

Task Force on Social Justice and Equity

Final Report

Southern Methodist University

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Task Force Members

Professor Jessica Dixon Weaver, Task Force Chair, Professor and Associate Dean of Research, Gerald J. Ford Research Fellow, Dedman School of Law

Professor Willie Baronet, Stan Richards Professor in Creative Advertising, Meadows School of Arts, Division of Advertising

Professor Amber Bemak, Associate Professor, Division of Film and Media Arts, Meadows School of the Arts

Professor Eric G. Bing, Dept. of Applied Physiology and Sports Management, Simmons School of Education and Human Development; Dept. of Anthropology, Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences.

Moira Cary, Associate Director of Recruiting and Events, Career Services, Dedman School of Law

Steve Denson, Assistant Dean of Diversity and Inclusion and Adjunct Professor, Cox School of Business

Wendelin Donahue, Ed.D., Director of Community Engagement, Development and External Affairs

Ann Fielder, Philanthropic Advisor, Principal and Major Gifts

Professor Mario De La Garza, Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of Counseling, Simmons School of Education and Human Development

Renee Gibson, Assistant Director, Residence Life and Student Housing

Professor Joanna Grossman, Ellen K. Solender Endowed Chair in Women and the Law, Dedman School of Law (1st year only)

Professor Johnitha Watkins Johnson, Clinical Assistant Professor, Simmons School of Education; Research Faculty Fellow, Office of Diversity & Inclusion (2nd year only)

Professor Dayna Oscherwitz, Professor of French and Associate Provost for Institutional Planning and Effectiveness

Professor Kelyn Rola, Assistant Professor Lyle School of Engineering, Applied Physiology & Wellness

Professor Abraham Smith, Professor Perkins School of Theology

Professor Peng Tao, Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, Dedman College

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Executive Summary

Introduction

In Spring 2021, SMU Provost Elizabeth Lobo established the *Task Force on Social Justice and Equity*, a university-wide interdisciplinary group of faculty and staff tasked to explore and inform SMU's approach to greater social justice and equity. Specifically, this group materialized after Summer 2020 when the world suffered a racial reckoning due to police brutality against African Americans, culminating in the murder of George Floyd by a white police officer. This incident occurred during the global public health crisis emanating from the coronavirus pandemic, which simultaneously highlighted longstanding racial and class inequities in the United States. On SMU's campus, the Black Unity Forum ("BUF") convened and initiated a dialogue with the administration regarding how the campus might become a more welcoming and inclusive environment for Black students, faculty, and staff. While the initial goal of the Task Force was to improve campus quality of life for the SMU Black community, it was expanded to explore external opportunities for all students, faculty, and staff to engage in and promote social justice and equity initiatives.

With a two-year timeline, Provost Lobo charged the Task Force with the following:

1. Promote collaboration among professors, students, staff and community to envision what social equity looks like on campus, in Dallas, and beyond. Articulate SMU's role in shaping that vision.
2. Review SMU's existing social justice and equity initiatives to identify potential synergies.
3. Develop multiple strategic frameworks for SMU's equity offerings; discuss strengths and challenges for each option. Provide a recommendation on the most impactful approach.
4. Identify near term sources of funding and provide a prospectus on opportunities for longer term external funding at state, regional, and national level for supporting initiatives center/institute.
5. Explore and identify intersections between local entities and University that would provide public service and educational opportunities for our students.
6. Generate a projected five-year programmatic calendar.

To this end, the Task Force first spent several sessions brainstorming and gathering research-based information concerning the terms *social justice* and *equity*. As a result, the Task Force utilized the following definitions: (1) social justice posits that everyone deserves equal economic opportunities and equal political and social rights; (2) equity recognizes systemic inequalities and works to eliminate them. Systemic inequalities pertain to vast differences in access to resources and opportunities for marginalized groups due to structural policies and

discrimination. These groups include those marginalized due to race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, and/or socioeconomic status.

SMU's commitment to social justice and equity is born of a desire to cultivate an ethical society. That is, purposefully serving the campus community by evaluating, reflecting on, and improving its' academic quality and orientation to fairness for its student body. Such an endeavor illustrates the University's advancement toward completing the goals and objectives in both the University's *2016-2025 Strategic Plan*, and *Moving Forward Together*, the action plan developed with BUF. To achieve social justice and equity in the larger society, the SMU administration, faculty, students, and staff carry out extraordinary social justice and equity work. Yet, there is room for growth, particularly expanding and enhancing SMU's external social justice footprint. Accordingly, the Task Force Final Report provides eleven recommendations that align with the aforementioned plans as well as SMU's primary focus of reaching academic excellence, Research One status, and implementing robust inclusive excellence initiatives.

Envisioning Social Justice and Equity at SMU

The Student Outreach Committee, a sub-committee of the Task Force, gathered feedback from current SMU students about how they envision social justice and equity on SMU's campus and beyond (see [Appendix A](#) for the full report). Information, related to students' perceptions of social justice and equity, was gathered through two methods: (a) small group listening sessions and (b) an electronic survey. In both the listening sessions and surveys, a fairly consistent theme emerged related to social justice and equity—to effectively engage in social justice and equity work outside of SMU, a socially just and equitable climate on SMU's campus must first be established. To achieve this vision, students consistently called for the University to sustainably fund the Human Rights Program, and expand and resource the Office of Diversity & Inclusion so it can have a greater impact on campus.

Students also indicated a desire for their coursework and on-campus involvement to more effectively prepare them to engage in social justice and equity work off campus. This sentiment aligns with the most recent undertaking of SMU's Center for Teaching Excellence—focusing on inclusive teaching. Inclusive teaching uncovers and eliminates systemic barriers that prevent marginalized students from self-actualization in the classroom. So, to address students' appeal, we recommend that the Center for Teaching Excellence maintains its focus on inclusive teaching, while also instructing faculty on how they might incorporate social justice and equity into their courses, regardless of the subject. Further, to strengthen formalized pathways for students to participate in these efforts, the University needs to intentionally invest resources that enhance the efficacy of existing social justice and equity initiatives, while also building trust and continuity with community partners. Student-sponsored solutions for improving the campus environment included holding authentic, identity-centered conversations through introductory coursework, as well as creating shared language related to social justice and equity among the student body.

SMU's Current Social Justice and Equity Initiatives

The Task Force determined the scope of SMU's current social justice and equity footprint by conducting a comprehensive review of undergraduate and graduate courses, activities, and

community service opportunities (see [Appendix B](#) for the full report). SMU has a large number of courses and service opportunities for undergraduates that either center or succinctly highlight social justice and equity. While some graduate schools bear similar offerings as the undergraduate program, many graduate students have neither the same volume of social justice and equity courses as undergraduate students, nor the similar opportunities for community engagement (see [Appendices C](#) and [D](#) for social justice and equity courses offered at SMU). A diverse array of coursework, research, programming, and activities supporting equity and social justice exist on the SMU campus; however, these opportunities are unevenly distributed across the campus, concentrated in particular programs and majors, overwhelmingly oriented toward undergraduate students, and not always readily visible to students or to external stakeholder. Clear opportunities to expand research, coursework, and programming supporting social justice and equity exist. In order to increase offerings and expand access, SMU will have to add structures and faculty with the specific goal of increasing the courses, research, and programming on equity and social justice. One way to maintain more structure in this area is to create an online database of social justice and equity course offerings and on-campus activities for students to access. This is an easy, low-cost solution that could increase utilization of existing programs, but it would not expand offerings or access to such offerings.

Again, if SMU wants to ensure that all students, regardless of program or level have access to coursework, research and scholarship, internships, activities, and programming focused on social justice and equity, additional structure and resources are needed. Another solution is incorporating an emphasis on social justice and equity into all new hires, regardless of discipline, which would not require resources beyond those the university has already committed. For example, SMU could ensure that all existing research clusters dedicate at least one position to faculty whose research focuses on equity and social justice. SMU could also create a series of visiting faculty positions and bring in faculty with a research or social equity focus. This is relatively easy to do in most clusters. For example, data science could ensure that at least one researcher is reviewing data that explores issues of social justice or equity, and in Earth Hazards and National Security, there could be at least one researcher who analyzes the disparate impacts of earth hazards on the poor or underrepresented groups.

A larger, more permanent way to secure additional structure and faculty devoted to social justice and equity is to create an institute or center devoted to urban research with a focus on social justice and equity. The proposed Urban Research cluster should include multiple scholars whose primary work queries social justice and equity issues, as the urban context is one in which these questions are easily centered. While establishing an institute or center is a monumental undertaking, SMU must determine its commitment to issues of social justice and equity, and the degree to which it wishes to make this commitment visible. The level of commitment of the institution will be the most significant factor in determining whether additional resources are committed to this project.

Strategic Frameworks for Social Justice and Equity Offerings

To create sustainable efforts and scalable models for impact in social justice and equity at SMU, it is essential that University efforts align with its strategic goals and build upon the University's academic strengths and organizational structures. The Task Force identified currently

existing and planned University activities and suggested potential opportunities for strengthening. Moreover, we recognized the synergies between different departments and schools on topics such as infrastructure and economic equity, homelessness, mass incarceration, and educational inequity, particularly noting that SMU's Deason Criminal Justice Center and the Budd Center are exemplars of funded, research-based social justice and equity hubs. We also considered student desires to engage with more social justice and equity offerings on campus and within the greater Dallas community.

We set out with the hope of developing a theme upon which to build a better foundation for social justice and equity at SMU, and thereby in Dallas, greater Texas, and the nation. We recognized that aligning the goals and objectives of the 2016-2025 Strategic Plan with the ideas for the various strategic frameworks would assist with both funding and feasibility. After reviewing centers and institutes at SMU's cohort universities (including their sources of funding, staff composition, and national impact), the Task Force also considered less costly frameworks such as joint initiatives, collaborative colloquiums, and expanding research within existing centers. Next, we connected with external organizations and people engaged in social and equity work. We concluded that several strategic frameworks for new social justice and equity offerings would be a fruitful investment for SMU, as well as one large, all-encompassing framework, which could serve as an umbrella to other initiatives in various departments. SMU is best poised to build a national social justice and equity legacy with: (1) *We Are All Homeless*, (2) *We Got Us Now*, and (3) the *Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Centers* (an American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) initiative).

Sources of Funding

A proposed budget was developed for each of the following general frameworks considered: an Urban Research Institute; an Urban Research Center; the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center; and an Art & Social Justice Collaboration (see [Appendix H](#)). Comparing operating budgets across the frameworks, the Urban Research Institute is the costliest, but also the most robust due to the strong complement of research enabled faculty and research fellows. A substantial fundraising effort would need to be executed to achieve an annual operational budget of approximately \$1.2M (in Year 5). An endowment in excess of \$23M would provide ample operational support, understanding that \$5M in endowment is required by SMU to stand up an institute. It is also anticipated that much of the research can be grant-funded. Mellon Foundation could be a source of near-term and long-term funding; however, it should be noted that SMU would need to demonstrate its commitment to hire faculty whose research focused on social justice and equity issues in order to make the case for a larger grant from an entity like the Mellon Foundation.

Each framework has different near-term and long-term funding sources. In general, SMU will need to develop new individual and corporate donors who seek to support social justice and equity initiatives. In addition, there are several foundations that provide grants for non-profits and educational institutions. Candid.org is a website for accessing potential funding sources. It has

tracked the foundations that have donated significant funds toward organizations seeking to address racial and social inequities before and after the murder of George Floyd and the coronavirus pandemic. There are existing relationships that SMU has with several foundations, including Meadows Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Texas Bar Foundation, as well as individual and corporate donors with existing relationships with SMU. It will be imperative for SMU to expand its list of potential donors for this enterprise and consider diversifying the frontline fundraising staff to accomplish this goal.

In analyzing alternative strategic models, the TRHT Campus Center (see [Appendix G](#)) would be more externally facing with a reduced focus on research as compared to the Urban Research institute and center models. The AAC&U model emphasizes external collaboration between institutions of higher education and the community, and it provides a platform and the resources to share experiences and facilitate conversations. Year 1 has a low cost of \$5,000 and potential seed money from Newman’s Own (\$25-30K). This model does require matching funding from the University in Year 1. It’s anticipated operational budget in Year 5 is \$712,000. This model is the least costly initiative.

The Art & Social Justice Collaboration, which would leverage the extraordinary *We Are All Homeless* project, would examine homelessness and poverty. Both the Meadows and Perkins Deans are supportive of this collaboration, and the SMU Perkins Black/Africana Church Studies Program (BACS) is also very supportive and can offer faculty leadership. The Art & Social Justice Collaboration could rotate or incorporate other social justice issues that intersect issues related to unhoused persons, such as *We Got Us Now*, a nonprofit organization that advocates for children of incarcerated parents. There is a planned research component for this model, and a symposium produced every other year. In Year 5, the anticipated operational budget is just under \$2M.

Task Force Recommendations

The following chart lists the eleven (11) recommendations of the Task Force, along with the alignment with various SMU Strategic Goals for each recommendation. The chart also lists the strengths and challenges for each recommendation, as well as the possible funding sources.

Table 1

List of Task Force Recommendations

Task Force Recommendations	SMU Strategic Goal Alignment	Strengths & Challenges	Funding Sources
Create a central online catalog of social justice & equity offerings for undergraduates and graduate students at SMU.	GOALS TWO & FOUR	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Admin. Task Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time & Maintenance 	Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion or TRHT Campus Center Funding
Establish a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center @ SMU, hiring five underrepresented tenured or tenure eligible professors whose research and teaching focus on social justice or equity.	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, & FIVE	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored to SMU AAC&U built-in support system Advances systems level change Adds safe physical space for underrepresented students Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TX politics Funding and space 	Near-Term: W.K. Kellogg Foundation w/ SMU Match Long Term: Ford Foundation, Mackenzie Scott, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Hewlett Foundation – See Candid
Establish an Urban Research Institute @ SMU, hiring five underrepresented tenured or tenure eligible professors whose research and teaching have a focus on social justice and equity. <i>Schools:</i> Law, Simmons, Dedman College, Meadows, Lyle, Perkins	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, & FOUR	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban Research Cluster Diversify Faculty Attract & support students Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dept. Lines & Hiring 	Near Term: Corporate and Private Donors, Bloomberg Philanthropies, TX Bar Foundation Long Term: Mellon Foundation (Higher Learning)
Establish a Joint Art and Social Justice Collaboration @ Meadows School of Art & Perkins School of Theology, with a specific focus on homelessness and poverty via We Are All Homeless .	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, & FIVE	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-year program w/ established partners Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty Time; Need for tenure-eligible faculty lead 	Near Term: Meadows Foundation, Model for Social Impact Investing Long Term: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Mellon Foundation (Humanities)

			in Place & Higher Learning)
Expand research and community education re: impact of mass incarceration on children and families through We Got Us Now . Establish partnership with SMU Deason Criminal Justice Center and VanSickle Family Law Clinic in Dedman Law, possible inclusion with Art and Social Justice Collaboration (see above).	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, & FOUR	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Reciprocal educational training for students and activists ▫ Service component tied to legal policy reform <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Coordination of Services; obtaining long-term research funding 	<p>Near Term: Texas Appleseed & National Institute of Justice (NIJ)</p> <p>Long Term: NIJ & U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ)-Flourishing Children of Incarcerated Parents (FCIP)</p>
Establish a Collaborative Colloquium featuring Data Science for Social Good (Lyle Engineering, Dedman Law & Dedman College Research Cluster).	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, & FIVE	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 3 Faculty + 1 Post Doc <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Long term funding & institutional support 	<p>Near Term: Texas Bar Foundation, Bush Institute</p> <p>Long Term: Fed Infrastructure Grant, Foundation Grant</p>
Require one faculty member of every cluster hire to be a tenured or tenure eligible professor whose research and teaching centers and reinforces social justice and equity.	GOALS ONE, TWO, & FOUR	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Diversify SMU faculty <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hiring practices ▫ Commitment to new courses across depts. 	<p>Near Term: SMU Departments & Grad. Schools</p> <p>Long Term: SMU Development & Alumni network</p>
Diversify Development and External Affairs office by expanding the frontline fundraising staff to seek new individual and corporate donors and alumni who would support social justice and equity initiatives.	GOALS ONE & FOUR	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Expand donor base; support ODI efforts ▫ Representative from underrepresented group <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Budget ▫ Recruitment from traditional non-profit arena to SMU 	<p>Near Term: SMU Office of Development and External Affairs</p> <p>Long Term: Corporate Donor(s); Foundation Grant</p>

<p>Establish an endowed chair in the area of social justice and equity, with the objective of hiring a professor from an underrepresented group.</p>	<p>GOALS ONE, TWO</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Recruitment advantage <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fundraising 	<p>Near Term: Individual Donor, Minority Board Directors Long Term: Corporate Donor, Foundation Grant</p>
<p>Increase and sustain funding in on-campus divisions that are already entrenched in social justice and equity work (i.e., Human Rights Program, Office of Diversity & Inclusion)</p>	<p>GOALS TWO, THREE, & FOUR</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Supports and advocates for underrepresented students ▫ Advances SMU’s mission while also centering students ▫ Continue meaningful work (e.g., civil rights pilgrimage, systems level change) ▫ Low hanging fruit <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Funding ▫ Budget 	<p>Near Term: SMU Office of the President (ODI) Long Term: Individual and Corporate Donors, Foundation (Human Rights Program)</p>
<p>Maintain inclusive teaching offerings in the Center for Teaching Excellence, while also regularly offering programming that instructs faculty on how they might incorporate social justice and equity into their courses, regardless of the subject.</p>	<p>GOALS ONE, TWO, FOUR, FIVE, AND SIX</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fosters a global-minded perspective ▫ Decreases student resistance to diversity ▫ Decreases disparities in student academic achievement <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Faculty buy-in 	<p>Near Term: Office of the Provost Long Term: Office of the Provost</p>

Conclusion

SMU’s commitment to social justice and equity will be determined by whether it prioritizes (a) fundraising, (b) the sentiments and on campus experiences of marginalized students, and (c) the hiring of faculty whose research centers the relevant social justice and equity issues identified in this report. Research Faculty are necessary to improve and build upon the existing undergraduate curriculum and expand the graduate school curriculum. Due to the dearth of options in graduate schools beyond Dedman Law, its logical to adopt the recommendation of establishing an Urban Research Institute with a focus on social justice and equity. This institute could be housed within the Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies, facilitating interdisciplinary scholarship, teaching, and the recruitment of PhD students.

Ideally, the provided Task Force recommendations work best when implemented together. We strongly believe that a dual-approach to social justice and equity will meet the needs of the SMU community, particularly the students. The most fitting strategic framework for establishing SMU's legacy of social justice and equity is to establish a university wide Urban Research Institute along with a TRHT Campus Center. All the remaining recommendations are complimentary to and intersect with the potential missions of an Urban Research Institute and the TRHT Campus Center. Each entity serves a distinct purpose, promoting long-term structural social justice and equity changes in the Dallas-Fort Worth region and across the nation. We envision the URI generating novel and groundbreaking research in areas such as infrastructure, poverty, homelessness, the impact of mass incarceration on children, economic development, and educational equity—issues with which most cities and many nations are grappling. The TRHT Campus Center will fit SMU's student community by focusing on racial healing and training students to tackle the above-referenced issues, all of which have strong racial implications in the U.S. Again, these two entities could provide an institutional home for most of the other recommendations, such as the Art and Social Justice Collaboration and the Collaborative Colloquium featuring Data Science for Social Good.

One of the key benefits of adopting a dual-approach is the expansion of underrepresented faculty who can assist with SMU's advancement to R1 status and provide the requisite classroom presence and support for all students, particularly those who are underrepresented. Funding is available for the recommendations; but please note that SMU may be required to match certain grants and/or show its level of commitment via private donor fundraising. Hiring a specific person to focus on generating new donors for social justice and equity initiatives is important because while there is a pool of donors and corporations who support this type of work, SMU must compete with other institutions with a solid history of hiring faculty from underrepresented groups and supporting research in politically unpopular areas in the southern region of the country. Developing a legacy in this area will require a high level of commitment, and SMU will need to raise \$25 – 50 million to move the needle and lay the foundation for being a national leader in the area of social justice and equity. As the largest private university in the heart of Dallas and state of Texas, it is perfectly poised to do so.

FULL TASK FORCE REPORT

Envisioning Social Justice and Equity at SMU (Charge 1)

Introduction

On August 20, 2021, the Task Force on Social Justice and Equity engaged in their inaugural meeting to brainstorm how we envision social justice and equity at SMU. During the following meeting, conducted September 13, 2021, two definitions emerged:

1. Social justice and equity mean that anyone on campus should feel that they are equal to others, or has equal opportunities to realize their full potential.
2. Social justice and equity are concepts that promote awareness and acknowledgement of every person and their differences and an active pursuit to provide equitable experiences for all.

Over the next two years, we continued to discuss the essence of each term and the concepts they embody. We identified opportunities for growth in a variety of areas, including healthcare inequity, economic justice, housing insecurity, access to voting, mass incarceration, assisting SMU students in need, and improving the campus climate and safety for African American, Hispanic, Asian, and LGBTQ students.

The Task Force spent the first year seeking information and feedback from the SMU community regarding how social justice and equity is taught, experienced, and researched on campus. We invited members of the SMU faculty and students to meet with us regarding their research, classes, and advocacy in the area of social justice and equity. As we progressed, we realized the breadth of work that SMU community members do. The entire two years could have been spent collecting information; however, this section of the report captures the major touchstones of social justice and equity and how these segments of the community envision the scope of this work.

SMU Student Vision of Social Justice and Equity

The Student Outreach Committee, a sub-committee of the Task Force on Social Justice and Equity, was charged with gathering feedback from current SMU students about how they envision social justice and equity on SMU's campus and beyond. Information, related to students' perceptions of social justice and equity, was gathered through two methods: (a) small group listening sessions and (b) an electronic survey. In both the listening sessions and surveys, a fairly consistent theme emerged related to social justice and equity—to effectively engage in social justice and equity work outside of SMU, a socially just and equitable climate on SMU's campus must first be established. To achieve this vision, students consistently called for the University to sustainably fund the Human Rights Program and expand and resource the Office of Diversity & Inclusion so it can have a greater impact on campus. Students also indicated a desire for their

coursework and on-campus involvement to more effectively prepare them to engage in social justice and equity work off campus. Detailed information related to the Task Force findings can be found in [Appendix A](#).

SMU students possess the will and desire to meaningfully engage in social justice and equity work. To strengthen formalized pathways for students to participate in these efforts, the University needs to intentionally invest resources that enhance the efficacy of existing social justice and equity initiatives, while also building trust and continuity with community partners. It is imperative to note that students consistently expressed a desire for SMU to dedicate efforts to improve the internal campus climate for students holding marginalized identities before focusing externally on social justice and equity issues in the community. Student-sponsored solutions for improving the campus environment included holding authentic, identity-centered conversations through introductory coursework, as well as creating shared language related to social justice and equity among the student body. To actualize the vision of a socially just and equitable campus, the University must solicit ongoing student input and consultation from students of *all* social identities and backgrounds, as well as center student needs and voices, throughout the process. Through these efforts, SMU can nurture students' passion for social justice and equity and prepare students to engage ethically in this work in the Dallas area and beyond.

SMU Faculty Vision of Social Justice and Equity

Over the course of two years, Task Force Chair, Jessica Dixon Weaver, and the Task Force met with various undergraduate and graduate school Deans, campus administrators, and faculty, including Human Rights Director Professor Rick Halperin and Associate Director Brad Kline, Lyle Professor Janille Smith-Colin, Lyle Ph.D. student Collin Yarbrough, Law Professor Mary Spector, Professor Emerita Lynn Stokes, Law Professor Pam Metzger, Associate Provost for Curricular Innovation and Policy Peter Moore, Bush Institute Director J.H. Cullum Clark, Perkins Professor of Practice and BACS Director Tamara Lewis, Budd Center Director Toni Harrison-Kelly and Program Specialist Jordan Robinson. The vision of social justice and equity varied within each school. For example, Professor Rick Halperin believes that the term 'human rights' encompasses the terms 'social justice and equity.' Many of the ongoing projects within the SMU Human Rights program address social justice and equity issues. Initiatives include the Human Rights Cluster, [Human Rights Youth Summit](#), SMU Pride, SMU Black Lives Matter, and [Maladjusted Podcast](#).

In both the undergraduate and graduate schools, it is clear that diversity officers and faculty members of color are critical to the social justice and equity offerings to students and the Dallas community. For example, Steve Denson, the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in the Cox School of Business, has long standing relationships with affinity groups, such as the National Association of Black Accountants, which sponsors a summer camp for underrepresented youth on SMU's campus. Steve also hosted conversations with the entire freshman class of business students on the issue of diversity and inclusion, including the discussion of three readings that focus on issues of belonging in the workplace, racial equity, and diversity's influence on innovation. Professor Jacquelyn Thomas' research focuses on corporate social responsibility and DEI in marketing, and she facilitated a first-time partnership with Marketing Science, a top journal in marketing, to publish a special issue of DEI. She hosted a conference in March 2023 for scholars interested in publishing papers in Marketing Science, with the goal of

quantifying the impact of DEI and helping to enact change. Finally, Dean Matthew Meyers highlighted the Folsom Institute for Real Estate, which provides hands-on training for students as part of the Real Estate Impact Investment Fund. Students created and raised money for an investment fund, with the mandate of finding a return on their investment as well as demonstrating a social benefit of their proposed investment. This class focuses on training students to commit to environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies in their investments and hiring.

Another example of how DEI officers and underrepresented faculty members drive social justice and equity issues on campus would be Assistant Dean of DEI Kathy Hubbard in the Lyle School of Engineering and Assistant Professor Janille Smith-Colin. Former Engineering Dean Marc Christensen and Kathy provided a long list of social equity and justice initiatives at Lyle Engineering, including events hosted by the Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity such as [Impact Nights](#), and reports generated by the Inclusive Economy Consortium, such as [Unlocking the Potential for Inclusive Economic Development – Dallas Ft. Worth and Beyond](#), addressing the impact of inequality on globalization, technological advancement, and climate change. Professor Smith-Colin and post-doctoral fellow Collin Yarbrough work together to address infrastructure equity. Collin is the author of *Paved a Way: Infrastructure, Policy and Racism in an American City*, and he presented an overview of his book to the Task Force in 2021. His book features the city of Dallas, and addresses the destruction of Freedman’s town, a thriving Black neighborhood, by the construction of highway US 75/Central Expressway. He also chronicles the ways that racism has impacted the division, elimination, and decay of neighborhoods throughout Dallas where people of color live. Collin and Professor Smith-Colin are part of the Research Cluster Data Science for Social Good, where they work with students in exploring Dallas County Inland Port’s effect on the community’s access to transportation services.

SMU'S Current Social Justice & Equity Initiatives (Charge 2)

Introduction

Three sub-committees of the Task Force were dedicated to determining SMU's current social justice and equity initiatives: the Student Outreach Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Community Outreach Committee. This section of the final report details the work of the latter two committees. [Appendix A](#) provides student statements regarding the curriculum and community engagement opportunities that relate to social justice and equity. Appendices [C](#) and [D](#) provide additional detail regarding the specific undergraduate and graduate classes that have either a social justice and equity component or focus.

SMU Curriculum on Social Justice and Equity

The Chair of the Task Force, Jessica Dixon Weaver, charged the Curriculum Committee with reviewing courses, activities, and centers at SMU to identify those curricular endeavors that delivered content related to social justice and/or equity. The committee reviewed the SMU catalog, course lists, activities, and offerings to identify these offerings. The committee also reached out to department chairs. The full findings of the committee are located in [Appendix B](#).

Curricular Offerings: Undergraduate Courses

SMU has relatively robust course offerings in the areas of social justice and equity at the undergraduate level. There is a Human Diversity requirement in SMU's Common Curriculum, which is required of all students. All courses approved for Human Diversity must satisfy a specific set of requirements that, by their nature, require students to investigate issues of equity and social justice. Students have the option of completing this requirement through coursework or through approved activities. There are currently 128 courses approved to satisfy the Human Diversity requirement.

Beyond the Human Diversity requirement of the Common Curriculum, SMU offers 355 undergraduate level courses with social justice and equity as either themes or the primary focus. The 355 identified courses include those courses that satisfy the Human Diversity requirements. These courses exist in the majority of departments at SMU, although they are concentrated in Dedman College, in Divisions I (Humanities) and II (Social Sciences), in Art History and the Communications division of Meadows, and in Civil and Environmental Engineering in Lyle. The departments with the greatest numbers of courses are, in order, World Languages and Literatures (60), History (51), Anthropology (29), Sociology (18), and Art History (18). In many of these departments, the entire undergraduate major centers questions of social justice and equity and a significant number of courses in the degree focus on one or both of these issues. Anthropology, History, Human Rights, Political Science, Sociology, and World Languages are examples of such departments. In other cases, departments offer isolated courses, or small groups of courses that have equity and/or social justice as themes. This is the case for departments such as Art, Art History, Economics, and Philosophy.

Although there are 355 courses in total that treat questions of equity or social justice, only 93 courses have equity or social justice as a primary focus. The remaining 262 courses have equity or social justice as a theme, meaning that questions of social justice and equity are repeatedly raised in the course but are not the primary focus of the course. The departments with the highest numbers of courses that focus on equity or social justice are, in order, History (24), Human Rights (11), World Languages (11), Anthropology (9), English (6), and Sociology (6). Examples of courses focusing on equity and social justice are FREN 4376 (Francophone Cultures), HIST 3304 (African Americans and Civil Rights), HRTS 2301 (Human Rights in South Africa), MUHI 1340 (Jazz Tradition and Transformation), and PLSC 4346 (Movements and Protests). A detailed listing of courses that foreground social justice and equity, along with descriptions of each course, and its relationship to equity and social justice is available here: <https://smu.box.com/s/v6fwrxlshh89ps79d2s5irxs11fylv>.

Although there are several hundred courses with social justice or equity as a theme or focus across the undergraduate spectrum, not all of these courses focus on these issues in a contemporary context. Some courses, in fact, deal with these issues in ancient societies, or even prehistoric contexts. Examples of these courses include: ARHS 3304 (Aztecs of Mexico), HIST 1311 (Western Civilization to 1527), and HIST 3353 (History of Ancient Greece). For this reason, it may be worth highlighting, for students interested in these topics, those courses that focus on equity or social justice in a contemporary context, as the translation of knowledge from a very removed context may not be of interest to many students. Examples of courses that explore social justice and equity in contemporary contexts in both the US and the world include: CEE 1326 (Introduction to Global Development) DANC 4375 (Dance History: Jazz History), ECO 4330 (Economics of Human Rights) ENGL 3385 (Literature of the Holocaust), and WL 3341 (Failure of Humanity in Rwanda). In the course inventory (linked above), these courses have been identified, and a count of such courses, by department, has been given in the table below. It would likely be helpful to students to have a central inventory of these courses, separate from an overall inventory of courses on equity and social justice generally.

There are, as noted, many majors with a strong emphasis on social justice and equity. Despite this, there is no dedicated major in social justice or equity. The Human Rights program comes very close to being such a major, because questions of equity and social justice are central to the study of Human Rights. Human Rights, however, has limited resources and only one dedicated faculty member, and it relies heavily on other departments for its courses. Other majors that figure these questions prominently are Anthropology, International Studies, and Sociology. There is also little coordination among departments offering courses on social justice and equity, and little publicly available information about which departments offer such courses and how often they are offered. Making these courses and programs, and the faculty who teach them more visible, and clearly indicating which courses have a focus on equity and social justice, and when and where (in terms of department) they are offered would likely increase enrollments in these areas.

Beyond highlighting the courses and programs with a focus on equity and social justice that already exist, SMU should look for ways to expand these course offerings and to work to promote questions of social justice and equity in curriculum across the campus. Hiring faculty

who incorporate these questions into their research and teaching, in whatever discipline they work, would achieve this end, as would hosting workshops and seminars on incorporating these issues into the curriculum.

Activities and Internships: Undergraduate Level

As with courses, there is no centralized tracking of activities related to social justice and equity on campus. There are activities of this kind offered in departments, through Student Affairs, through the residential commons, and off-campus, but no comprehensive list is available. This section will detail some of the activities on campus that have a focus on social justice or equity, but a deliberate attempt to catalog and disseminate the full list of activities offered would benefit students.

SMU Student Affairs offers a number of regular, organized activities that engage students in work towards equity and social justice in the Dallas community. The largest of these is Engage Dallas (<https://www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/EngageDallas>), which is a structured approach to place-based community engagement, rather than a single activity. Engage Dallas is the university's designated community engagement opportunity for students who live on campus. It consists of training in community engagement and in social justice and equity, coupled with hours of community service completed in the Dallas community. Engage Dallas has a number of community partners around Dallas, including After8toEducate, Dallas Furniture Bank, Empowering The Masses, Genesis Women's Shelter & Support, Our Community Gardens, Sunny South Community Garden, The Bridge, and The Senior Source among others. In addition to Engage Dallas, the Office of Social Change and Intercultural Engagement works to pair students with opportunities to engage in social justice and equity work, and the SMU Residential Commons similarly offer programming to provide these opportunities to students. Each of the Residential Commons also engages students in social justice and equity work. Each commons offers a thematically focused opportunity for social justice and equity work in the Dallas community. In short, there are many opportunities on campus for students to engage in promoting equity and social justice. However, because these opportunities are not centrally promoted, students may not always be aware of just how many opportunities exist.

Curricular Offerings: Graduate Courses

Like the undergraduate curricular offerings, graduate courses focusing on social justice and equity are distributed across programs, with no centralized or coordinated cataloging or advertising of these offerings. However, there are far fewer courses addressing questions of equity and social justice at the graduate level than at the undergraduate level, and there are many fewer departments offering them. In fact, the departments that offer the greatest number of such courses, are, primarily, graduate-only departments, such as Education (15), Law (34), Liberal Studies (43), and the Perkins School of Theology (11). Moreover, many of the departments that offer the greatest number of these courses at the undergraduate level, such as Human Rights, Political Science, Sociology, and World Languages, do not have graduate programs, and many of the departments that do have graduate programs, particularly programs in Cox and Lyle, do not offer equity and social justice courses, or if they do, they offer only one or two at the undergraduate level. A table showing the distribution of courses on equity and social justice at the graduate level is below. For

a detailed list of courses, with descriptions, see <https://smu.box.com/s/9r3myu02gqv75s2m69u2q48h2plv9bu4>.

There are, in total, 126 courses at the graduate level that have equity or social justice as either a focus or a theme. 72 of these courses have equity or social justice as a focus, and 54 have equity or social justice as a theme. 64 of these courses have a contemporary focus. Examples of courses at the graduate level that have equity or social justice as a focus are ANTH 6304 (Ethnicity, Migration, and Nationalism), EDU 6362 (Race, Power, & Politics: The History of Urban Education), EPL 6358 (Equity and Access Across Higher Education), LAW 6224 (International Protection of Human Rights), and SOSC 7340 (The Human Condition in Africa).

Unlike undergraduate students, most graduate students have a limited ability to take courses outside of their program. For this reason, the only equity and social justice courses available to most graduate students are those offered in their program. Given the very small numbers of programs that offer these courses, it is clear that most graduate students at SMU have no exposure to courses exploring equity and social justice. This means it is imperative that SMU hire faculty who teach graduate students very intentionally, and that they prioritize, in all areas, the hire of faculty who will bring questions of equity and social justice to each discipline and department.

Activities and Internships: Graduate Level

As with courses, the opportunities for activities or internships that permit students to explore or address issues of equity and social justice are limited at the graduate level, both in terms of numbers and the programs that offer them. The Dedman School of Law offers the most activity related to social justice and equity, through its law clinics and externships. Dedman Law offers ten community clinics and one externship that serve local communities and that offer legal services to those who may otherwise lack access. The services offered by the clinics are free. [Appendix B](#) describes each of the relevant clinics.

In addition to the law clinics, the SMU Psychology program offers a psychology clinic that provides low or no cost mental health and counseling services to members of the local community. The Perkins School of Theology offers Global Theological Education Immersions that expose students to diverse cultures from around the world. In the Lyle School of Engineering, students in Civil and Environmental Engineering engage in research projects that explore issues of equity in local communities. These were the only documented opportunities for equity or social justice work at the graduate level at SMU. As this summary suggests, the opportunities are uneven, and heavily concentrated in Dedman Law. There were no documented opportunities for Cox students or for more programs in Lyle, Education, or Dedman College. Ideally, all graduate students would have opportunities for social justice and equity work, as these issues span disciplines. Adding faculty whose research focuses on social justice or equity work and communicating to graduate programs the need for more social justice and equity opportunities would likely increase the opportunities for students.

SMU Centers and Institutes

SMU has 41 centers and institutes. Some of these are university-wide and some are housed in specific colleges and schools. There are a few centers and institutes that are focused on social justice or equity, including The Budd Center in the Simmons School of Education & Human Development, the Hunt Institute for Engineering and Humanity, the Deason Criminal Justice Center, Hunter Legal Center for Victims of Crimes Against Women, and the W.W. Caruth, Jr. Child Advocacy Institute. The latter three are all housed in the Dedman School of Law. Several centers and institutes offer programming related to equity and social justice. In some cases, this programming is occasional, and in other cases, it is offered regularly. Overall, there is activity in the domain of social justice and equity, but as with curriculum and activities, it is unevenly distributed, and there is no central, coherent organization and no one place to go for information about such programming.

Conclusion

Although a diverse array of coursework, research, programming, and activities supporting equity and social justice exist on the SMU campus, these opportunities are unevenly distributed across the campus, concentrated in particular programs and majors, overwhelmingly oriented toward undergraduate students, and not always readily visible to students or to external stakeholder. Clear opportunities to expand research, coursework, and programming supporting social justice and equity exist. The easiest way to increase participation in such programs would be to offer a centralized webpage that advertised all of the equity and social justice activity on campus in a single place. This is an easy, low-cost solution that could increase utilization of existing programs, but it would not expand offerings or expand access to such offerings.

In order to increase offerings and expand access, SMU will have to add structures and faculty with the specific goal of increasing the courses, research, and programming on equity and social justice. One way to accomplish this would be to create a center devoted to social justice and equity. Another way to expand offerings and access equity and social justice coursework, scholarship, and programming would be to deliberately hire faculty who incorporate social justice and equity into their research and teaching, regardless of the domain or department in which they are hired. For example, SMU could ensure that all existing research clusters dedicate at least one position to faculty whose research focuses on equity and social justice. SMU could also create a series of visiting faculty positions and bring faculty with a research or social equity focus. This is relatively easy to do in most clusters, for example, in data science to ensure that at least one researcher is looking at data that explores issues of social justice or equity, and in Earth Hazards and National Security, for example, to ensure that at least one researcher looks at the disparate impacts of earth hazards on the poor or on underrepresented groups. The proposed Urban Research cluster should also include multiple scholars whose work incorporates questions of social justice and equity as the urban context is one in which these questions are easily centered.

Additional structure and resources are needed if SMU wants to ensure that all students, regardless of program or level have access to coursework, research and scholarship, internships, activities, and programming. However, there are solutions to this, such as incorporating an emphasis on social justice and equity into all new hires, regardless of discipline, which would not

require resources beyond those the university has already committed. SMU must determine its commitment to issues of social justice and equity, and the degree to which it wishes to make this commitment visible. The level of commitment of the institution will be the most significant factor in determining whether additional resources are committed to this project.

Strategic Frameworks for SMU Social Justice and Equity Offerings (Charge 3)

Introduction

To create sustainable efforts in social justice and equity at SMU it is essential that University efforts align with the University's strategic goals and build upon its academic strengths and organizational structures to create scalable models for impact. SMU set forth six goals to accomplish in its' 2016-2025 Strategic Plan: (1) to enhance the academic quality and stature of the University; (2) to improve teaching and learning; (3) to strengthen scholarly research, creative achievement, and opportunities for innovation; (4) to sustain student development and a supportive campus environment; (5) to broaden global perspectives; and (6) to increase revenue generation and promote responsible stewardship of resources. In this section, we identify the University activities with a social justice and equity focus that currently exist or are planned, and when indicated, suggest potential opportunities for strengthening.

Strategic Frameworks

The Task Force considered several strategic frameworks for new social justice and equity offerings as well as one large, all-encompassing framework that could serve as an umbrella to other initiatives in various departments. While each school has its own particular programs or centers that may focus on social justice and equity, there is no overarching physical or virtual place where a student or faculty member can find the collection of offerings across campus. The Task Force reviewed centers and institutes with a distinct focus on social justice, racial justice, and/or economic equity at SMU's cohort universities. Some offered annual reports, outlining their history, funding sources, mission, impact, etc. A chart of these centers can be found in Appendices [E1](#) and [E2](#).

Prior to Summer 2020, many universities already had social justice and equity-oriented centers in place; but some received major gifts or funding because of the research of their existing faculty (see [Appendix F](#) for detailed information). For example, Rutgers University received a \$15M grant from the Mellon Foundation to establish an [Institute for the Study of Global Racial Justice](#). It is described as “[a] collection of scholars who believe that the arts and humanities, in dialogue with other fields, can contribute powerful visions of a just society to effect change.” As a public university, Rutgers has a long history of hiring and retaining scholars in various fields whose research centers on social justice, equity, and systemic racism; therefore, the grant money received was used to assist them in collaborating across campuses, amplify their work, invite visiting and new scholars to campus to enhance the intellectual offerings to students, and create a half dozen new interdisciplinary research projects with fellow colleagues and professors at other universities such as Yale and Arizona State University. Rutgers' President was invited to apply for a Mellon grant by Mellon Foundation President, [Elizabeth Alexander](#), who is a nationally recognized thought leader on race, justice, the arts and American society.

On the smaller scale, Syracuse University began [The Lender Center for Social Justice](#) in 2018 with \$5M from alumni Marvin and Helaine Lender. The center seeks “to foster proactive, innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to issues related to social justice, equity, and inclusion.” The Center generates much less research than the Rutgers Institute; however, they do have both faculty and student fellowships centered on the research of the selected professor. Each year faculty members can apply for the fellowship. The selected professor is then paired with 5 student fellows who support the faculty member’s research project over a two-year period. There is also a 3-year programmatic collaborative initiative exploring the racial wealth gap to help dismantle the root causes of wealth disparities.

Centers and institutes are the strategic frameworks best suited for interdisciplinary, research-driven work in the area of social justice and equity. Research clusters housed within this type of framework will allow professors and post-doc fellows the opportunity to collaborate and propose funding for the collection of data by students, fellows and faculty while at the same time performing a service for the local community. Data Science for Social Good, one of the current DCII Research Clusters, is an interdisciplinary group of professors working to promote tangible changes in engineering, law and public policy, and statistics such that infrastructure equity is established for those who are marginalized by socio-economic status, employment status, location, and race. If an Urban Research Institute were established, Data Science for Social Good could utilize its resources to expand its reach. If expanded, it could receive support from the Bush Institute by applying for available post-doctoral grants. It could further expand its work with inclusion of the Economics Department and a possible collaboration with the [Sadie T. Alexander Collective](#), which is an organization that supports the pipeline of Black female economists entering the academy. In addition, other centers whose work has a social justice and equity component, such as the Folsom Institute for Real Estate, could consult and collaborate with identified Research Clusters to advance the educational experience of students, and increase the equity impact of SMU in greater Dallas. Ideally, an Urban Research Institute would be a hub for social justice and equity endeavors and a place where faculty could collaborate and generate new research projects to advance and/or maintain SMU’s Road to R1. See [Appendix F](#) for a list of university-wide social justice centers, urban research centers in Texas, and research concerning the history and creation of urban studies.

The Task Force also considered less costly frameworks such as joint initiatives or collaborations, collaborative colloquiums, and expanding research within existing centers. Next, we connected with external organizations and people engaged in social and equity work. We concluded that several strategic frameworks for new social justice and equity offerings would be a fruitful investment for SMU, as well as one large, all-encompassing framework, which could serve as an umbrella to other initiatives in various departments. SMU is best poised to build a national social justice and equity legacy with: (1) *We Are All Homeless*, (2) *We Got Us Now*, and (3) the *Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Centers* (an American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) initiative). A description of these organizations and how SMU could partner with them is expounded upon in the section on Intersections for Public Service and Educational Opportunities (Charge 5) on page twenty-six.

Sources of Funding (Charge 4)

The Fundraising and Budgeting Committee, a subcommittee of the Task Force, developed a proposed budget for each of the following frameworks: Urban Research Institute; Urban Research Center; Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center (*An AAC&U initiative*); and Art & Social Justice Joint Initiative (see [Appendix H](#) for detailed information). To establish an institute or center, SMU funding guidelines require a minimum of a \$5M or \$2.5M endowment, respectively. At least five years of operational funds are recommended to allow the centers to begin scalable hiring and programming. To qualify for a TRHT Campus Center, AAC&U requires a nominal (\$5,000) investment for faculty and staff training. Upon successful completion of the TRHT Institute on Campus Centers, which is a series of workshops that are held annually, the decision to create a TRHT Campus Center would be made by the University. The Art & Social Justice Joint Initiative would be a joint program between two schools or departments and does not have a funding minimum. This alternative framework is less structured and would necessitate short-term and long-term funding strategies.

Proposed 5-Year Operational Budget

The proposed 5-year operational budget for the five frameworks is located in [Appendix H](#). The Committee reviewed budgets of peer and aspirational colleges and universities that have institutes or centers with a social justice and equity focus. In addition, the Committee reviewed similarly situated SMU institutes and centers. The 5-year operational budget tracks with the 5-year programmatic calendar. It should be noted that some of the recommendations that are not included in the budget for the institute or center could be subsumed within the financial plan for the framework with minimal changes to the bottom line. For example, the Collaborative Colloquium feature Data Science for Social Good could be part of the Urban Research Institute or Center, and it could account for the budgetary line for a conference or symposium in year two or three.

Salary, Wages and Benefits

Each framework is scalable with leadership positions, administrative staff, and post-doctoral fellows. The Committee determined annual salaries and the 30% fringe benefits after reviewing recent budgets proposed in SMU grant requests. After reviewing a wide range of SMU budget proposals and researching current flight pricing, the Committee determined domestic and international travel and custom categories. Across all frameworks, the Committee gradually increased programmatic elements and student engagement over five years.

Comparative Budgets: Near-Term and Long-Term Funding

Clearly, comparing operating budgets across the frameworks, the Urban Research Institute is the costliest to operate, but also the most robust due to the strong complement of research enabled faculty and research fellows. A substantial fundraising effort would need to be executed

to achieve an annual operational budget of approximately \$1.2M (in Year 5). An endowment of more than \$23M would provide ample operational support, understanding that \$5M in endowment is required by SMU to stand up an institute. It is also anticipated that much of the research can be grant-funded. Near term sources include individual and corporate donors, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and the Texas Bar Foundation. Long-term sources include the Mellon Foundation and other foundations identified through www.candid.org, which is subscription-based web platform that provides a foundation directory to match nonprofit organizations with grant funders.

The Urban Research Center is a scaled down version of the institute with an approximate operating budget of \$721,000. Again, SMU would require a \$2.5M endowment to establish a center. The operational difference between these frameworks is the number of positions available and the amount of research that could be generated from the center. This choice would be less than ideal because it may not be a sufficient platform for the Urban Research Cluster. If SMU hires five (5) tenured or tenure-eligible faculty who focus on social justice and equity, the opportunity for mutual innovation and creative research projects is greater; therefore, an increased level of initial resources and staff support is necessary to advance future plans.

The TRHT Campus Center would be more externally facing with a reduced focus on research as compared to the institute and center models (see [Appendix G](#)). The AAC&U model emphasizes external collaboration and provides a platform and the resources to share experiences and facilitate conversations. In Year One, the only expense for the TRHT Campus Center is a \$5000 fee for sending participants to AAC&U's TRHT training. Potential seed or near-term funds could come from Newman's Own (\$25-30K). This model does require a funding match from the University when seed-funding is received. For example, Duke University was granted a \$30K fund to seed the TRHT Campus Center, and it exceeded this amount with a \$100K match from an existing Institute. Comparatively, Rutgers University received the same amount in seed funding as Duke, and the University matched this amount exactly with \$30K. The TRHT Campus Center's anticipated operational budget in Year 5 is \$712,000. While all TRHT Centers do not have a physical space or building on campus, the Task Force recommends that SMU seek to locate a separate building on campus to house the TRHT Campus Center. This building could also serve as the safe space for underrepresented students at SMU, as well as the space for the Urban Research Institute.

A less costly and less permanent framework is a joint initiative or program. There is a vast difference between a center and a joint initiative. The TRHT Campus Center is a different entity using a national model, whereas a joint initiative is a national/international movement with local genesis. The joint initiative is a reasonable program with several near-term funding sources, including Meadows Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies. The Model for Social Impact Investing will receive a \$1.7M grant from Meadows Foundation and the Research Center for Data Arts is set to receive \$1.5M from Bloomberg Philanthropies. These existing relationships lay the foundation for near-term as well as long-term funding. The Art & Social Justice Collaboration would leverage the extraordinary *We Are All Homeless* project, examining homelessness and poverty. Featuring this project expands an existing program that is already in motion at the

University with decanal support from Meadows and Perkins. There is a planned research component and a symposium produced every other year. In Year 5, the anticipated operational budget is just under \$2M.

It should be noted that there is an existing Data Science Center that may be more readily able to pick up the Collaborative Colloquium as an additional research project or scholarly event if current faculty leaders and staff are available to serve in this capacity. This colloquium could also easily be subsumed under the Urban Research Institute. Furthermore, several facets of the partnership with We Got Us Now (see next section) can operate within the existing Deason Criminal Justice Center and the Art and Social Justice Initiative (if adopted).

Intersections for Public Service & Educational Opportunities (Charge 5)

Public service and educational opportunities abound for students at SMU in both the undergraduate and graduate programs. The Task Force distinguishes the opportunities that are highlighted in this section by noting that the organizations working to achieve social justice and equity in the community are not as widely represented among the organizations represented in programs like Engage Dallas. Using the definition of social justice and equity outlined in Section I, the Task Force is focused on intersections for public service and educational opportunities with organizations that are not just meeting the immediate needs of the community, but are working on solutions for historical and current injustices and inequities experienced by marginalized communities or vulnerable groups, i.e., children, racial minorities, the LGBTQ community, unhoused persons, etc.

The Task Force identified several organizations based on preliminary brainstorming and discussions with various school Deans, Center Directors, and specific Research Clusters. The three organizations with which SMU is best poised to build a national SJE legacy are We Are All Homeless, We Got Us Now, and the Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Centers. Below is a brief description of each of these enterprises and the impact they have in the community.

We Are All Homeless

In 1993, SMU Professor Willie Baronet began [*We Are All Homeless*](#), an art and social justice project. It started with him buying a cardboard sign from an unhoused person at an intersection. Professor Baronet struggled with his morality and feelings about homelessness, questioning whether his choices contributed to the poverty he witnessed. This one act led to conversations and connections with unhoused persons across America. After collecting hundreds of signs, Professor Baronet created art exhibits showcasing various signs in different configurations. Since 2009, there have been over 35 art installations of *We Are All Homeless* in museums and art galleries in the United States and the United Kingdom. In 2016, the exhibit was featured at the Democratic and Republican Conventions. The installations provide an experience for people to explore the humanity of the signs, question the nature of home and compassion, and see people for who they are.

We Are All Homeless has over 7.7 million website views, 100,000 video shares, and has raised close to \$500,000 for non-profits dedicated to assisting unhoused persons and families. Professor Baronet has recorded 3 TEDx Talks and conducted over 40 workshops with students and community members. The documentary, [*Signs of Humanity*](#), records his trek across the United States where Professor Baronet collected over 280 signs and conducted 100 interviews of unhoused persons. *Signs of Humanity* has been featured in 8 film festivals and has won best documentary awards. It is currently available on Amazon Prime.

Professor Baronet is a Faculty-in-Residence and leads Armstrong Commons. *We Are All Homeless* is a featured component of Armstrong Commons. For example, several student

organizations create ‘blessing bags’ for unhoused persons, each comprised of basic toiletries and personal items. There is also an annual *Home is a Journey* march that Professor Baronet organizes each year on SMU’s campus. This fall, there will be *We Are All Homeless* art exhibit in the Meadows School. Dean Samuel Holland of Meadows School of the Arts and Perkins School of Theology Interim Dean Michael McKee support the concept of an interdisciplinary symposium focused on research on homelessness, poverty, and unhoused persons. The SMU Perkins Black/Africana Church Studies Program (BACS) is also very supportive and can offer faculty leadership. The Art & Social Justice Collaboration could rotate or incorporate other social justice issues that intersect issues related to unhoused persons, such as *We Got Us Now*, a nonprofit organization that advocates for children of incarcerated parents (see below). The City of Dallas is also focused on homelessness, and City Task Force Chair (and philanthropist) Peter Brodsky indicated his support for efforts to bring awareness to this issue. See Table 3 for the 5-year projected programmatic calendar.

We Got Us Now

[*We Got Us Now*](#) is a nonprofit organization with the goal of voicing the multifaceted consequences of mass incarceration, notably those endured by the 10 million children and young adults of incarcerated parents. Founded in 2018 by Ebony Underwood, *We Got Us Now* centers the lived experiences of these children while contributing to policy change, family reunification, and ultimately criminal justice reform. In December 1988, Ebony’s father was arrested. Two years later, a judge sentenced him to life without possibility of parole. Such began the pain, trauma, and silent suffering that, according to Ebony, many children of incarcerated parents experience. Sixteen years later, Ebony began sharing her story and realized it is the story of over 10 million American children. *We Got Us Now* is guided by four principles—**engage** children of incarcerated parents and mobilize their efforts, **educate** stakeholders regarding the consequences of incarcerating parents, **elevate** the community, and **empower** the community and stakeholders with solution-oriented strategies for holistically addressing the wellbeing on said children.

The Task Force foresees *We Got Us Now* as a potential framework for collaborating with SMU’s Deason Criminal Justice Reform Center and the Vansickle Family Law Clinic. Similar to *We Got Us Now*, the Deason Center focuses on criminal justice reform for marginalized persons through advocacy and storied or qualitative research. It offers a “boots on the ground” approach to address a multitude of issues including the right to counsel and prosecutorial discretion. In the past, the Deason Center partnered with [Buried Alive](#), an organization working to assist in the release of persons serving life without parole sentences. The Vansickle Family Law Clinic provides assistance to low-income, unrepresented family law litigants. *We Got Us Now* is a worthy organization to join the caldron of SMU partnerships doing the work of social justice and equity.

We Got Us Now is focused on policy changes in every state regarding maintaining the relationships of children with their incarcerated parents. To this end, there are three state legislative bills for which *We Got Us Now* is advocating – the Families Act, the Proximity Bill, and codification of mandated in-person visits. The Families Act would provide funding for organizations that provide alternatives to jail via substance abuse, employment, educational, and community-based programs. Rather than serve time in prison, persons who meet certain requirements would enter a program and remain home with their family. This Act ultimately seeks

appropriations for reunification of families. The Proximity Bill would mandate that states place incarcerated parents in a jail near family and loved ones so that they could easily maintain their family relationships. Since the coronavirus pandemic, some states have switched to having parent-child visitation online or via video-conferencing rather than in-person. *We Got Us Now* maintains that children need to see and touch their parent in-person to maintain a healthy relationship.

Another goal is *We Got Us Now* is to educate the next generation of leaders. It has launched a three-part campaign sponsored by the Institute of Museums, which has provided funding for an art installation and short documentary film. SMU could host this art installation as part of the Art and Social Justice Initiative, and a film showing and discussion could also be hosted at Meadows and in Dedman Law. *We Got Us Now* is seeking to showcase the art and film at universities across the U.S. There are multiple ways that SMU could partner with *We Got Us Now*, and this work could be done within the Urban Research Institute or the TRHT Campus Center (see below).

Truth, Racial Healing, & Transformation Campus Centers

[Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation \(TRHT\)](#) is the brainchild of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which in 2007 discovered that racism exacerbates the conditions that stifle the pursuit of health, happiness, and wellbeing of all children. Born from a charge to nurture and empower children, *TRHT* is a comprehensive community-based framework that unearths and addresses the implications of racism in communities and organizations. Largely, *TRHT* promotes the erasure of racial hierarchies, and conscious recognition of innate human value. Moreover, *TRHT* facilitates the infrastructure for systemic change by helping constituents build trusting authentic relationships and unity, which leads to collective power useful for meaningful change. *TRHT* posits that “racial healing is about:

- the people work that leads to transformative systems
- the telling of hard truths about past wrongs and present consequences.
- repairing the harm of racism
- replacing the deeply held system that fuels racism with one that sees the inherent value of people
- authentic relationship building across real and perceived difference.

In an effort to dismantle systemic racism and the belief in hierarchical human value, the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is partnering with higher education institutions to develop *Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation (TRHT)* Campus Centers. Both AAC&U and *TRHT* seek to develop at least 150 self-sustaining, community-integrated Centers. Currently, the AAC&U collaborates with 71 institutions that serve as host locations and implement visionary action plans with the shared goal of erasing barriers to equitable treatment and opportunity on campuses, in our communities, and for our nation. The effort is centered around the primary pillars of the *TRHT* Framework—narrative change (truth-telling) and racial healing (trust and relationship building). A secondary pillar focuses on separation (segregation, colonization, and concentrated poverty), law (recommending solutions that produce a just application to the law), and economy (recommending approaches that create an equitable society). The Task Force met with Dr. Tia Brown McNair, the Vice President in the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Student Success and Executive Director for the Truth, Racial Healing, and

Transformation (TRHT) Campus Centers at the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

TRHT allows for customized programs that align with the history and prevailing needs of the universities with which it partners. For example, Duke University boasts a multidimensional program that engages Duke alumni, administrators, faculty, staff, and students along with citizens of the Durham area in activities that foster racial healing and relationship building. A research-oriented and producing center, Duke's TRHT Campus Center uses the relationships as leverage for building trust, recognizing bias, and thereby eradicating on campus racially motivated tensions and incidents. Rutgers University's TRHT Campus Center addresses structural inequality and barriers to economic opportunities. The Citadel TRHT Campus Center conducts archival research on the histories of racially underrepresented campus community members and uplifts their voice so those currently on the current campus community see themselves in the institution's history. Middlesex' TRHT Campus Center addresses equity and opportunity gaps among students by identifying practices, policies, and systems that enforce inequity. SMU is situated to establish a *TRHT* Center and acutely demonstrate their continued and active role in dismantling systemic racism and the belief in hierarchical human value.

The Task Force met with the Simmons School of Education & Human Development Budd Center Director, Dr. Toni Harrison-Kelly. Serendipitously, the Task Force learned that The Budd Center is a part of *TRHT*'s 2023 cohort, demonstrating SMU has an active social justice and equity hub that is familiar with *TRHT*'s goal, mission, efforts, and impact. This is helpful to know and indicates synergies might exist. The Task Force envisions, however, SMU's potential TRHT Campus Center as just that—a centrally located university center accessible to students, faculty, and staff. We envision students participating, collaborating, and in many cases leading the effort toward truth telling and racial healing. With the support of students, we envision faculty conducting research, facilitating racial healing activities, and other programs of interest to the SMU community. See Table 4 for the 5-year projected programmatic calendar.

**5-YEAR PROJECTED PROGRAMMATIC CALENDARS
(Charge 6)**

Introduction

There are three programmatic calendars in this section. Each calendar charts the development of a particular strategic framework and details the yearly growth of goals, programs, and community engagement.

Strategic Frameworks – 5-year Projected Programmatic Calendar

Table 2
Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation Campus Center

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Planning & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Attend TRHT Institute Training ▫ Select 5 SMU faculty/staff to participate in training (5 alternates) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Implement Comprehensive Action Plan (Collaborate with Budd Center) ▫ Fundraise (\$5M Goal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Establish partnership with Dallas TRHT ▫ Continue with Comp. Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Enhance Curriculum components w/ Dallas TRHT ▫ Add Research & Teaching Component 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Establish Inter-disciplinary Research ▫ Seek integration of resources re: R1
Hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ June 2024 ▫ \$5000 fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hire Director ▫ Hire 1 Admin. Staff Person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hire Program Director ▫ Start Hiring Process for Faculty Research Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hire Faculty Research Director ▫ Hire 1 Post Doc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Add Affiliated Faculty (2) ▫ Hire 1 additional Post Doc
Community Engagement			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Add Community Engagement Component 		

Table 3

We Are All Homeless – Meadows & Perkins Joint Initiative

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Planning & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fall Exhibit With Meadows ▫ IRB Approval for Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Exhibits in other schools @SMU ▫ UTD Exhibit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ DMA Exhibit ▫ Fort Worth Exhibit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Museum Exhibits (Local and State) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 1 ½ Day Fall Symposium Human Rights Collaborative \$30K-45K 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Working on Edited Research Book ▫ Perkins Black /African Church Studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fall Symposium ▫ Survey Modules & Related Costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Publish Edited Research Book 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fall Symposium
Hiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Student Researchers ▫ Apply for Post-Doc position w/ Bush Institute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hire Research Faculty (Junior Level) ▫ Post-Doc position 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Add Class -Art and Social Practice/ Entrepreneurship ▫ Social Justice & Equity Artist-in-Residence (1 yr) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hire Research Faculty (Senior Level) ▫ Social Justice & Equity Artist-in-Residence (1 yr) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Social Justice & Equity Artist-in-Residence (1 yr)
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Student-Led Community Service (Engage Dallas) ▫ Blessing Bag Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Student-Led Community Service (Engage Dallas) ▫ Blessing Bag Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Student-Led Community Service ▫ Blessing Bag Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Student-Led Community Service ▫ Blessing Bag Event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Student-Led Community Service ▫ Blessing Bag Event

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ <i>Home is a Journey</i> (March, November 2023) ▫ (National Homelessness Month) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ <i>Home is a Journey</i> (March, November 2023) ▫ (National Homelessness Month) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ <i>Home is a Journey</i> (March, November 2023) ▫ (National Homelessness Month) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ <i>Home is a Journey</i> (March, November 2023) ▫ (National Homelessness Month) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ <i>Home is a Journey</i> (March, November 2023) ▫ (National Homelessness Month)
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Table 4
Urban Research Institute

	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
Planning & Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Establish Urban Research Cluster ▫ Establish & Strengthen Existing Community Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Establish Inter-disciplinary Pilot Research Programs ▫ (Facilitate cross-cluster collaboration ▫ Urban Research Colloquium (Lunch and Learn) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Inter-disciplinary Pilot Research Programs (cont’) ▫ Urban Research Inter-disciplinary Symposium (National) ▫ Establish Executive Council ▫ Urban Research Colloquium (Lunch and Learn) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Inter-disciplinary Pilot Research Programs (cont’) ▫ Establish Inter-disciplinary Urban Research Institute ▫ Urban Research Colloquium (Lunch and Learn)

<p>Hiring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Recruit 3 Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty (1 Full Prof., 1 Associate Prof., 1 Assistant Prof.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Recruit Research Manager + Research Assistant ▫ Recruit 2 Tenure Eligible Faculty (2 Assistant Professors) ▫ Recruit 2 Post-Docs ▫ 2 Graduate Research Assistants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Recruit 4 Post-Docs ▫ 3 Graduate Research Assistants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hire Executive Director ▫ Recruit 4 Post-Docs ▫ 7 Graduate Research Assistants
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Strategy Planning Advisory Council (SMU Development & Outside Community Organizations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Establish Affiliate Faculty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Recruit Engaged Learning Students (Undergraduate) 	

Task Force Recommendations

Table 1
List of Task Force Recommendations

Task Force Recommendations	SMU Strategic Goal Alignment	Strengths & Weaknesses	Funding Sources
Create a central online catalog of social justice & equity offerings for undergraduates and graduate students at SMU.	GOALS TWO & FOUR	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Admin. Task Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Time & Maintenance 	Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion or TRHT Campus Center Funding
Establish a Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) Campus Center @ SMU, hiring five underrepresented tenured or tenure eligible professors whose research and teaching focus on social justice or equity.	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, & FIVE	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Tailored to SMU ▫ AAC&U built-in support system ▫ Advances systems level change ▫ Adds safe physical space for underrepresented students Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ TX politics ▫ Funding and space 	Near-Term: W.K. Kellogg Foundation w/ SMU Match Long Term: Ford Foundation, Mackenzie Scott, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Hewlett Foundation – See Candid
Establish an Urban Research Institute @ SMU, hiring five underrepresented tenured or tenure eligible professors whose research and teaching have a focus on social justice and equity. <i>Schools:</i> Law, Simmons, Dedman College, Meadows, Lyle, Perkins	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, & FOUR	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Urban Research Cluster ▫ Diversify Faculty ▫ Attract & support students Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Dept. Lines & Hiring 	Near Term: Corporate and Private Donors, Bloomberg Philanthropies, TX Bar Foundation Long Term: Mellon Foundation (Higher Learning)
Establish a Joint Art and Social Justice Initiative @ Meadows School of Art & Perkins School of Theology, with a specific focus on homelessness and poverty via We Are All Homeless .	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, & FIVE	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 30-year program w/ established partners Challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Faculty Time; Need for tenure-eligible faculty lead 	Near Term: Meadows Foundation, Model for Social Impact Investing Long Term: Bloomberg

			Philanthropies, Mellon Foundation (Humanities in Place & Higher Learning)
Expand research and community engagement within Engage Dallas, Joint Art and Social Justice Initiative (above), and VanSickle Family Law Clinic in Dedman Law, with a specific focus on the impact of mass incarceration on children and families via We Got Us Now .	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, & FOUR	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Reciprocal educational training for students and activists ▫ Service component tied to legal policy reform <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Coordination of Services; obtaining long-term research funding 	<p>Near Term: Texas Appleseed & National Institute of Justice (NIJ)</p> <p>Long Term: NIJ & U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ)-Flourishing Children of Incarcerated Parents (FCIP)</p>
Establish a Collaborative Colloquium featuring Data Science for Social Good (Lyle Engineering, Dedman Law & Dedman College Research Cluster).	GOALS ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, & FIVE	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ 3 Faculty + 1 Post Doc <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Long term funding & institutional support 	<p>Near Term: Texas Bar Foundation,</p> <p>Long Term: Fed Infrastructure Grant</p>
Require one faculty member of every cluster hire to be a tenured or tenure eligible professor whose research and teaching centers and reinforces social justice and equity.	GOALS ONE, TWO, & FOUR	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Diversify SMU faculty <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Hiring practices ▫ Commitment to new courses across depts. 	<p>Near Term: SMU Departments & Grad. Schools</p> <p>Long Term: SMU Development & Alumni network</p>
Diversify Development and External Affairs office by expanding the frontline fundraising staff to seek new individual and corporate donors and alumni who would support social justice and equity initiatives.	GOALS ONE & FOUR	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Expand donor base; support ODI efforts ▫ Representative from underrepresented group <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Budget ▫ Recruitment from traditional non-profit arena to SMU 	<p>Near Term: SMU Office of Development and External Affairs</p> <p>Long Term: Corporate Donor(s); Foundation Grant</p>

<p>Establish an endowed chair in the area of social justice and equity, with the objective of hiring a professor from an underrepresented group.</p>	<p>GOALS ONE, TWO</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Recruitment advantage <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fundraising 	<p>Near Term: Individual Donor, Minority Board Directors Long Term: Corporate Donor, Foundation Grant</p>
<p>Increase and sustain funding in on-campus divisions that are already entrenched in social justice and equity work (i.e., Human Rights Program, Office of Diversity & Inclusion)</p>	<p>GOALS TWO, THREE, & FOUR</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Supports and advocates for underrepresented students ▫ Advances SMU’s mission while also centering students ▫ Continue meaningful work (e.g., civil rights pilgrimage, systems level change) ▫ Low hanging fruit <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Funding ▫ Budget 	<p>Near Term: SMU Office of the President (ODI) Long Term: Individual and Corporate Donors, Foundation (Human Rights Program)</p>
<p>Maintain inclusive teaching offerings in the Center for Teaching Excellence, while also regularly offering programming that instructs faculty on how they might incorporate social justice and equity into their courses, regardless of the subject.</p>	<p>GOALS ONE, TWO, FOUR, FIVE, & SIX</p>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Fosters a global-minded perspective ▫ Decreases student resistance to diversity ▫ Decreases disparities in student academic achievement <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ Faculty buy-in 	<p>Near Term: Office of the Provost Long Term: Office of the Provost</p>

Conclusion

SMU sits at the precipice of staking a national claim in the social justice and equity space. It is Dallas' University, a city identified as one of the most racially, economically, and ethnically diverse in America. Dallas is also the fastest growing metropolitan city in the country with a predicted population of 10 million by the mid-2030's. While Dallas is progressing in most facets, especially economically, it is also located in a state where the last century of social justice and equity advances are being rescinded. As such, SMU must take a stand and actively commit to a position. We recommend that SMU's position is to support social justice and equity endeavors wholly and meaningfully. SMU is situated to lead; that is, drive positive change and position itself at the forefront of transformative initiatives that will inspire and guide other universities and the nation. SMU must determine its commitment to issues of social justice and equity, and the degree to which it wishes to make this commitment visible.

The most impactful approach to establishing a legacy in the area of social justice and equity would be the dual-adoption of the Urban Research Institute and the TRHT Campus Center. The Task Force findings affirm that SMU has good initiatives in the social justice and equity space. However, they exist in pockets and are not deeply embedded in campus culture. Thus, major gaps exist in the curriculum, campus climate, and representation of tenured or tenure-eligible faculty of color. SMU also lacks an institutional umbrella that allows for knowledge of related efforts and collaboration among colleagues. The Urban Research Institute can serve as the intellectual home for research and community partnerships in the area of social justice and equity. Moreover, it is vital that SMU fulfills both the strategic plan and promises it has made over a period of time to underrepresented students and faculty. The mantra that 'every Mustang is valued' falls short if SMU continues to delay its commitment to hire faculty of color and provide resources necessary for innovative growth and inclusive excellence for all students.

The Task Force encourages the university to go beyond the Urban Research Institute to recruit faculty whose research and teaching focus on social justice and equity. There must be a comprehensive framework to address decades long equity issues both on campus and in the greater Dallas community. It is time for SMU to step up and embrace the tenets of truth, racial healing, and transformation. Establishing a physical TRHT Campus Center will assure students that SMU is committed to their well-being on campus and their ability to navigate diversity and difference in their future careers and life. It will also change the level of trust that SMU can develop with future community partners and future Mustangs. Underrepresented faculty can also be a critical part of the TRHT Campus Center -- five additional faculty of color will enable SMU to secure larger grants in the humanities and conduct the type of research that boldly shapes tomorrow.