

**FACULTY/STAFF BLACK LIVES MATTER AT UNT TOWN HALL**  
**JUNE 8, 2020**  
**WEB VERSION**

**Jennifer Cowley, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs:** Request that everybody go ahead and mute yourself and turn off your video until we begin the program.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote, Mayborn School of Journalism:** Good afternoon. My name is Neil Foote. I'm a principal lecturer here at the Mayborn School of Journalism, and I welcome you here today for this conversation. I spent some 40 years in journalism and over the years, I've covered riots and hosted dozens of panels and taught classes that address this issue of race, equity and inclusion. I welcome you here today as we are in yet another transformative time in this country's history. Today, we are focused on listening and learning. We will be hearing from you and your colleagues, and towards the end of the session, we will be spending time sharing some of the efforts that are underway. We know the conversation has to continue, and in the coming months we will have the opportunities to engage in deeper conversations. To get us started, I'd like to invite Shani Barrax Moore to discuss our principles of engagement. Shani...

**Shani Barrax Moore, Director of Diversity and Inclusion:** Thank you, Neil. We want to offer these to you as guidelines for our discussions today because these conversations are never easy and also share with you the protocol for how we will engage today. So, the things that we want you to suspend — this is for yourself and for others: judgment, denial, guilt and assumptions. And one of the things we want to make very clear is that there will be no personal attacks or profanity. So, if we could just honor that. But what we do want you to embrace though is awareness towards understanding and leaning into the discomfort of these discussions. There'll be lots of opportunities for critical self-reflection and cognitive dissonance, and for those of you that will be making comments, there'll be a fair amount of vulnerability that will be involved as well. So, this session is obviously on Zoom. So, it gives us an opportunity for you to have a little bit more engagement. So, today is about actively listening, and I want to go over the two different ways that you can submit questions.

So, the first way is if you would like to raise your hand and pose a question or comment live, you're going to go to the icon labeled "participants" at the bottom center of your screen. At the bottom of the window on the right hand of the screen, there's a button that's labeled "raise hand." It should look like this. And so please put in the Q&A that your hand is raised, and include your name as it appears on your Zoom screen, so that we can unmute your mic. So, some of you may have your names different than it is. But we just need to know who to who to call upon. So, once we recognize you, we want you to pose a succinct question or comment. People will be given a max of two minutes to make a comment, and we prefer that if you're posing a question, that you just pose the question, and then we will mute your mic thereafter. And so to submit written questions anonymously — some of you may feel comfortable submitting your questions with your name, but if you would like to submit your written

questions anonymously, then you go to the Q&A tab at the bottom of your screen. You can type in your question and then click on the “send anonymously” button and then hit send. So that's the protocol for engaging today, and so now I will turn it back over to Neil Foote.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you. It is my pleasure to introduce the president of our university, Neal Smatresk.

**President Neal Smatresk:** Well, hello there. And thank you so much, Neil. Um, I gotta tell you, I'm having all kinds of crazy technology problems. So, give me a thumbs up if you can hear me okay. Can you hear me?

**Jennifer Cowley:** I can't give you a thumbs up, but we can hear you.

**President Smatresk:** Okay. Um, I just have been switching machines. And so let me gather up my notes here. First of all, I just wanted to say to everybody that this has been a really trying couple of weeks. The whole world has taken notice of what's going on, and the incidents that have come out have been horrible. No one doubts for a second that we can do much better than we're doing now, whether it's in terms of policing and the horrible crime committed against George Floyd or whether it's in terms of how we react to challenges on our own campus. And so today I've been asked to listen to the frustration, the anger, the hurt, the rage, and I've also been asked to begin to address some of the things that we're going to do. And I know some of you feel that not much has happened. And the truth is quite a bit has happened, and we're going to hopefully be able to go over a little of that today. But I want you to know I'm respectful of the balance of opinions between I should be accountable and talking about what we're doing and I should listen.

And so we're going to do a little bit of both today as we proceed. You know, I think there's people who feel like nothing's changing and the calls for change are being ignored. Our campus, however, is changing, and we need to acknowledge that as a minority serving institution, we need to continuously be working harder. And better to improve the situation for our students and for our faculty and staff members. So, what would really be helpful today is if you give us specific ways that you believe we can do better, or specific incidents that we can address so that we can encourage you to stand up and represent them and to make sure that these are addressed at the highest levels within our university.

We're also going to be gathering everything that you've said and putting it together so that we can then respond to it in a more cogent fashion. We will be putting the responses up on our Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity website later this month. This conversation won't stop today. This conversation is part of an ongoing conversation to advance our inclusive campus. What I think is really important is sometimes it feels like people want us to walk different paths. I think we have to be able to walk this path together. We have to be able to understand and show respect to each other. We have to embrace the issues of our black community plainly and with good intention to become anti-racist and we need to be able to not only listen but begin in this next intervening few months — before the campus even begins to

officially reopen — to make sure that the kinds of things that we're working on are understood by our whole campus community, that we're transparent, that we're listening actively and turning what we hear into action steps that really make a difference.

Today we've invited a number of people to talk and express themselves. We've got Chandra Carey our representative of the Black Faculty Network, and Landon Ellison representing, the Black Professional Network, to share their perspectives and their experiences and the experiences and feelings of their organizations. So, at this point we are going to be asking people to contribute, and Neil Foote will help run the contributions that we're going to be doing today and recognizing speakers. I will say we changed the format up significantly today. I found receiving anonymous comments that were typed in hastily wasn't as effective as it could be. What we really hope to see is that we can have a great dialogue, face to face, we can listen to what you have to say, and you can take the time that you need to express your opinions to us. So, thank you very much. I appreciate everyone who's here, and I'm going to turn it back over to Neil now.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you, Neal. I want to open up the next phase of our program today and introduce Chandra Carey who is chair of our Black Faculty Network. Dr. Carey...

**Chandra Carey, College of Health and Public Service Associate Professor:** Hi, I'm Chandra Carey. I'm one of the leadership members, leadership team representatives from the Black Faculty Network, which includes Tony Carey, Brandi Livingston and Jacqueline Walker. I first want to really articulate that the Black Faculty Network supports and is in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and those who are demanding reform and greater accountability for the murdering of unarmed people by the hands of police. Faculty of color at UNT are grossly underrepresented to serve the needs of our student population.

The Black Faculty Network is an organization focused on improving recruitment and retention of black faculty at UNT. Black and Latinx faculty are particularly disproportionate to our student numbers. In the academic year of 2018-2019, out of a total of 1130 faculty, there were 60 black faculty. That is just about 5.3%. When you compare it to our student population of black students who are about 15%, it's a stark contrast. The black faculty network has existed at UNT in multiple versions over the time that UNT has existed. In the most recent iteration of BFN, we have been working to address the disproportionate representation of black faculty and have collaborated with other faculty of color and Provost Cowley. Most notably, since 2019 we've been highlighting the need for a multi-dimensional mandatory training for all who attend UNT and work here to address the very experiences that have been emblazoned across the internet this week by the hashtag #BlackatUNT. That plan includes measures of accountability for our administrators. Our faculty have also had some of these experiences, and I'd like to share just to have a very long list with you now.

One faculty member wrote "While attending a black women's dissertation defense and having a white male faculty member approach and tell us who are all a group of people of color. We look like we're about to sing something. 'Sing for me.' To then question why we're there and not

believe it could be for a dissertation defense. This person then returned to the singing comment and tried to get everyone in the middle of the school day in the middle of the hall to seeing the black national anthem while pretending to address them like a choir director. When those faculty didn't perform for him, he started to chastise them and say that they didn't know the anthem.”

A second comment was written as a note of a concerned member of the UNT community. On a Saturday at approximately 5 pm, this person, this faculty member and her fiancé were stopped by an officer from UNT police. From the moment that the gentleman approached their car, they assumed that the incident was not going to go well. He began a conversation with many questions regarding why they were on campus, where they were going and if they came to UNT often. The faculty member writes that they felt that this line of questioning was odd as there was not a greeting that started or “Hello, how are you?” or “Here's why you were stopped.” During this time, the officer frequently told the faculty member’s fiancé that he thought he had an attitude. She also found this odd because they were talking in the same tone, and she's very sure of this because this particular faculty member relies quite heavily on auditory cues. Once the officer returned to their car with the fiancé’s driver license, we asked about his references to her fiancé’s tone and attitude. And she mentioned that she was concerned as a faculty member because she hadn't witnessed such an attitude. The officer then proceeded to say, ‘Well, I'm not racially profiling you.’ She raised her hands and motioned to indicate ‘No, I wasn't even discussing race.’ And she said she's not clear where this came from. But this was the starting point of her conversation. After that they did not receive a warning, they did not receive a citation and they were sent on their way. They met later with the captain at that point in time to discuss the incident. They received no apology, little reception regarding the incident being racially insensitive, and the captain was sure to indicate that this particular officer was one of their best and had been receiving diversity training.

On the heels of disparities amplified by COVID-19, these recent events further illustrate the depths of racial inequality that pervade our society. While the public is now focused on policing, the over policing of black communities is a reflection of underlying economic, social and political inequality. We cannot ignore the historical ramifications of systemic racism and oppression that have led us to this moment. Given these considerations, the Black Faculty Network feels that the burden of reform should not be placed at the feet of black people. It is imperative that this institution is held accountable for racially biased policies in an effort to ensure that this black community’s expressed values are made real. As members of the black community ourselves, the Black Faculty Network cannot escape the triggering effect of these experiences in our personal and professional lives. Dr. Ibram X. Kindi, who is at Boston University, states that universities have a key role to play in ending disparities, fostering academic communities that discuss anti-racist ideas and leading people to go out into their lives with an anti-racist perspective. He also believes that these institutions should support research that's about trying to figure out what's wrong with our policies as opposed to try to figure out what's wrong with people.

As one of the few Tier one institutions that purports to be committed to helping a diverse student body thrive and excel, the urgency for action at UNT is paramount. To move forward in a substantive way and to answer the call put by Presidents Smatresk to ask what are our next steps and to find things that respect and honor the experiences of the black community at UNT, we suggest the following: We would like to see the university advance the development of an academic degree program in black studies. This was put forth very subtly by our student groups and our student leaders this past fall. We would like to see the implementation of a mandatory, comprehensive, multi-level and dynamic portfolio of diversity trainings with an anti-racist philosophy that is provided for all students, faculty, staff and administrators at UNT. We would like to see amendments to the university budget that would divert and reallocate funds for policing and public safety toward the hiring of culturally responsive and ethnically representative counselors to adequately service the mental health needs of our black and brown students at UNT. UNT Counseling and Testing is under resourced and significantly under representative of the student population at UNT. We would like to see provision of enhanced funding allowing for staff positions in the Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity, so that it has adequate means to develop and provide the training to 40,000 students and 3,600 faculty and staff. The Black Faculty Network understands that the fight against systemic racism requires systemic action. This is not a time for us to be satisfied with low hanging fruit wins. Our black students, faculty, staff and administrators are relying on an institution to live up to the values that it claims. Thank you.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you, Dr. Carey. We would like to now introduce Landon Ellison, who is president of Black Professional Network. Landon...

**Landon Ellison, Director of Outreach:** Thank you, Neil. Hello, my name is Landon Ellison, president of the Black Professional Network. On behalf of BPN, I would like to thank all involved with the opportunity to speak on behalf of black staff at the University of North Texas. Today, I will be sharing two testimonies from black staff members experiences on campus.

The first is an anonymous submission from an academic advisor: "As a person of color and advisor, I have the unique ability to see so many students on campus and to hear their stories. I work in a department where most of the students of color feel comfortable and excited to reach out to me for all of their needs. It doesn't matter if I know the answer or not, they seem eager to have someone who looks like them in a space where they feel left out. I have had students say the following to me, 'Finally, someone who knows what I'm going through. My white professors don't understand. You would not believe the comments my white peers have said to me.' This is a repeated cycle in my office, and I must maintain microaggressions from faculty, staff, and even students and parents, while still supporting students of color who seek me out. For example, I recently met with a student and her mother. During the meeting the parent asked me if I was black. It proceeded to tell me I sounded excellent for a black girl. The student said, 'I guess I have to apologize, since I need my advising code from you.' I have also invited several white students who have often complained to me about the resources black students get, and they feel left out. One student said to me, 'I'm not trying to sound racist, but why do them folks get everything? You're black, so you will know all the resources that can help

me.' I continually get mistaken by professors in my office as a student as they cannot believe that I am an advisor. I've had professors and deans giving out my professional contact information out for me to 'deal' with issues arising and regarding students of color, even if I have no jurisdiction to assist the student. Meanwhile, several professors have also walked students to my office and said, 'Oh, she'll know how to handle your situation as she's probably been through it.' I've seen professors who are supposed to advise diverse student populations within my department never show up for meetings, events or even talk to the students they chose to advise so they may get a bonus or they just want to beef up their resume for tenure. These students often feel comfortable to come to me and tell me everything that is going on. I love my job, I love helping students but I refuse to be the affirmative action and equal opportunity employer at UNT in regards to black relations in my department." That concludes my first story.

I'm actually going to be sharing — the next story is actually a personal one of mine, so I apologize in advance if I get a little emotional while reading it out. So, this story actually intersects in my role as both a staff member and an alumni, as well as my wife, Vanessa, who's also a two time alumna. Vanessa is actually one of the original Emerald Eagle scholars here at UNT back — she was the alumni speaker at the Emerald Eagle Ball in 2014. President Smatresk, this is one of your first public events because it was within a few weeks of your tenure here at the university. After Vanessa's speech, notable alumni since as Mean Joe Greene and Phyllis George sought Vanessa out to commend her performance. However, none of those actions or Vanessa's contributions back to the institution were relevant one evening in 2015. I was an employee of the Dean of Students Office serving as a judge for Omega Sigma Phi fraternity's event in the Eagle Student Services Center 255. I also serve as the advisor for the organization. At the event, two officers were present. Due my role at the event, I was not outdoors with the officers during the program as I usually would be at such events. During intermission, a dance party broke out among the students. It was loud but not unruly. At first, I considered as the advisor to make an announcement asking students to lower the music, a little. However, we were on the eve of the Michael Brown verdict, and our students were feeling much of the same anger, stress and anxiety as the kind the student body and employees are living through today. It was a rare instance for this — simply to enjoy being college students in the current climate that they were living through. I decided to let students have their moment, and if the officers on duty thought they were disruptive, they would let me as the advisor know. When I returned to my seat, I had a message from Vanessa that the police wanted her out of the building. She was waiting in the lobby as we shared a vehicle. When I went to find her, Vanessa was standing on the stairs right outside of the door, and one of the officers sprinted down the hallway and, enraged, told me she could not come into the event as I opened the door. I explained that Vanessa was not coming into the classroom, she was waiting in a public space, the same as a white student who was only a few feet away from us. I reminded the officer that I was a staff member, Vanessa was my spouse and was waiting for me. However, it was clear to the officer in question that they found the event, featuring a large group of black students, disruptive, although there was no violence, and my role as an institutional official and Vanessa's value as alumni was not important. I felt powerless too because I felt that I had to leave the event, which means my leaving the students unprotected, or ask my wife, who was already angry and

humiliated, to wait in the cold of night or in the car like a criminal. This past week when discussing the high-profile deaths of the black citizens Vanessa told me part of the story I hadn't heard. It's not surprising this detail didn't come up in 2015 because it's actually very traumatic. But it brought a lot of clarity with to what happened that evening in the Eagle Student Services Center. When Vanessa first arrived to the event as previously mentioned, she was told to leave. Vanessa explained to the officer that her husband works in the Dean of Students Office, to which the police officer said, "Yeah, right," even though the officer and I had met at the beginning of the event and I shared my role on campus. After a few minutes of conversation, with Vanessa the officer, who was white, became irate, screaming and placing his hand on his firearm. It was only because of the second officer, who was a person of color, intervening that might have prevented my wife Vanessa, who only a year and a half before was the keynote speaker at the Emerald Eagles Ball and alumnus who frequently is invited back to the campus to address students from her master's program or through her position in the city of Denton, the same person that I personally fell in love with here on the UNT campus, might have been the next on black citizen to become a hashtag, and I as university employee, I would have been powerless to stop it.

These stories are shared today demonstrate why that when you are black in America, you have to justify your existence and presence constantly. Black employees, tell me stories of students, coworkers and supervisors who make racist and insensitive comments and disregard that humanity by such acts such as petting their hair like a dog on display. While black employees navigate their trauma in turmoil, they must also take on the emotional burden the students of color who seek them out because they don't trust anyone else. I share these stories today in hopes that you will listen to not only my testimony, but of those of black staff members who feel unheard and unwanted on our campus. I have called UNT for most of my life as a second-generation alumni and the son of a past employee who worked on the campus for 30 years. I want everyone who enrolls or works here to feel safe in pursuit of their educational and professional goals without fear of bias or retaliation. We have members of the Black Professional Network who would like to echo the recommendations of the Black Faculty Network to UNT to continue in this mission to become a more inclusive and welcoming environment for faculty, staff and students. Thank you.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you Chandra and Landon for giving us some insights from your own personal experiences and certainly from the Black Faculty Network all across campus. As we transition to the next segment of our program today, I want to take a few minutes to encourage you to participate in today's conversation. As Shani explained earlier, you can use your virtual hand to raise it if you'd like to offer a comment. We'd like to share you to share your own experiences. Not only from what you've gone through here, but also offer some advice to us. What can we do better here at UNT to improve the campus community and make it that much more enriching for everyone? We will begin this session in about 15-20 minutes. I see some. We have already begun posting questions. Please use the Q&A section, and we'll be glad to add more. We will try to hold our answers to the questions until we have heard from all the participants. I'd like to share a few excerpts from some of those comments that we received already. These samples are just representative of so many that really echo some of the

comments we just heard, but let me read through of couple of things. And then, once again I will open up the floor, please feel free to begin posting questions in the Q&A.

“When we speak our truth about the culture here you can see we are not believed. Any incident we describe is assumed to be some sort of misunderstanding. We must be validated by some non-black person before any action is taken. We are told that we are touchy, sensitive. We are constantly asked why we always have to bring up race.”

“UNT is a top notch highly respected and admired employer. If UNT would not just send an email on what is what it would not tolerate but actually be vocal about it, get out and speak to the people, purchase advertising space on television, make it a part of the UNT homepage at every campus and speak out loud and UNT proud and make UNT proud that we will come together as one, and if we do, we will stand united, we will work together for the betterment of our community.”

“I would like to see more professional development opportunities brought to UNT on how to engage in conversations around racism, with support and compassion to the experiences black, indigenous and people of color. I've read about the colonizing syllabi addressing implicit bias and assignment design rating and classroom policies. I have much more to learn and would appreciate the opportunity to do so by bringing experts on these topics to campus to better train us. There will be faculty that use the current protests in future classes, myself included, for when I discuss emergency management plans, protests and riots. But how can we engage in statics without causing trauma to black, indigenous, people of color? I need more tools, and I believe my colleagues do as well.”

As I said, these are just a few examples of what is available and what has been shared with us, thus far. You know, there are many more that you would like to share with us, and we want to encourage you to use the Q&A section on the on the Zoom, at the bottom, to submit your questions. As you're submitting those questions, again I will be notified of you and try to encourage you all to participate as much as possible. This is a listening session. This is one of many conversations that we will have in days and weeks ahead. We do hope today that you'll be able to dive in and share with us some of your thoughts.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** We do have one — two — hands raised. The first hand is from Ananth Seetharaman. I apologize if I did not pronounce that correctly. But if you would, state your name and you are, you have two minutes to make a comment or pose a question. I'm not sure if he lowered his hand. So then we are going to go to —

**Ananth Seetharaman, Department of Accounting Chair:** Apologize. That was by accident.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Oh. Okay. There you go. Yes, you may go ahead and make your comment or question.

**Ananth Seetharaman:** I mean I raised my hand by accident. I apologize.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Oh, okay. All right, so then we are going to go to Jennifer Lane, who has a comment or question.

**Jennifer Lane, College of Music Professor:** Hi. I just want to thank Shani. I don't know if I can turn my video on. Probably not, but Shani, I just want to thank you because you're carrying so much of this right now. You're doing so much of the work. So thank you so much. That's all.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** We do not have any other hands raised. Oh, we have one more. Danielle Keifert. She has a comment or question. Danielle. Go ahead.

**Danielle Keifert, College of Education Assistant Professor:** Okay, can you hear me? One of the things I'm noticing in the Q&A coming up again and again, and I haven't heard a response yet that seems to address it. And although Dr. Kerry did bring up the issue of systemic problems needing systemic solutions, not putting the burden on people, but instead on the institutions. As a learning scientist, I believe there's a lot of learning to be done both by staff and faculty, but also by administration at multiple levels, but that's not really going to resolve the issue. So I think when faculty and staff are bringing up policy issues, I would really like to see more policy responses, even if it's not immediate but a consideration that that'll be taken forward.

As an example, I had a colleague raise the issue of reviews — student reviews, course reviews — and how that plays out in our process. And she rightly raised this issue as a woman of color because as a woman, and a woman of color, she is more likely to receive negative reviews, and disproportionately negative reviews. When that was brought up, it was not attended to. I brought it up again in multiple institutions, both within my department, also within the Women's Faculty Network, trying to draw attention to the fact that the portfolio option is not a solution, because that continues to place the burden on the faculty.

As an individual, I can create additional materials for my portfolio to demonstrate and counteract the negative reviews I'm going to receive disproportionately as a woman. But that's placing the burden on the individual. That's not a systemic solution. So I've certainly felt this and I'm seeing this in the Q&A again when people bring up questions about policy initiatives, about shifts in the way we do things as an institution. Rather than putting that back down on departments or faculty or staff individually, I'd like to know how you and the team is going to make systemic change within the system to make sure that faculty and staff are provided better opportunities to do their work and thrive in doing their work. Thank you.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Would anyone like to address that question?

**Jennifer Cowley:** Sure, I'd be happy to address that. So I think you bring up a really good and important point, as we think about the systemic nature of much of the work that we need to do around race, ethnicity, sexism and the range of other issues that are confronting our campus. I recognize that we are a racist society. I've been raised with racist ideas along with many in our community. When I talk to our faculty and staff, I hear a range of views from those who fully

recognize and acknowledge the racial challenges on our campus and others who struggle to see how they need to individually change. And this gets to both the policy issues and the individual change that needs to happen.

I'll just offer as one example: We have been working to design a faculty development program that's a collaboration with our Faculty Senate, Faculty Success and Institutional Equity and Diversity, and throughout the winter and spring Joanne Woodward and I had a series of conversations with faculty. In each one of those conversations I asked, "What do you personally believe that you need in terms of your own professional development?" And what I heard time and time again was people pointing the finger at others and what they believe others in our community need. While we can implement a professional development plan that will apply to all of our faculty — and that is a policy solution, if you will, that we can enact a professional development program — we also have to recognize that us as individuals, members of our community, all have to be responsible for addressing our own individual needs and recognizing what we need to do to develop as stronger professionals.

We know that we have significant race challenges on our campus, and that our community is struggling with these personal needs. You know, I've seen incidents where we need to focus on becoming more anti-racist, anti-ageist, anti-sexist anti-ableist. And I know that we have a lot of work to go. And so I use that as just one example of both the policy initiative that we're working on and a recognition that it will take all of us to come together and be serious about making the cultural changes that we want on our campus. Yes, another question, or a comment, from Faith Espindola. Faith? Can you hear me?

**Faith Espindola, Division of Student Affairs:** Hello. I am an alumni, staff and current student. I have a question about what, in particular, are we going to be doing about faculty that are problematic? During the course of my now second degree, I have dealt with two professors who were very problematic. One, during a discussion about a black poet who wrote about racism, we were forbidden about talking about race. And this was not a class on formalism, so there was no right to do that. In another class, I had a professor who was trying to defend Heart of Darkness as not racist. When the black people and the people of color in the class tried to explain to him that something could be racist even if the author didn't have ill intent, he kind of refused to believe it and kind of shut the conversation down. And now I'm a white-passing staff member, and I didn't feel comfortable taking this to the department and reporting it because I still have classes to take, and I may have to take classes with this professor's wife at some time. So if I'm not comfortable, how comfortable do our black students feel reporting this or discussing this with the departments?

**Jennifer Cowley:** Thank you for sharing that story and question. I think it's an excellent one. And we know that we have significant challenges within our curriculum, that we have faculty members who wish to engage with content that's directly related to race but have been ineffective at best, and racist at first, in their approach to how they address these curricular topics. Certainly, this is an issue that needs to be taken up at the department level. It's not about in individual course that happens to be on a topic of race, but rather how we address our

curriculum and how we ensure that our faculty have the cultural competencies to be able to adequately address and help support our students' learning. This is a conversation that I'll be taking up directly with the deans on Thursday, and a topic that will be continued conversation with our department chairs in the coming weeks and months, about how we can better support our classroom experiences for our students.

And on the second side, in terms of feeling the ability to report this, I think that's something important about how we create the appropriate mechanisms. Our students can always make reports to our Office of Diversity, but that's not enough. We need to have people feel that they can be comfortable talking about these things with their fellow faculty members, with their department chairs and within their communities so that we make sure that we are impacting the change that we all want.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** So, thank you for that comment. We have one more question or comment from Meena Naik. My apologies if I've mispronounced that but Meena, you may go ahead and speak.

**Meena Naik, Career Connect Program Director:** Oh, thank you. Actually, I want to piggyback on what Faith shared. I also am a grad student and staff on campus, and I identify as South Asian American, I've been born and raised in this country. And in class, I have had a number — and my experiences have been far lower in the grand scheme of what could go wrong, but what it makes me think of is how bad it is for others. I've been asked in very similar words I still remember, "Surely you know what the colonization of India was like and the damage it did. Can you speak to that?" I've had instances where I've had to diminish what I talked about in a paper as it relates to racial and ethnic inequities, particularly around SES, race, gender, to get a higher grade because I took that professor more than once, and the first time I got a low grade and I couldn't figure out why. So I decided to experiment on the next paper, and sure enough it was received really well, and I was told to turn it into a poster. And I'm a staff on campus and I felt ill-equipped to respond. I felt that I had no power and what I recognized in that is I have many peers in my program who are TAs, TRs, TAs who have absolutely no power. They're whatever they say or do will actually put them in a serious role of precarity in the department. They are at risk. If they say anything they could lose their projects because of the way that power structures are set up.

And to what Faith was saying, as it relates to reporting, I think that's really important. But also, what do we do as it relates to retaliation against these things, right? I was in a position where I needed to get to candidacy, and so I wasn't going to ruffle feathers because I needed to get to doctoral candidacy. So I let it go more than once across multiple classes with multiple faculty members around the same type of conversation. And again, I hold more power than others who face the same issues and I still couldn't respond. And that's what scares me about what's been sort of, not, I don't want to say institutionally acceptable, but it happens. And I haven't seen anything that shows it as unacceptable.

**Jennifer Cowley:** Thank you for those comments, and you're exactly right. Our graduate students are some of the most vulnerable on campus in terms of their position and feeling that they have a sense that they can report incidents that are unacceptable. There was a tragic suicide by a student at another university that triggered a real look at how can we address issues that are happening for our graduate students in more meaningful ways. As a result of that, the university instituted a graduate student reporting system. I asked Victor Prybutok, our Dean of the Graduate School, to look into this and to learn about the experience that university is going through to see if we can implement something similar that wouldn't be restricted to exactly what you're talking about, but could capture more holistically the challenges that our graduate students are facing when they feel uncomfortable or unable to report things that they see that should not be happening in our community. So stay tuned. I expect to be able to report more on this topic in the coming months.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Thank you. We have a question or comment from Hameed Hameed. Would you like to go ahead and pose your question or comment? Okay, they lowered their hand. Okay, so we have another question or comment from Priscilla Ybarra. Priscilla, would you like to share your question or comment?

**Priscilla Ybarra, Department of English Associate Professor:** Yes, thank you very much. I first just want to say that I feel like it's a privilege to be part of a learning community at this time that we're going through so much change. And I'd also just like to address the document that was submitted to the administrators prior to this meeting by UNeTe, the Latinx faculty and staff alliance, and with endorsement from LMAS, the Latina/Latino Mexican American Studies Program. One point that we made in that document was just to articulate the fact that we're talking about systemic change at the same time that we are part of an institution that was founded by Eurocentric values during the times of colonization and imperialism. So the fact that we need systemic change is glaringly obvious when we recall that very important history.

And then I'd just like to say that our five points really echo the points made by the Black Faculty Network, and we're very much in support of the call that they're making for a black studies, an academic program in black studies, for representation in the faculty and staff to equal the percentage of diverse students on this campus, for a full-time staff position to help with that multi-dimensional diversity training, and to enhanced discretionary funding for Equity and Diversity and Faculty Success, and to give more funding to counseling and to the Multicultural Center, and to consider reducing funding for the police in order to do that. The question I'd like to ask is just what kind of timing can we expect for accountability on these points that are coming from the advocacy networks for both black and Latinx faculty from across campus? Thank you.

**President Smatresk:** Priscilla, let me take a crack at that for you, and then maybe Jennifer might want to jump in. We're working on almost all of these things actively, some easier, some more challenging. Some of these things will be addressed prior to fall, some of the actions and steps will be put into place prior to fall. So I think after this webinar is over, what we'll be doing is gathering these up and at the end I'll summarize some of the steps that we've taken now and

hopefully you can see that there's been some progress made, particularly in some of the resource areas. Thank you, Priscilla.

**Jennifer Cowley:** I'll just say, stay tuned from Academic Affairs. We're going to be having a number of meetings in the coming weeks to better outline a timeline, a number of initiatives are already underway and others need more time and deliberation. For example, the Black Studies program that has been proposed, we have an African American studies minor and I've had preliminary conversations with Tamara Brown, Executive Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, about ways that we can consider best advancing that conversation interest around having a Black Studies program.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Okay, we have Dr. With, did you want to — ?

**Elizabeth With, Vice President of Student Affairs:** Yes, please. Like Jennifer, I want to make sure that folks understand that the Division of Student Affairs to is looking into all that we can do. I agree that we have behaviors that need to change on campus and we have lots of work to do, but it really is important to us that we're moving forward and taking actions. And we will be able to update some of the activities that we have done and talk a little bit more about what we hope to do in the future. Thank you.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** So, we've got three more hands raised, but in the interest of time, I'm going to just call on one of them: Zach Shirley. You can proceed.

**Zach Shirley, Co-Advisor of Interfraternity Council:** Hello, everyone. Thank you, Shani, for recognizing me. My name is Zach Shirley, I work in the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Life on campus. I'm also a proud UNT alumni, having earned my doctorate degree from the University of North Texas in 2014 in the Higher Education program. Number one, I want to thank my Black Professional Network President Landon Ellison for sharing his story. I serve as his vice president and I'm excited about the work that we get to do alongside colleagues at University of North Texas in supporting our staff of color, our black staff at the University of North Texas. I also want to say, as a proud member of the Division of Student Affairs, we've had a conversation, a number of conversations, on the situations that have surrounded our staff and students from the black community at UNT.

And so what I'm going to say a little bit really quick is a conversation on, actually, racial battle fatigue. We brought this up last week in our Division of Student Affairs meeting, but I think it's very crucial to also talk about racial battle fatigue from the standpoint of our faculty and students. And for those who don't know what racial battle fatigue is, it was a coined term in 2008 by critical race theorist William Smith and originally used in reference to the experiences of African American men in America, but has now expanded itself to the negative and racially charged experiences of all people of color. And so I would encourage us as a university, a community of educated individuals who work to mold the minds of our students, to familiarize ourselves with racial battle fatigue and the stressors that that causes, not only on students but also our faculty and staff — our faculty, especially, who are in the classroom and having to

navigate many of these concerns that they have had that we've heard on this call. And so that is it a concept that I feel like would help educate our entire university community on what it means to be a black person in predominantly white spaces and how allies and advocates can step up and come to a place of support for those individuals. And not just passive support, but actionable support as well. I am thankful to be able to work in our division to where these conversations are occurring because we know our students are coming back. Our students are, as many have said before us, coming to us as staff and faculty, and we are being taxed with those questions. And we will never shy away from them because we want to support our students. But I would encourage everyone to educate themselves on the concept of not only critical race theory as a whole, but racial battle fatigue as well. Thank you.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Thank you. And so we will turn it back over to our moderator, Neil Foote.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you, Shani. Thank you for all those wonderful questions. And we will definitely be getting to many of those — as many as we can of the questions posed in the Q and A. I do want to take a few minutes here and ask Police Chief Ed Reynolds to join the conversation, Chief, we're glad you're here today. I know there's been lots of conversations about the role of the UNT Police Department, and we'd love to get some insights from your point of view.

**Ed Reynolds, Chief of Police:** Thank you so much, Neil. For those of you that don't know me, I'm Ed Reynolds. I'm the Chief of Police. I've been with the university for a little over 27 years. I just want to give a couple of comments about our department. Most of our officers that work for UNT are UNT graduates. Many of them are also taking classes at UNT. The reason I share that is because I think it's important that we have a police community that reflects our community. So when we're looking to hire an officer, that's the first place we go. We try to find someone that's invested in UNT, like I am, to making this a great place to learn and a safe place for us all to be. I know there are several questions that have come up, and I want to start off by just quickly talking about the issue in Minneapolis and how this all unfolded. Because I was asked to speak one time at a forum, and a video was pulled up with a clear case of police brutality. The participants asked me what I thought about it. And the one thing that I can say on that is, when I watched those videos, when I watched that in Minneapolis, what I saw was an officer that, it probably wasn't the first time that he'd been in trouble. My guess is, when you see that, there's a pattern of behavior that's going on and it's been unchecked, it's not been dealt with appropriately.

So what I'm going to say to you may offend other chiefs across the country, but I'm just going to say this: it's a failure of leadership. And police, we have to do better. We have to take our, our duties as police chiefs to make sure that we're hiring officers that are reflective of our community and ones that hold those values and then go out in the field and, when we meet with students, faculty, and staff, that we're showing that. We have not always done a good job at UNT, but what I can tell you is we are committed to doing better. And some of the stories and some of the comments I've read are certainly concerning to me. I know you've heard us say as a as a police department, many times: if you see something, say something. What I'm going

to ask all of our community to do, if you see an officer that is acting inappropriately, please let me know. We need to look at that, and if we don't know it's tough.

Some of the questions that came up were about body cameras, so I just want to address that real quickly. All of our officers do carry body cameras, and our supervisors are required monthly to go in there and watch periodic video to make sure that they are holding the standards that we expect. It's kind of a QA — quality assurance — process for that. I think one of the questions was also to deal with complaints on police officers. And I know that there's a lot of concern that the police try to police themselves, and I would agree with you or anyone that's concerned that that is not a good idea. Anytime we get a complaint of the UNT Police Department that involves a race-based allegation against an officer, we work with the Office of Equity and Diversity to give them all that information so that they can review that. And so you know, that office doesn't report under my vice president, it reports directly to the president. That's one of the ways that we try to have a third party look at it, so it's not just us looking at that piece of it.

Our officers' training piece of this — I know that's come up with some questions. Roughly, our officers achieve two times of training that the state requires, but it's also in bias awareness training. We feel that that's important as part of our accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement that's required to do that training at least every two years. We do meet that standard and many times we do that every year. Many of our officers are trained in specifically mental health because we know that that's a concern. It's also the time that we want to make sure that our officers are responding to someone that's in a crisis, that they can use those skills so that we can get that person maybe the help that they need. We don't have all of our officers trained as certified mental health peace officers, but we've got a large majority of them. And that's kind of the direction that we're going.

The de-escalation piece for law enforcement is always something that that we have to do better at. We do scenario-based training to where we put officers in scenarios with live participants, where we try to help them improve their communication skills so that force is only applied as an absolute necessity.

One of the questions came up about kind of the demographics of our department, so I kind of wanted to share that. Roughly 10% of our police officers are black; roughly 12% are Hispanic. That's not good enough. I know that it's a tough job to recruit people to do, to recruit for this job, and that is something that I plan on working with some of our community members on ideas and thoughts that we can boost our recruitment for minority officers. I hope this answers your question. I know there was a number of things that came up with the 8 Can't Wait, so I'll just really quickly touch on that. I'm probably exceeding my time here. Many of those things that are in that 8 Can't Wait we're already doing. However, there are some things in there that we are definitely looking at that we think we can put in policy that would improve our department and make us better at what we do. Neal, is there any other question that I missed?

**President Smatresk:** Yeah, one of the things that's come up fairly regularly, and you've kind of maybe alluded to it a bit, is that we might have some form of an advisory group that helps

connect the community, our students and faculty of color and black students, particularly with our police. If you have any more thoughts on that.

**Ed Reynolds:** I know of departments that have used an advisory board to help craft police policies and procedures, and I know that I think if it's done the correct way it can be a useful tool and I'm certainly not opposed to that. And I think that there could be some advantages to go in that route.

**President Smatresk:** I think that's something that would begin to add a measure of comfort that there was a connection, that there was sincere communication. I've seen a lot of people responding that they fear the police, whether it's the Denton police or our campus police and I would love to do what I can to mitigate that, and I know you went too, Ed. I've watched you in action, and I believe that you feel that the right kind of advice, the right kind of training could really help us feel safe, as opposed to having certain members of our community fear, feel, feel, fearful, and I appreciate your openness to that.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you, Chief. I'm sure there'll be more conversations and more dialogue in the weeks ahead, hopefully with you and your team, that's important, on many issues. I want to give an opportunity for the VP of Institutional Equity Joanne Woodard to join the conversation. Joanne.

**Joanne Woodard, Vice President of Institutional Equity and Diversity:** Thank you, Neil. I'd just like to echo the statements of Chief Reynolds. One of the things that he did when he became chief was to contact their office back in 2015 about reviewing incidents that might occur with the police department that might fall on are protected class, particularly issues of race, and we've been doing that for the past five years. So, what he's speaking of is not a new thing for us, but something that we have been engaged in for a while.

I was concerned about some of the comments that I've heard about people still not being clear sometimes about where they can report things, and our office, our division, contains an equal opportunity section that does take complaints of discrimination, or allegations of discrimination, harassment or bias based on race and other protected categories. And so, we hope that people will take advantage of the opportunity to bring those to us. We can proceed with an investigation if we have enough information to do so, and it meets one of the bases for which we can do that under our non-discrimination equal opportunity policies.

Also, we've been engaged in a lot of work during the telecommuting period, here since about mid-March, trying to ensure that we can convert as much as possible, some of our training opportunities, to an online format, but we would be the first to admit it's not our ideal method of providing training, but what we want to make sure that people still could continue to engage in diversity and inclusion work during the period that we've been away from campus. And so, we were able to still have some of those meetings, still participate in classrooms with students with breakout sessions, and we will continue to refine those kinds of processes as well to ensure that our office can still deliver and participate with our campus community. And we've

been very pleased by the folks who will engage with us. We understand that our biggest challenge lies with those folks that we would call not-the-choir members. We can get a lot of folks in who want to do this and are really enthusiastic about working with us and the value of it, but our biggest challenge comes from, how do we engage larger numbers of people in our campus community in the valuable work of understanding valuing and appreciating diversity in its in its many forms?

And I know we're talking about issues of race here today and also on Friday. So, we know that's a paramount concern to folks. So, if there are allegations of discrimination or harassment based on race, we wish that you would bring those to our office and give us an opportunity to, to look at those. And I'm not promising that we're going to investigate everything that is brought to us, but those allegations that are brought to us that do allow us to move forward with an investigation, we do that as well. And we're still continuing to work actively on cases and material that's brought to us. Since we went to telecommuting back in in mid-March, and I will say, we haven't gotten to this yet, but we will be releasing the information, I've seen it on the online feed, where people are asking questions, the results from the UNT climate survey will be made available on our website. We hope to have all of those posted by the beginning of August, and it will be the full reports in their entirety, one for each of the groups that we surveyed, students, faculty, staff, and administrators. So, there'll be an executive summary, as well as a more detailed report with charts and graphs that show the different responses of various members of the UNT community and we specifically made sure that that information is provided by race in a lot of those instances, so you'll be able to fairly immediately, immediately see what the climate is like at UNT and unfortunately, it has not changed a whole lot since we ran the survey. And I must apologize about the survey results taking a while to get to you, but they do reinforce what people are continuing to tell us on Friday and today about the climate at UNT and the and the need for us to take additional action and to do even better, and making sure that it's a welcoming and inclusive climate for everyone who works and learns at UNT.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thanks, Joanne, appreciate that. Lots more to come from, from climate survey investigations and the many things that the office does. I want to bounce this over to Shani, who has been, you know, culling through the many questions that you've been posing and she definitely wants to address some of those from her own work, which is in earlier comments that the entire department there works very hard to address many of these issues. Shani.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Sure. So first I wanted to start with a comment that has come through and then I will address another topic.

So, this comment from an anonymous attendee says: "I'm deeply concerned about the framing of UNT's institutional response to anti-black racism on campus as a matter of, quote unquote, changing hearts. This suggests a serious misunderstanding of how racism works. It individualizes a systemic problem. It's also coercive. It leveraged the university's ethic of care against those the institution fails to care for, per the theme of this meeting, black faculty, staff, and students. I'm also deeply concerned about a statement made during Friday's Black Lives

Matter town hall with students that, quote unquote, radical change is rarely sustainable. Radical change is, indeed, sustainable, as any student of, say, the Haitian Revolution understands, and it is necessary. Radical, aka systemic, change is the only sustainable, aka realistic, approach to the problem of anti-black racism on campus.” Is there anyone that would like to address that comment? I think, President Smatresk, that may have been a comment that that you made on Friday. Would you like to address that?

**President Smatresk:** Yeah, sure, Shani, look, you know, this is hard. Let's be honest here. If, I'm told if I don't listen, then there's a challenge. And if I listen but don't act, there's a challenge. What I believe is that we have to walk this walk together. I also believe that not everybody is at the same place in their voyage towards becoming anti-racist or overcoming prejudicial behavior, whether it's in them or admitting that they're racists, or whether it's part of the culture. So, when someone says they want radical change, I don't know how to proceed to create radical change in the hearts of people. I want them to come to an acceptance that we have a big challenge. And then I want them to move forward. And I think we have to walk this path together. I don't think we can walk it independently.

So, the more people we can gather who believe in support, an institution that is less prejudicial and less involved in racism than we are now, the better it will be and that's my belief. And I would argue that radical change in this institution would not necessarily have the impacts that people think. But then again, I don't know what people are referring to when they speak of radical change. So perhaps if someone wants to put a constructive comment on the table, about what radical change looks like, then we can address it and see whether that makes sense.

As far as people having a change of heart, I know lots of folks who've had changes of heart. I have had changes of heart. I'm not trying to put that on anyone else. I'm putting that on me. When I hear and understand the stories and the incidents, which I often don't hear because information comes to me in a highly filtered way, it changes how I want to respond. It makes me more accepting and more likely to enact firm abiding practical change that can create an improved situation, and you're going to get to hear some of those in a moment.

So, I understand there's many points of view. I also understand that the black community has many different points of view. I'm really interested in what people mean when they refer to change. And I know that people say, well, we shouldn't have to tell you what change means, that you should figure it out. But if I don't listen to what people are saying, then through the limited lens of my own perspective, I may not make the right choices. So, there's got to be a balance and that's how I feel.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you. Thank you, Neal. Shani, did you ever, do have some additional questions?

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Sure, I've got a couple more. One is: “Can you please tell us how and when you will respond specifically to each of the points that Dr. Kerry and the BFN and made at the onset of the meeting?”

**President Smatresk:** Well, you know, I know times a-wastin' here. And I wonder if it isn't time to begin to wrap things up and then get some take-home messages from some of the other panelists. There's a lot of great people in the room that we haven't heard from much yet and so, I would like to say, if people are interested, I'd give a brief review and update of some of the things we're doing and some of the things that we've got planned and then perhaps we can continue that dialogue, the list that I can give you. It's only a partial list because a lot's been happening. But I think it'll give people an understanding that we haven't been sitting on our hands since November. So, if it's time for that. I'd be willing to jump into it.

**Shani Barrax Moore:** Well, if I could just answer one of these questions about Diversity and Inclusion Councils and then certainly turn it back over to you. One of these questions is: "As we continue to develop diversity councils across campus, will there be some sort of criteria in place when choosing members?"

Currently, the Division of Student Affairs has one, but the members are randomly chosen by the chair, without any type of criteria or needed expertise. The council should also take on deeper issues rather than watching videos on LinkedIn. And what I will say is that I have been working specifically with many of the units across campus to build their Diversity and Inclusion Councils, so that they have equal representation, that they have positional diversity, that there's obviously a cultural diversity, and that we are recommending that the, the online learning that we have on our telecast just be essentially a primer for our in-person trainings.

And we are also, we are converting many of our in-person trainings to online trainings now. So, we're recommending that all of the folks that are on Diversity and Inclusion Councils do participate in our Inclusion, Equity, and Community Building series that is fairly comprehensive and goes from cultural humility to identity development to micro aggressions to issues of privilege, and then ends with change leadership and how you can apply these concepts in your respective spaces. So, I just wanted folks to know that. Yes. One of the protocols is that folks that are on Diversity and Inclusion Councils do get a fair amount of training. Dr. With, did you want to address that?

**Elizabeth With:** Yeah, if I could, I would love to, thanks, Shani. I will tell you that we have two chairs of the Diversity Council, the Division of Student Affairs right now. And those two folks review applications. Anybody is welcome to apply. And I don't know that we turned anybody away from our Diversity Council. But I'm happy to look into that and I'm happy to update. So, if you're in the Division of Student Affairs we'll be sending this out in a UNT In the Know here in the very near future. Thanks.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Great. Thank you, Elizabeth. Thank you all for your questions. We have these questions and our team is definitely going to be addressing them and answering them. I want to turn this over to, to you, Neal. I know you want to talk a lot about what we've done since November and what some of the other framework is for us moving forward.

**Jennifer Cowley:** Neal? I'm sorry, I'm trying to, President Smatresk, are you ready to go?

**President Smatresk:** Yeah. It's funny, technology. Love it. You know, and several people have been asking me interesting questions, someone says as president of the university, it's your job to lead in this path. And another person said where are you in your voyage? I think I want to just make sure people understand that I have been changing. I am changing, and I am continuing to lead. We have a huge number of things that are going on, and I have owned this. Can we move fast? Maybe. Can we do better than we're doing now? Certainly. And we're going to continue to apply both financial resources, as well as cultural trainings and other types of devices, to get us to where we have to go.

What I want is for us to become an institution where people feel comfortable expressing themselves, where we support people, where they have success, where our students are changed and transformed, and as an educator, the thing I believe most is that our biggest impact is by making sure that students get degrees. Black students with degrees are going to live a healthier lifestyle. Their families are going to be better off. Their nieces and nephews and brothers and sisters are more likely to go to college. They're more likely to have a better income. And when we talk about anti-racism, a major part of anti-racism is understanding that many of the problems black people face are due to lack of employment and to financial challenges that are created by policies of white people, in many cases. The way to overcome that, in my opinion, is through education. So, let's all start recognizing the need that we have as a community to be strong for our students, to educate our students, to provide them a safe place where they can grow and thrive and become leaders in society. And that's what I am most excited about doing.

Along with that, we have to create inclusion and we have to create, combat racism within our faculty and staff ranks, and I recognize that that's going to take a lot of change. Our provost has addressed that. But let's talk specifically about some of the things that we've done. You've asked for mandatory cultural competency training for students. This is going to be starting. We've contracted to offer diversity training to all new undergraduate students who are coming into UNT this year, and this will go along, similarly to our alcohol and sexual assault training. Follow ups with students will occur in first flight within a pilot in the first year. We've asked for comprehensive cultural competency training. Especially in student affairs, we're working to advance the development of our employees. Faculty Senate have voted to have mandatory faculty development program focused on diversity inclusion. A team from Faculty Senate, Faculty Success, Institutional Equity and Diversity are working together to develop professional development program that will launch this fall. The Division of Student Affairs requires its staff to complete the following three trainings, 96% of the staff have completed it: unconscious bias training, cultivating cultural competency inclusion, and communicating across cultures. This is a great statistic. The Division of Institutional Equity and Diversity is temporarily moved to remote workshops to enable the continuation of that learning, because we're in an odd time where we can't gather naturally. The Division of Student Affairs has also brought in a diversity training in January to work with directors on implicit bias and inter-cultural competency inventory of ICI. So, whether it's overarching developmental areas like wellness engagement and auxiliaries,

we're giving their ICI scores and the follow up training is going to be scheduled to learn how to move their departments further along the IDI continuum, but because of the training and the face-to-face components, this is cancelled during COVID, so we will look to reschedule and conduct it virtually.

We have a number of things from the Diversity Inclusion initiatives in our strategic plan from the Dean of Students Office. A goal and strategies follow: Cultivate an environment that bodies respect and awareness of diverse communities through the support of cultural abilities, identities, and ideological thought; Provide ongoing training and developmental experiences that increase the intercultural competence of staff and employees. And again, they're well on the way there as far as increasing the percentage of faculty and staff black, brown and other marginalized identity. Faculty search committees training for implicit bias training, and for making sure that we're hiring towards diversity has been increased. All Division of Student Affairs positions are posted externally in order to increase diversity. Student Affairs Diversity Council has developed guidelines and best practices for an affirmative search processes and in 15 minutes of implicit bias training. They've developed a 15-minute implicit bias training program to offer to all search committees at their first meeting. We've also, and interested in expanding the resources available to the Multicultural Center and to equity and diversity, we've hired an additional staff member in the Multicultural Center. We've created a new First Gen Center, which I'm very excited about, as a resource to help promote the success of our students.

We're hiring additional access members to serve first generation students, especially because now, as an MSI, we feel that that can be funded through things like our CARE, CARES funding. We've got CARE 2 Act funding. We've devoted portions of that to making sure that we're expanding programming for our minority communities, our Parent Association and parent orientation scholarships are being offered for first generation, low, SES parents, also funded by our cares funding for MSI. And we funded positions within the Pride Alliance to allow for additional trainers. So, we have done quite a few things in, especially quite a few things in the Division of Student Affairs. For mandatory training of, from the black faculty network, I'm going to respond to some of the demands that the black faculty network statement made mandatory training will be implemented this fall for all faculty members, especially for incoming faculty members. The Division of Student Affairs required staff to complete those trainings. I've talked to you about that. We are, we are currently reading "Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria" as a book that we will have facilitated discussions around. Again, a number of these activities are moving forward.

We've also allocated, in the question of allocate funds from police to counseling, everyone agrees we need more counseling money. In fact, this year we began to hire more counselors and more advisors. We've contracted with a national consultant to review our counseling and testing center to assess its strengths and weaknesses, our staffing model where efficiencies could be found, and what changes are needed to better understand the changing needs of our students. So, we're going to work through their recommendations, including the staff recommendations and try to really beef up our counseling, and it, interestingly, we're

discovering some efficiencies in areas like tele-counseling right now, and mental health initiatives that we can run fairly efficiently through virtual environments. We've also provided again, let's see, we also have a number of initiatives through the Provost Office. And what I'd like to do now is ask if Jennifer wants to talk about some of the specific things that are happening on the faculty side of the equation as opposed to in Student Affairs and on the staff side of the equation. Jennifer?

**Jennifer Cowley:** Absolutely. So, you already spoke to the professional development program, and I've responded to that a little bit in the comments. I'll just give a very brief preview and then move into some of the other topics that have been raised. So, the professional development program is intended to be a multi-stage program so covering foundational information so that we have a common language as well as moving into advanced skill sets, and we've heard from our participants in today's session about the kinds and nature of help that they'd like. For example, how to analyze their syllabus and select more culturally appropriate readings, is just one small example. Bertina Combes, in my office and the Office of Faculty Success, is the point person that you can reach out to find out more and to offer suggestions on things that you'd like to personally learn about and see included in the professional development program.

One of the topics that also came up was around faculty recruiting, and the importance of faculty recruiting to support the increasing diversity of our faculty body. And approximately 5% of the doctorates awarded in the United States are awarded to black faculty. Our, we recognize that's not enough. And one of the things that we can be proud of as an R1 institution is that we're helping to move the needle, in terms of ensuring that we have a more diverse doctorate body that is coming out and graduating and being prepared to move into faculty roles. We're ranked number two in the country in the diversity of our business doctoral graduates and number three in the country in terms of our fine and performing arts diverse graduates. That's a very important role for us to play and one that I'd like to see us place more emphasis on. We cannot have a diverse faculty, if we are not part of the solution in creating a more diverse educated doctoral body. As it relates to our faculty diversity itself, our faculty are in fact responsible for hiring each other. And so, changing the ways in which we think about and perceive people's qualifications, understanding the impacts that each individual hired has on the nature of our faculty in an individual department, and thinking about the ways that we can ensure that we're doing better.

So, I was very happy that we were partnering with Diversity and Inclusion to expand our search committee training. I was talking to Joanne Woodard, a little earlier today, and we believe that we saw about a 70% increase in the number of faculty who participate. Long term, I would love to see that program become mandatory so that everyone has the knowledge they need to be supportive in the faculty hiring process. And we've seen successes. Six percent of our faculty body is currently a faculty who identify as black, and this past year, faculty who joined this fall and spring, it was 10% of the new faculty that were coming in. But let me clear, be clear, the rate of change that we're, we're having is, is not adequate. As I shared with our department chairs at this rate of change, it will be 30 years before we reflect in our faculty, the diversity

that our student body has today. And that's unacceptable. It means that we have to do more, and it means every faculty hire in every department is an opportunity to increase the diversity of our faculty body. And that's something that we all have to take ownership of.

So, while I can provide support, I can provide policies, I can provide the right environment, ultimately, our faculty are the people who are making hiring decisions. We all need to be committed as a community to make the change that will have the faculty that our students are asking for, that we will have a faculty that reflects our values and our diversity as a minority serving institution. There is more that's coming. And we're going to be having divisional conversations over the coming months. And so, in the interest of time, I want to turn it over to Neil to help us wrap up today's conversation.

**Cornelius "Neil" Foote:** Thank you, Jennifer. And thank you all for participating in today's conversation. We've just scratched the surface of so many issues that we can spend hours doing, and I think the key today was to listen and learn and continue this conversation not only at the level that we're having now but certainly within our departments, through our schools, our colleges, and hopefully continued dialogue that means the doors are open between faculty, staff, and the administration as we build a better campus and continue to grow on the success we've had so far.

What we do now is that this session has been recorded. If you are looking to check back and review some of what's been said, we will post this on the Equity and Diversity site, at [edo.unt.edu](http://edo.unt.edu). If there were others who could not join us today, please let them know that this link will be available on the site within the next week or so, so that you can comment on that. All the student and employee pre-submitted comments, questions will be posted there at the [edo.unt.edu/UNTBLM](http://edo.unt.edu/UNTBLM) site. We will have ongoing engagement, please look to an event in August, where we will pick up this conversation and move the ball further down the road. We also will be releasing the campus inclusion climate survey data to give us further insights on how folks are receiving the community and what we all want to do, which is improve the community itself. Thanks again for your engagement today your questions your comments and your recommendations.