



February 15, 2022

Dear Maritime College Community,

In December 2020, I announced the formation of a Campus Climate Task Force charged with making specific recommendations on how Maritime College can implement meaningful institutional change toward a more diverse and inclusive campus climate. One that fosters greater respect and understanding. The Task Force was also charged with recommending approaches that enable us to respond effectively to incidents of bigotry and intolerance. Finally, the Task Force was asked to make recommendations along three timelines:

1. Recommendations that can be accomplished immediately;
2. Recommendations that could be accomplished within 6-12 months; and
3. Aspirational recommendations.

In response to their charge, the Task Force recommended the following sixteen recommendations that should be implemented during the 2021-2022 academic year. These recommendations are listed in order of priority, as determined by the Task Force. I am pleased to report progress has been made in addressing ten of these sixteen short-term recommendations, including six of the top eight Task Force recommendations. Please see below for details. The President's Cabinet will continue to monitor the progress in implementing these recommendations, and will provide updates to the campus community through Town Halls, email, and the College's web site.

I am grateful to the Task Force for their time, effort and commitment to establishing an inclusive and respectful campus climate at Maritime College that is free from bias, harassment, and discrimination. Changing climate and culture requires much more than a year's effort by a few individuals. It requires a sustained effort by all of us as a campus community. I call on everyone to rededicate themselves to this important work.

I look forward to engaging the campus community and sharing more on these important issues through Town Halls, faculty meetings and student government.

RADM Michael Alfultis, USMS, Ph.D.
President

Campus Climate Task Force Recommended Short-Term Actions

1. Expand our current diversity, anti-bias, and anti-harassment training of residential advisors and the regimental student leadership, including squad leaders and indoctrination officers

Response: Director of Housing and Commandant of Cadets tasked with developing additional diversity, anti-bias, and anti-harassment training of residential advisors and the regimental student leadership.

Actions: Additional diversity, anti-bias and anti-harassment education and training modules for residential advisors and regimental student leadership delivered prior to start of INDOC and academic year in August 2021. New calendar allows for additional training prior to SST, INDOC, and academic year. Additional training will be delivered to Summer Sea Term Rates, INDOC Leadership, and Fall Rates in Spring and Summer 2022.

2. Hire an ombudsperson to support the campus community in an advisory/training capacity on a daily basis and lead campus response efforts

Response: AVP for Human Resource Services and Dean of Students tasked with examining different support and advocacy models across SUNY campuses, including Ombudsmen, ALANA (African, Latinx, Asian and Native American) Coordinator, and CDO, and providing recommendation to PBAC and PRC.

Actions: AVP for Human Resource Services identified best practices for an Ombuds office through SUNY campuses with staffed Ombuds offices, as well as the International Ombudsman Association. Developed Ombuds person position description, submitted to Planning, Budget and Assessment Committee (PBAC) for funding. Will also provide recommendation to Personnel Review Committee for authorization to fill position. Goal: fill position prior to Fall 2022.

3. Transparent procedures for reporting bias incidents such that reporter can be anonymous and also track status of their complaint

Response: AVP for Human Resource Services, working in concert with senior leadership, will establish task force to review and assess Maritime College's Bias Incident Reporting system. Task force will review other SUNY campus systems, consult SUNY General Counsel's Office, and engage IT to determine possible solutions, and provide findings and recommendations to the Planning Budget and Assessment Committee (PBAC).

Actions: The College is continuing to assess with the SUNY Office of General Council on the feasibility of tracking the status of a complaint. Efforts in this regard will continue as COVID has delayed progress. To address the immediate concern, specifically, the College has elevated the reporting feature for anonymous reporting on our webpage to (a) increase visibility (b) elevate anonymous reporting with the intent to encourage reporting (see illustration below).

4. A standing Campus Climate Committee focused on overseeing campus-wide justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion [JEDI]

Response: CDO tasked with examining standing committee models across SUNY campuses, and providing recommendation for committee charge and structure to PBAC.

Actions: Held two meetings with SUNY CDO to discuss possible structures and best practices. Identified different structures (Committees, Commissions, Councils) at different SUNY campuses. Developing charge and structure for action-oriented "President's Council on Campus Climate and Culture." Individuals will be asked to submit an interest statement for those wishing to serve on the President's Council. Goal: fully establish Council prior to Fall 2022.

5. Increase transparency regarding violations of the Student Code of Conduct and the Regimental Rules and Regulations

Response: Dean of Students and Commandant of Cadets tasked with considering how to increase transparency while maintaining individual students' right to privacy, and providing recommendations to President's Cabinet.

Actions: Conducted External Review of the Regiment of Cadets. Prototype report being developed to show trends while protecting privacy. Goal: implement new reporting system in Fall 2022.

6. Write/adopt uniform diversity statement to all institutional syllabi; should include a section on diversity, inclusion, protected speech, and harassment

Response: Provost tasked with developing statement on diversity, inclusion, protected speech, and harassment, and providing statement to Academic Council for inclusion in all syllabi beginning in Fall 2021.

Actions: Academic Council approved following "Welcome Statement" for inclusion in all institutional syllabi beginning in Fall 2021. Required for courses in Spring 2022. Academic Schools and Departments encouraged to supplement institutional Welcome Statement with additional discipline-specific statements.

"At SUNY Maritime College we work together in a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable environment for all of our students, staff, and faculty. We recognize that knowledge is best generated, disseminated, and taught when people of diverse backgrounds and experiences engage and discuss with each other in a mutually respectful way. We value a multiplicity of identities both because we recognize the intrinsic dignity possessed by every person, and because we know that our learning community is enhanced by our differences and strengthened by our shared quest for knowledge."

7. Transparency in HR procedures/investigations

Response: AVP for Human Resource Services tasked with considering how to increase transparency in accordance with the collective bargaining agreements covering terms and conditions of employment while balancing privacy and due process rights, and providing recommendations to President's Cabinet.

Actions: To date, education to members of campus community regarding the balance of privacy and the collective bargaining agreement, as well as reporting options, continues. The Office of Human

Resource Services (notably AVP for HR/CDO) will continue meetings aimed at educating constituents (i.e. President's Cabinet, Academic Council, College Council, Student Government Association) on the procedural elements of filing a complaint. Additionally, continue efforts to highlight and emphasize CLERY data.

8. Review and update the uniform and grooming standards so that they are more inclusive and aligned with the New York State Human Rights Law

Response: Commandant of Cadets tasked with providing analysis of grooming standards/regulations at all other U.S. maritime and service academies, and present findings and recommendations to President's Cabinet. Recommendations to include messaging to incoming students on process a student may follow if requesting accommodations based on gender, ethnic, religion and/or other bases, beginning perhaps informally with incoming students in Fall 2021, have process formalized by Fall 2022.

Actions: New guidance provided to cadet leadership and entering cadets prior to INDOC 2021. Uniform and grooming standards updated in November 2021. New standards based on safety, but exceptions to standards based on gender, ethnic, religion and/or other bases are allowed.

9. Expanded professional development for faculty and staff members & improvement of course offerings

Response: Provost and Academic Council to enhance institutional and local professional development opportunities and expectations. Provost to work with Curriculum Committee and develop charge to review and make recommendations, including 3-year implementation plan.

Actions: To date, the College has invested in training modules through a few platforms (i.e. Linked-In Learning and Academic Impressions) to expand the professional development toolkit for our employees. See attached training status of courses members of the President's Cabinet have engaged with thus far.

In conjunctions with implementation of new SUNY General Education Framework (<https://system.suny.edu/academic-affairs/acaproplan/general-education/>) additional courses will be developed in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice. New General Education Framework is effective for students entering Maritime College in Fall 2023. Provost to work with Curriculum Committee and develop charge to review and make recommendations, including implementation plan.

10. Add a session on diversity and inclusion to the first faculty meeting of the academic year

Response: Faculty meeting may not be optimal venue for session on diversity and inclusion due to time constraints and lack of staff attendance. Provost and CDO tasked with incorporating session on diversity and inclusion into "Semester Launch" Week activities for Fall 2021, with additional offerings for future Semester Launch weeks. Provost tasked with incorporating session on diversity and inclusion to Academic Council offsite in August 2021 as well as to future AC meetings. Additionally, in accordance the SUNY Equity Action Plan a formalized Model Diversity Training Program is forthcoming for implementation by SUNY campuses.

Actions: Provost incorporated session on diversity and inclusion to Academic Council offsite in August 2021 as well as to future AC meetings. Provost and CDO tasked with incorporated session on

diversity and inclusion into “Semester Launch” Week activities for Fall 2021, with additional offerings for future Semester Launch weeks. More than 150 faculty and staff participated in Sexual Harassment/Sexual Assault/Title IX training held in January 2022. New calendar allows for additional faculty/staff training prior to SST and prior to start of academic year. President’s Cabinet participates in DEI training provided by Academic Impressions throughout year. Transitioning to new training platform. Leveraging LinkedIn Learning to provide additional training.

11. Diverse hiring practices to be implemented with all new searches in accordance with SUNY policies and recommendations

Response: Several changes have already been made to search processes, including advertising positions in venues that will reach diverse candidates and requiring diversity statements from candidates for all searches. AVP for Human Resource Services tasked with continuing to examine search policies and procedures to ensure diverse applicant pools.

Actions: Ongoing.

12. Create a communication plan to keep the Maritime community abreast of all the progress the taskforce is making. When public crises occur (public health, violence, racial injustice, unrest, tragedy), College’s central response should be issued within 24 hours of the event occurring.

Response: Director of Communications tasked with reviewing SUNY system, and other SUNY campuses policies and strategies, and developing communications strategy and plan.

Actions: President established “response team.” Crisis Communications Plan drafted and approved by President’s Cabinet, to be incorporated into Emergency Response Plan.

13. Develop mandatory small training videos/discussions for all students and faculty

Response: AVP for Human Resource Services and Title IX Committee tasked to identify and review readily available online resources, and develop “library” of resources to lead classroom discussions as well as provide standalone training. Additional materials are forthcoming under the formalized Model Diversity Training Program.

Actions: This recommendation for “mandatory” training has been held in abeyance given a study from Harvard University referenced in the SUNY Diversity, Equity and Inclusion study illustrating how mandatory diversity trainings in isolation have been ineffective. However, it should be noted that the College has established a partnership with LinkedIn Learning to include a series of trainings and short videos that need to be more broadly advertised and actively promoted to the faculty and staff. See attached content map of short videos and training opportunities that have been shared with members of the President’s Cabinet. The visibility and opportunities of this partnership will be elevated and increased to the entire campus community.

14. Sibling Program: A program where an upperclassmen can volunteer to be paired with a freshman to guide the incoming student around the school

Response: Dean of Students and Commandant tasked with expanding upperclass mentoring program used during Summer Sea Term into mentoring program for all incoming freshmen (civilian and regimental) students starting Fall 2022. Review other institutions’ best practices re: peer (and blended) mentoring programs.

Actions: Pending.

15. Work with Chartwells to improve dining options for students with restricted diets

Response: Student Government standing "Food Committee" meets with Chartwells on regular basis to discuss student concerns regarding food service and options. Dean of Student Affairs and Student Government will continue to work with Chartwells to assess dining options for students with restricted diets. Dean of Students and Student Government will improve communications with students regarding process for students to request additional dining options.

Actions: Ongoing.

16. Add a question on diversity and inclusion to student evaluations

Response: Director of Institutional Research to review approaches (including wording) used by other institutions and best practices for collection of useful feedback, and present suggestions and options to Student Policies Committee (SPC) and Assessment Committees in Spring 2022. SPC to present recommendations at Faculty Meeting.

Actions: Pending.