



AFRICAN AMERICAN ADVISORY COUNCIL



University of Illinois at Chicago
African American Advisory Council

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY CHANCELLOR

Winter 2020-Fall 2022
Submitted November 2020

Introduction

The University of Illinois at Chicago’s African American Advisory Council (UICAAAC) was established in 2014 by former UIC Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares. The original intent for the UICAAAC was to serve as an advisor to the Chancellor on matters impacting African American students, faculty, and staff at UIC.

Over the past several years the UICAAAC’s advisory role has evolved to focus on four primary areas of UIC activity (“The Four Buckets”):

1. Recruitment, enrollment, retention and achievement of African American students.
2. Recruitment, hiring, retention and promotion of African American faculty and staff.
3. Participation of African American owned companies in UIC procurement and purchasing opportunities.
4. UIC engagement and partnership with surrounding African American communities.

In 2016, the UICAAAC submitted to current UIC Chancellor Michael D. Amiridis a list of recommended policies and strategies to improve the university’s performance in the aforementioned areas. Over the course of the last four academic years, Chancellor Amiridis and the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity implemented the following programs in response to our recommendations:

- ✓ UIC Engage K-12 Mentoring Program
- ✓ UIC Top 4% CPS High School Automatic Admissions Initiative
- ✓ UIC Admissions Produces First Recruitment Publications Targeting African American Students
- ✓ Establishing the Task Force on the Progression and Success of African American Students
- ✓ Establishing the Ida B. Wells Scholarship

While UIC has made strides to improve the experience of its African American students, faculty, and staff, it is troubling that a university nationally recognized for diversity¹ only has an 8% African American undergraduate student body in a city where 30% of its residents are African American. We also find it unacceptable that the city’s largest public university with a \$3.4 billion budget spends less than 1% with African American owned companies.² It is the UICAAAC’s position that we have a long road ahead of us to establish UIC as a world class institution where *African American students, faculty, and staff excel in their academic and professional pursuits and experience*

an environment where they are welcomed, supported, respected, and valued.

To that end, the UICAAAC convened two planning retreats in August and September 2020. The first retreat focused on developing a list of recommended strategies and policies for achieving progress in The Four Buckets – i.e., Goals #1 thru #5. The second retreat focused on identifying tactics, tools, and resources for building the council’s capacity to better advise the Chancellor and university – i.e., Goal #6. This activity also resulted in the creation of UICAAAC vision, mission, and values statements.



1. <https://today.uic.edu/uic-recognized-for-student-diversity-social-mobility-in-u-s-news-rankings> and <https://today.uic.edu/uic-earns-national-acclaim-for-diversity-inclusion-efforts> (September 2019). The UICAAAC notes that while UIC officials tout the university’s HSI and AANAPISI designations in the latter article there is no mention of the role that African American students play in creating a diverse learning environment. It’s as if African American students are invisible.

2. UICAAAC meeting with Debra Matlock (Executive Director UIC Purchasing) and Fernando Howell (Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of Project Management UIC Office of Planning, Sustainability and Project Management) (July 14, 2020)

Vision Statement

UIC is internationally recognized for its culture where African American students, faculty, and staff excel in their academic and professional pursuits and experience an environment where they are welcomed, supported, respected, and valued.



Mission Statement

Act as a key advisor to the University to ensure the necessary access, achievement, inclusion, and engagement of African Americans in all sectors of the UIC community; foster communication and networking among African American students, alumni, faculty, and staff; act as a key advisor to the University on policies and procedures that will positively impact the African American experience at UIC; and steward opportunities that lead to sustained and mutually beneficial community engagement and partnerships.



Values Statements and Council Member Expectations

Commitment:

Remain dedicated and engaged in developing policies and taking action to support the long-term interests of African Americans interacting with the University.

Competency:

Be curious, ask questions, and employ a data-driven approach to advise the University on the development of policy and recommendations supporting the Council's vision and mission.

Collaboration:

Work together and with the University to achieve the Council's vision and mission.



Key Goals and Recommendations

1. Within the next 5 years, build a state-of-the-art UIC African American Cultural Center modeled after UIUC's Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center.
2. Increase the Ida B. Wells (IBW) Scholarship Fund's endowment to \$1 million in the next 3 years.
3. Establish an UIC African American Alumni Association modeled after the Illinois Black Alumni Network or Purdue Black Alumni Organization.
4. Advocate for increased "sheltered markets" in high contract value areas and provide "advances" and "quick pay" for African American vendors seeking to do business with UIC.
5. Formally recognize the existence and charge of the UICAAAC by including a UICAAAC landing page on UIC's web site to include vision, mission, headshots and bios of council members.
6. Double the Bridge to Faculty Program from 10 to 20 positions for the 2021-2022 academic year.
7. Establish and staff an Office of Community Collaboration reporting to the Associate Chancellor and Vice Provost for Diversity.
8. Convene quarterly meetings of all campus groups working on issues pertinent to UIC African American students, faculty, and staff including, but not limited to, UICAAAC, Chancellor's Committee on Status of Blacks, Black Student Union, Black Graduate Student Association and AAREI.
9. Add ex-officio members to the council representing each of the following groups: Black Student Union, Black Graduate Student Association, and African American Faculty.

Please note that the UICAAAC's recommendations are informed, in part, by our review of the following documents. In some instances, recommendations from these documents were incorporated into our document as indicated by footnote.

- *UIC Chancellor Amiridis Official Staff Announcement: Advancing Racial Equity at UIC (October 2020)*
- *Advancing Racial Equity Taskforce: Community Engagement Working Group Report (September 2020)*
- *UIC Student Petition (June 2020)*
- *Student Success Initiative: Improving African American Student Success at UIC: Final Project Report (November 2019)*
- *Task Force on the Progression and Success of African American Students University of Illinois at Chicago: Final Report (Ransby, B. et.al., July 2016)*
- *Through the Lens of Diversity: University of Illinois at Chicago Diversity Strategic Thinking (August 2012)*
- *A Mosaic for UIC Transformation: University of Illinois at Chicago Diversity Strategic Planning (August 2012)*



Goals and Recommendations

Goal # 1:

Increase the recruitment, enrollment and retention of African American students.

Recommendations

1. Beginning with the Fall 2021 academic year, exceed by 25% the following 2016 enrollment and retention goals set by UICAAAC and UIC: ³
 - Increase enrollment of African American freshmen to 400
 - Increase African American freshmen cohort one-year retention rate to 85%
 - Increase enrollment of African American transfer students to 200
 - Increase enrollment of African American graduate students to 700
 - Admit 40 and enroll 20 students through the Increase the Admissions Via Excellence (AVE) Top 4 % program.
2. Increase the Ida B. Wells (IBW) Scholarship Fund's endowment to \$1 million in the next three years. We further recommend that the UIC Advancement Office develop a special plan to raise these targeted scholarship funds and report regularly on their progress. This should include the hiring of a full-time equivalent person dedicated to raising funds for the IBW Scholarship Fund as well as other campus diversity efforts. They should work closely with the Office of Diversity and other relevant units to identify advancement opportunities akin to the AANAPISI and HSI programs that support a broad array of programs and services for African American students. ⁴
3. Beginning with the Fall 2021 academic year, allocate \$1 million for the Finish Line funds to assist African American students in LAS and other undergraduate colleges who need only a small sum of money to complete their education in their final year when other resources have run out. Funding decisions should concentrate on two specific periods for students - retention from the first to the second year and the final year or semester before graduation are crucial times. ⁵
4. Beginning with the Fall 2022 academic year, and four years thereafter, award [xxx number] ⁶ of full four-year scholarships to high school students completing the Pathways Program.
5. Increase financial resources to the African American Academic Network (AAAN), and CHANCE and TRIO programs to expand their recruitment and engagement efforts. Position AAAN, CHANCE, and TRIO to work in coordination with Academic and Enrollment Services to increase enrollment of African American students and support their transition to UIC. ⁷
6. Increase financial resources to UIC Early Outreach, which reports to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, in support of pipeline initiatives for students attending the summer and Saturday college programs through undergraduate recruitment and retention. For those who do not select UIC for undergraduate programs, to recruit and retain those students for graduate and professional college consideration. [data forthcoming]
7. Designate a "go to" person for confusing financial questions: a financial aid coach, troubleshooter or ombudsper-son committed to diversity and sensitive to the special needs and challenges of URM students. African American students report being overwhelmed and confused by the financial bureaucracy, what their options are, and who can help them troubleshoot. ⁸

3. UICAAAC Expectations Document 2016

4. Task Force on the Progression and Success of African American Students University of Illinois at Chicago: Final Report (Ransby, B. et.al., July 2016)

5. Ibid.

6. Number to be identified during UICAAAC meeting with Chancellor to review these recommendations.

7. UIC Chancellor Amiridis Official Staff Announcement: Advancing Racial Equity at UIC (October 2020)

8. Task Force on the Progression and Success of African American Students University of Illinois at Chicago: Final Report (Ransby, B. et.al., July 2016)

8. Create a website of UIC African American Student resources which would include all UIC African American support groups, including program group missions, services and contact persons.
9. Establish an UIC African American Alumni Association modeled after the Illinois Black Alumni Network or Purdue Black Alumni Organization. It will help raise funds for the IBW Scholarship Fund, assist in the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of African American students, and facilitate post-graduation employment for African American students. This should include the Office of Advancement hiring of a part-time equivalent person dedicated to recruiting African American alumni and managing the association's day-to-day operations.

Goal # 2:

Increase the recruitment, hiring, and retention of African American faculty and staff.

Recommendations

1. Operationalize and monitor a diversity, equity and inclusion faculty recruitment, hiring, training and retention policy for each UIC college, department, and business unit, which includes each college, department and business unit having publicly available diversity goals, and dashboards for each target.
2. Double the Bridge to Faculty Program from 10 to 20 positions for the 2021-2022 academic year. This is a post-doc to faculty program initiated in 2019 that aims to diversify our faculty, with a special focus on departments with few or no underrepresented faculty. These twenty new scholars we will recruit will be in addition to the ten scholars we recruited for the 2020 academic year.⁹
3. Create [xxx number]¹⁰ of endowed professorships and chairs for African American faculty in UIC's College of Liberal Arts and Science, College of Education, College of Engineering, and College of Business. Endowed faculty professorships and chairs benefit the university, professors, students, businesses, and private donors. They are crucial for recruiting and retaining the highest-quality faculty which in turn helps recruit the brightest students. They recognize the continued contributions of senior-level faculty and provide funds to push the frontiers of scholarship. The funds can propel research, help pay student workers or create opportunities for collaboration with scholars around the world. Having endowed African American faculty also ensure that African American, and other, students have an opportunity to learn from some of the most talented scholars. Businesses have an avenue to invest in a talent pipeline and private donors are afforded opportunities to commit their financial resources toward research in specific areas of interest to them. This should include the Office of Advancement hiring a part-time equivalent person dedicated to working with each department chair to raise funds for these endowed chairs.



9. UIC Chancellor Amiridis Official Staff Announcement: Advancing Racial Equity at UIC (October 2020)

10. Number to be identified during UICAAAC meeting with Chancellor to review these recommendations.

Goal # 3:

Increase the participation of African American owned companies in UIC's purchasing and other supplier contract opportunities. ¹¹

Recommendations

1. Provide support services to contractors, including administrative assistance with the completion and submission of applications and bids.
2. Provide advances and quick pay for African American contractors. Pay invoices timely at a minimum and, in advance, upon reasonable request.
3. Track UIC's spend with African American owned companies. The system that the University of Illinois System Data Analysis Office uses to collect this information currently does not allow for this information to be broken out by each University and Systems Administration Office.
4. Establish and/or increase "sheltered markets" in high contract value areas for African American owned companies (e.g., IT sheltered market).
5. Establish and implement workforce diversity goals on construction projects.
6. Set goal of 5% annual increase in diversity spend for each UIC College and administrative unit. Provide quarterly reports from each UIC College and administrative unit on supplier diversity utilization.

Goal # 4:

Establish sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships with African American communities in Chicago's south and west sides.

Recommendations

1. Create an Office of Community Collaboration reporting to the Associate Chancellor and Vice Provost for Diversity. This office will provide administrative, technical and grant-writing support to facilitate existing and new collaborations of faculty, students, staff and several campus units engaged in community outreach. It will also coordinate and initiate a pilot community hub program in two Chicago neighborhoods. This office should provide the UICAAAC with a quarterly update on university activities in this area. ¹²
2. Create a database of past and present UIC African American students, alumni and faculty. Notwithstanding privacy issues, all can be invited to opt-in to a database which can then be used to target communications and leverage resources for current students, alumni, faculty and special projects. All UIC Colleges, Graduate and Professional Schools, Athletic Department, National Pan-Hellenic Council, and any other primary African American campus organizations should be key collaborators and contributors.
3. Create a written and visual archival history of the UIC African American presence and contributions to the UIC campus. Having the information in written and visual form affirms that the UIC African American experience is valued, valuable and validated, woven into the fabric of the historical and current UIC community and not merely a footnote. Examples of similar works can be found in ...Or the Fire Next Time, African-American history at Purdue University: <http://collections.lib.purdue.edu/timelines/ortheffire> and in the film, Black Purdue, financed and produced by African-American Purdue Alumni: <https://youtu.be/IMaQyMyQpDc>

11. UICAAAC meeting with Debra Matlock (Executive Director UIC Purchasing) and Fernando Howell (Assistant Vice Chancellor and Director of Project Management UIC Office of Planning, Sustainability and Project Management) (July 14, 2020)

12. UIC Chancellor Amiridis Official Staff Announcement: Advancing Racial Equity at UIC (October 2020)

Goal # 5:

Within the next 5 years, build a state-of-the-art UIC African American Cultural Center modeled after UIUC's Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center.¹³

Recommendations

1. A new UIC African American Cultural Center will immediately and strategically position UIC to better compete with surrounding universities when it comes to recruiting, enrolling, and retaining highly qualified African American students. It will also play a pivotal role in helping the UIC attract and hire highly sought after African American faculty and staff. The building of the center must include African American owned companies – i.e., architect, construction, etc. - thereby increasing UIC's spend with this targeted vendor demographic. The center will connect African American students and faculty, communicate and celebrate the contributions African Americans have made to UIC, and make African American presence on campus more visible. We further recommend that the university annually budget additional programming funds for educational, cultural, and community-building events and projects that support this purpose prior to and after the building of the new African American Cultural Center. Funds for this programming will be jointly managed by the Department of African American Studies, the African American Cultural Center and the Office of Diversity. This is a highly visible project that clearly demonstrates UIC's commitment to becoming a world class university where *African American students, faculty, and administrators excel in their academic and professional pursuits and experience an environment where they are welcomed, supported, respected, and valued.*

Goal # 6:

Strengthen UICAAAC's capacity to more effectively advise the Chancellor and University.

Recommendations

1. Formally recognize the existence and charge of the UICAAAC by including a UICAAAC landing page on UIC's web site to include vision, mission, headshots and bios of council members.
2. Provide staff support for planning UICAAAC meetings. This includes drafting meeting agendas, transcribing meeting minutes, and assisting the council co-chairs with ongoing communication to council members and other campus units.
3. Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity convenes quarterly meetings of the UICAAAC and other campus organizations working on initiatives aligned with the UICAAAC's vision and mission including, but not limited to, Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Blacks, AAERI, Black Student Union, and Black Graduate Student Association.
4. Add ex-officio members to the council representing each of the following groups - Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Blacks Black Student Union, Black Graduate Student Association, and African American Faculty.
5. Provide UICAAAC a written plan that includes a road map for how UIC will achieve the recommendations in Goals #1 through #6. The plan should include timeline, benchmarks and metrics. UIC may want to consider updating the 2012 Diversity Strategic Plan with agreed upon policies and strategies from this document. Moreover, this plan should be made public.
6. The Office of the Vice Provost of Diversity should convene bi-annual meetings of the UICAAAC and Chancellor to review progress toward achieving Goals #1 through #6.

13. Task Force on the Progression and Success of African American Students University of Illinois at Chicago: Final Report (Ransby, B. et.al., July 2016)

7. The UICAAAC and Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity should convene a meeting to agree upon a tool and process for monitoring, tracking, and regularly reporting progress on Goals #1 thru #6 – e.g., Equity Dashboard.
8. The Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity should update the “Diversity at a Glance” data at <https://diversity.uic.edu/data/equity-dashboard/>. This data is 5 years old. Moreover, UIC should strive to be more transparent with its diversity, equity, and inclusion plans. To that end, the UICAAAC recommends that the Equity Dashboard Project data be made available to the general public and not require a UIC administrative login. In addition to updating the current data, UIC should include diversity employment reports and data for faculty and staff (including civil servant and student workers). That information should also be included in the equity dashboard project, without UIC login access limitations.
9. As a nationally recognized research institution, we know that UIC has the means and resources to access, generate and present comprehensive data. We expect and require that UIC utilize its best available research expertise to improve the circumstance of UIC’s African American students, faculty, staff and the UIC community area.

UIC African American Advisory Council



Malik S. Nevels, J.D. PMP - Co-Chair

Executive Project Manager
Safer Foundation
UIC LAS '93
UIUC College of Law '99



Tamara Edmonds Askew, JD, MPH - Co-Chair

Director, ABA Section of State and
Local Government Law
UIC School of Public Health '96



Jonathan Banks

Chief Operating Officer
Urban Outreach Foundation
UIC Student Parent



Paul Burton J.D., M.B.A.

Burton Advisory Group
UIC LAS '90 and '95
UIUC College of Law '99
UIUC College of Business '99



Nina Fain, B.S., M.S., CAGS, J.D., Esq.

General Counsel
JSS Family Trusts



Gerald Hankerson

Council on American-Islamic Relations
(CAIR)-Chicago
UIC LAS '17



Rev. Randall W. Harris, Sr.

Pastor
Faith Community Church



G. Sequane Lawrence

President
African American Leadership and Policy Institute



Cecilia Mowatt

President
Strategies In Site, Inc.



Carlos Nelson

President & CEO
Greater Auburn Gresham Development
Corporation



Ernest Sawyer

President
Ernest R. Sawyer Enterprises, Inc.



Carl H. Tutt, Jr.

Managing Partner
Integrating Green Technologies
Board Chairman
100 Black Men of Chicago, Inc.



Rev. Dr. Janette C. Wilson

National Executive Director
PUSH For Excellence Inc.
Senior Advisor to Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr.