

October 11, 2021

Durham Tech Community:

In the fall of 2020, Durham Tech released an [Equity and Inclusion Action Plan](#). The Plan was developed through engagement of Durham Tech’s faculty, staff, students and community partners and was endorsed unanimously by the Board of Trustees. It reflects the College’s ongoing dedication to being a just and equitable institution, desire to make visible and durable our commitments, and to hold ourselves accountable for the work.

In that spirit, we are writing to report on the College’s progress over the past year and Durham Tech’s ongoing commitment to be a force for equity, inclusion, and progress in our community. What follows is a review of actions we have taken in the four major areas addressed in our plan.

EQUITABLE STUDENT SUCCESS

- **Created an Equity Scorecard that identifies clear metrics to gauge student and institutional progress**, including a focus on the equitable academic success of our students at the College and their upward economic mobility after they graduate from our programs.
- **Incorporated the Plan’s actions and goals in Durham Tech’s recently adopted [2021-26 Strategic Plan](#).**
- **Launched the [Men of Color Scholars Institute](#)**, a new program to support educational, career, and personal objectives through mentorship and exposure to academic, social, and career/professional opportunities for our male students of color. In the pilot phase, MCSI is supporting 43 students.
- **Developed a [Success Coaching model](#)** designed to provide holistic support to students on academic advising, career planning, financial aid, transfer policies, and other supportive resources. The College has hired a coordinator, begun work with an inaugural cohort of 41 students, and committed to Success Coaches for each of our seven guided career pathways.

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

- **Implemented Racial Equity Institute training** as a requirement for all senior leaders, the President’s Cabinet, and Campus Police and Public Safety, and made it available to employees from across the College. To date over 250 employees, Board of Trustee members, and Foundation Board members have attended The Racial Equity Institute Training.
- **Created the [College Teaching for Racial Equity](#)** online course to support Durham Tech’s faculty. The course focuses on equity mindedness, history of race in American education, understanding and utilizing racial equity gap data, addressing instructor-student relationship barriers, building relationships with students, and teaching strategies for closing equity gaps.

- **Instituted a book study for the College's 40-member Leadership Council** using the following texts: *From Equity Talk to Equity Walk: Expanding Practitioner Knowledge for Racial Justice in Higher Education*, *White Fragility*, *Stamped From the Beginning*, *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*.
- **Included in our strategic plan the recruitment and hiring of faculty** that represent our community's diversity and the promotion of more men of color into leadership roles.

INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE AND POLICIES

- **Created the Equity Compliance Officer position to assist with regulatory compliance efforts** to ensure the College's overall compliance efforts of Title VI, Title VII, Title IX, Equal Employment Opportunity, American Disabilities Act, Section 504 and other applicable non-discrimination requirements.
- **Hosted 12 courageous conversations and Real Talks sessions** for our College community to allow for space for reflection on critical issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Established a SafeZone Committee** focused on creating a more inclusive College experience for our LGBTQ+ community.
- **Took action on salaries and wages** to ensure that all part-time and full-time employees earn a living wage and began an Equity Audit of salaries and positions to support a comprehensive compensation plan.
- **Began audits of policies, practices, and procedures for bias**, including work on an attendance policy that removes barriers to success for students.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- **Launched the BULLS initiative to build a diverse talent pipeline of 18-24 year-olds entering the life sciences sector.** The program is a collaboration with Durham County, the NC Biotechnology Center, the Durham Chamber of Commerce, and Made in Durham. A pilot cohort started in August and second cohort of 20 students will begin in the late fall of 2021.
- **Worked to address critical student needs in the areas of equitable access to technology, food, childcare, and classes** with key community and governmental partners.
- **Established the [Equity and Inclusion Fund](#) at the Durham Tech Foundation** and raised nearly \$65,000 to date, including almost \$50,000 to support on-going anti-racism and anti-bias professional development for college employees and fund key efforts that supports the Plan's goals. Another \$15,000 has been raised to create an Equity and Inclusion Endowment that will provide support for Plan goals in perpetuity.

Our efforts over the past year reflect the institutional priority and urgency we place on this work. The work is hard, but it is critical to who we are at Durham Tech and we will not flag in our commitment. We aim to provide leadership on these critical challenges facing our community and the broader society. And we welcome your continued partnership to forge real progress for the people of our region.

Sincerely,

J.B. Buxton
President, Durham Tech

John F. Burness
Chair, Board of Trustees