SJU has been accepted to Association of American Colleges & University's 2021 institute on Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT). A TRHT Campus Center should be pursued.
- Review and ensure implementation of departmental Diversity Plans at all levels.
- Build upon the work of Lumin Protestant Services and the new Interfaith Prayer Spaces to activate further support for students of non-dominant faith traditions.

Implementation of revised Human Rights Policy:

- Review and implementation of the revised policy has stalled. CSB/SJU Student Senates put this in their Call to Action.
- Human Resources is currently under resourced to adequately address Human Rights violations that do arise.

Address issues of gender:

- CSB/SJU is deeply rooted in the gender binary which requires attention if we are to be inclusive of all genders. Non-binary and gender non-conforming people are excluded from current admission policy.
- The gendered nature of CSB/SJU requires dedicated staff time to identify and transform exclusive policies, practices, and structures and to address issues of gender inequality and sexism.

Strengthen relations and work toward reconciliation with Native Nations:

- Staff, faculty, monastics, and students have begun efforts to repair relations with Native communities harmed by the industrial schools formerly managed by the Saint Benedict's Monastery and the Saint John's Abbey. CSB/SJU must be a long-term partner in this work.
- Currently, there is no body equipped to address these issues. The Indigenous Students Association has called for a task force to continue these efforts as part of their [Call to Action](#).

Increase accessibility for out-of-state, international, and low-income students:

- Review policies throughout the institution for how they affect international, out-of-state, and low-income students, specifically housing, transportation, and food security during breaks.
- Review Becoming Community research to learn more about the nature of these problems and the ways in which transportation inaccessibility constitutes inclusion and belongingness issues that disproportionately impact out-of-state, international, low-income, and BIPOC students.

Charge the office of institutional research and assessment to bring an equity lens to its research and assessment efforts.

- The institutions must be explicit about our intended student learning outcomes, and collect, disaggregate, analyze and apply data to ensure all students have the high impact educational experience promised by the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University.
- Train staff on best practices for collecting, analyzing and reporting disaggregated demographic data. Analyze disaggregated demographic data and share results with organizational stakeholders. Use disaggregated data to inform strategic planning and decision-making.