

STETSON UNIVERSITY

Stetson Culture Working Group
2021 Report and Recommendations

June 2021

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WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Cabinet Liaisons: Michele Alexandre, Dean of the College of Law

Ray Nault, Interim Vice President of Enrollment Management;

Sue Ryan, Dean of the duPont-Ball Library and Learning Technologies; and

Working Group Members:

1. Sven Smith, Faculty Co-Chair (DeLand), Assistant Professor of Sociology
2. Carmen Johnson, Staff Co-Chair (Gulfport), Director of Diversity Initiatives and Recruitment

DeLand Campus

3. Ethan Shoemaker, Assistant Rowing Coach
4. Joel Jones, Assistant Vice President of University Marketing
5. Jose Lois, First Year Student
6. Rosalie Richards, Associate Provost for Faculty Development, Office of Academic Affairs
7. Stuart Michelson, Professor of Finance and Department Chair
8. Ranjini Thaver, Professor of Economics and Director of Africana Studies
9. Lana Kolchinsky, '22, Political Science
10. Stephanie D'Addio, '22, Psychology
11. Paula Hentz, Director of International Learning – World International Learning
12. Nora Huth, Assistant Director of Student Employment
13. Laura Kirkland, Associate Professor, Catalog Librarian
14. Jennifer Williams, Assistant Director of Graduate Admissions for the College of Arts and Sciences
15. Leigh Baker, Director of Counseling Center
16. Kristina Hernandez, Head Volleyball Coach
17. Beth Eaton, Administrative Assistant II, Public Safety

College of Law Campuses (Gulfport and Tampa)

18. Darren Kettles, Director of Admissions
19. Elizabeth Berenguer, Associate Professor of Law
20. Melissa Mundt, Registrar

CHARGE

The climate survey results identified areas of ongoing need for inclusion and equity including race, gender, political ideologies, professional role, etc. The working group was to begin their process by studying and discussing information on the development of organizational culture, the impact of race, gender and other dynamics on culture, and data (survey results, narratives, and other sources) reflecting the personal and professional experiences of students, faculty, and staff at Stetson. The group was to consider and discuss the potential relationship of these data with climate survey results and other important university climate measurements in order to identify points needing the attention of the community and administration, and offer prioritization as to next action items.

PROCESS

In December of 2020, despite the COVID crisis and the adjustments required therein, the Stetson Culture Working Group (“the workgroup”) was formed based upon responses to multiple member email solicitations sent to Stetson employees both in DeLand and with the College of Law. During our first meeting, our members recognized the need for representation of staff members with hourly employment. We then resent the member email solicitation campus partners to help us achieve this goal. One hourly staff member joined after this effort.

The first workgroup meeting was held on December 3, 2020, to discuss the charge and the potential process to achieve this charge. It was determined that the group would follow a 3-step process that would incorporate feedback and edits from the entire workgroup.

On December 14, 2020, the workgroup finetuned and agreed on the following steps:

Step 1. Current Normative Behaviors: Identify some of the key concerns about the norms within Stetson’s culture based on the 2020 and 2016 Climate Surveys, and each workgroup member’s experiences and insights through the “Normative Behavior” process described below.

Step 2. Values Gap: Analyze the gap between Stetson’s overall values and the norms identified in Step 1 using the “Values” process described below. Then, identify as a Group four primary areas of concern (“gaps”) to focus our recommendations.

Step 3. Recommendations: Provide short- and long-term suggestions on ways to help diminish the gap between the norms and values identified in Steps 2 and 3, wherever they may be. The results of this final step are outline in the Recommendations section of this report.

Resources & Fact-Finding Processes: To carry out each of these Steps, the workgroup used the following:

- [2016 Campus Climate Reports and Study](#)
- [2020 Climate Survey Report](#)
- Workgroup’s January 2021 Discussion Responses (Exhibit A)
- Workgroup’s February 2021 Discussion Responses (Exhibit B)
- Stetson Values Day – DeLand Participant Feedback (February 11, 2021)
- [Stetson University Values – Equity and Inclusion Statement](#)

Step 1 – Current Normative Behaviors:

Identify some of the key concerns about the norms within Stetson’s culture based on the 2020 and 2016 Climate Surveys, and each workgroup member’s experiences and insights.

First, we requested explanation of group members’ experiences here at Stetson via group members’ a January 2021 survey. The questions were primarily developed from the 2020 Climate Survey with the goal of facilitating the workgroup’s discussion of what to prioritize from the survey results. See Exhibit A for the questions and responses. At the second monthly workgroup meeting on January 28, 2021, the workgroup discussed the responses and summations of the common themes from everyone’s comments.

Step 2 – Values Gap:

Analyze the gap between Stetson’s overall values and the norms identified in Step 1. Then, identify as a Group which areas of concerns (“gaps”) to focus our recommendations.

All group members responded to a February 2021 survey asking for their observations of the common values here at Stetson regarding inclusive, professional practice. See Exhibit B for the questions and answers. Group members were guided to Stetson’s Values Statement and Equity and Inclusion Statement for reference. At the third monthly workgroup meeting on February 26, 2021, the workgroup discussed the responses and summations of the common themes from everyone’s comments.

On February 11, 2021, the workgroup started a second fact-finding process by also hosting a Values Day workshop session to broaden the workgroup’s ear to the concerns, questions, and comments of those at Stetson outside of the workgroup who wished to speak toward reducing the space between our values of inclusion and our practice here at Stetson. A diverse group of students, staff, and faculty attended and offered suggestions regarding policies to be taken by Stetson faculty, many of which mirrored the concerns of the workgroup and 2020 Climate Survey and are contained within this document.

Using the Resources & Fact-Finding Processes highlighted above, the following four primary areas of concern (“gaps”) were identified:

Evaluate Exclusionary Practices/Policies: There has been a history of in/direct and systemic exclusionary practices/policies at Stetson University that previously and/or continues to impact underrepresented community members based on race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identities, as well as University “hierarchy”. Applicable Values – Stetson seeks to be a place where:

- *we express no tolerance of intolerance and exclusion in all Stetson-related meetings as well as outlaw certain practices that are exclusionary*
- *we acknowledge systemic and implicit racism as existing, as a threat to human rights, and take formal action to reduce*

More Intentional Inclusion: There is a lack of specific (or specialized) communication to under-represented community members to emphasize that they are included and needed for collaboration at all levels. We need to create more deliberate and transparent safe spaces and opportunities for underrepresented community members to be welcomed, to be their authentic selves, and to have an impactful voice at the University at all levels.

Applicable Values – Stetson seeks to be a place where:

- *we express cultural sensitivity when receiving a message*
- *we acknowledge the importance of minority opinion in shaping outcomes, encourage offerings of diverse opinion (especially when minority opinion) to dialogue*

Greater Transparency: There is a need for greater transparency between higher administration and faculty/staff/students regarding Stetson’s values and decision-making. Administrative decisions regarding departmental and curricular matters can sometimes appear exclusive. Ex: Concerns about funding being used to improve a fountain on campus versus using those funds for student scholarships or staff salaries. Applicable Value – Stetson seeks to be a place where:

- *students/staff/faculty are educated on how to embrace the uncomfortable conversations associated with transparency and are working together in unison or in debate for greater outcomes*

University-Wide Effort: Stetson’s current inclusion initiatives and goals do not appear to be permeating down to individual community members and the various departments/offices/student groups. There is a need to communicate and promote these goals and values and encourage specific inclusive initiatives in all corners of the University to make this a “community-wide” effort – not just for a few individuals or departments/student organizations to address. Applicable Value – Stetson seeks to be a place where:

- *University leadership take decisive action to prioritize inclusion at all levels through allocation of resources and creation of systemic structures to support.*
- *there are regular, grassroots efforts towards improving and welcoming communication at an office or departmental level*

After identifying these four areas of concern (“gaps”), the workgroup formulated recommendations for each specific area. What follows is a description of the process for Step 3, which focused on developing each set of recommendations.

Step 3 – Recommendations:

On March 26, 2021, a subgroup was formed for each of the four areas of concern and the workgroup members were divided into each subgroup with the following instruction:

Please provide 3-5 suggestions of long-term actions that may be taken by Stetson University (at either the macro or micro level) and first-steps that may be taken now to begin to actualize this ideal. Please be as specific in both parts (the long-term actions and the first-steps) as you can be to mitigate the gap between what occurs at Stetson and what we are aiming for here at Stetson as we work toward a more inclusive environment here at Stetson. Please note that your suggestions will be shared with the larger group for edits and suggestions before being compiled in a report that shall be shared with several other larger groups here on campus.

Each subgroup tendered their small reports to the larger workgroup throughout April and May of 2021 for cross-feedback and editing. Workgroup members also had the opportunity to submit their edits to the Co-Chairs through early June. The Co-Chairs then compiled a “Summary of Recommendations” (the next section of this report) based on the subgroup’s submissions, the Resources & Fact-Finding highlighted above, and the larger workgroup’s feedback throughout April-June 2021.

The subgroup’s full submissions are included as Exhibits C through F of this final report and we encourage the reader to review these submissions, as they contain more in-depth analysis, findings and short- and long-term recommendations for each of the identified areas of concern.

The final report was provided to the full workgroup on June 15, 2021 for final review and edits.

What follows is the result of these collective efforts.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the collaborative Process detailed on pages 3-5 of this report, the workgroup strongly recommends the prioritization of these four (4) areas of concerns, as well as the respective action steps within each the areas to help Stetson University's address the "culture" concerns raised in the 2020 Climate Survey.

While this Summary of Recommendations provides an overview of the top priorities for each of the four areas of concern, the workgroup also encourages the reader to reference **Exhibits C through F** for the subgroups' full reports on each area, which include a more in-depth analysis of each area, the short- and long-term recommendations, and in some cases, the relevant climate survey concerns that the recommendations address.

I. EVALUATE EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES/POLICIES

Finding:

There has been a history of in/direct and systemic exclusionary practices/policies at Stetson University that previously and/or continues to impact underrepresented community members based on race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identities, as well as University "hierarchy".

Applicable Stetson Values:

First, we wish to express no tolerance of intolerance and exclusion in all Stetson-related meetings as well as outlaw certain practices that have been exclusionary

Second, we acknowledge systemic and implicit racism as existing as a threat to human rights, and wish to take formal action to reduce it.

We recognize the university's value statements and DEI statement and wish to push the communication of those statements.

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

1. **University-Wide Office/Department DEI Evaluations:** Stetson Administration should require each office/department to evaluate their policies and practices to identify direct and/or indirect exclusionary practices and policies and ways to promote inclusion within their respective areas. To aid in this process, the Administration should incorporate this as an expectation (or make it more of a priority) in each supervisor's or department head's annual assessment of their area's benchmarks and achievements. Further, the Administration should provide resources for each office/department to learn more about common, historic exclusionary practices in higher education and, more importantly, within their respective areas. These resources should also include current innovations happening within those areas. Progress should be evaluated by Administration annually.
2. **Trainings about Eurocentrism vs. "Multi-centrism":** Stetson Administration should require each office in administration under a VP and academic department (by major or concentration area) to undergo training about the history and exclusive practice of Eurocentrism in the development of canonical knowledge, symbols, and social structure here at Stetson and throughout higher education in

the United States; similar to that discussed in www.honehq.com, www.traliant.com, etc. Assessment should follow, instituted by the Stetson's Institute for Social Research.

Brief examples of Eurocentric (and thereby exclusionary) practices:

- Teaching U.S. Political Science/Government (DeLand) or Administrative/Property Law (College of Law) without addressing the existence of Tribal/Indigenous Nations in the U.S. and how these Nations historically interact with the U.S. Government (property ownership case law, government functions, etc.)
 - The explicit exclusion of non-Eurocentric and other religious/cultural holidays and celebrations from Stetson's acknowledgements, celebrations and/or holiday calendar
3. **Better Highlight DEI Course Options:** Stetson's Office of the Registrar, in conjunction with the Institute of Technology, should create a system for flagging existing courses that cover diversity concepts in the new online search system for course selection, so that current students can easily find them. If possible, this would be a helpful feature for prospective students. Ivy League institutions, such as University of Chicago, Yale, and Brown, use an online course search system that allows students to select a "diverse perspectives" tab that automatically generates a list of courses that fit this category. Highlighting the myriad of these courses offered at Stetson will better promote to students that diversity is among the forefront of Stetson's basic functions (the curriculum) and create a sense of inclusion and belonging. Stetson should create a plan for integrating newly developed courses into the online course selection system.
4. **DEI Writing Contest(s) and Other Inclusion Programming:** To further publicize Stetson's commitment regarding DEI, a university-wide writing contest for students could be offered on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In a similar vein, incentives (ex: grant/stipend) or other promotional concepts could be offered to faculty/staff/student organizations to develop new courses and/or programming devoted to DEI concepts.

II. MORE INTENTIONAL INCLUSION

Finding:

There is a lack of specific (or specialized) communication to underrepresented community members to emphasize that they are included and needed for collaboration at all levels. We need to create more deliberate and transparent safe spaces and opportunities for underrepresented community members to be welcomed, to be their authentic selves, and to have an impactful voice at the University at all levels.

Applicable Stetson Value:

We wish to express cultural sensitivity when giving or receiving a message in professional communication and we acknowledge the importance of minority opinion in shaping outcomes, and encourage offerings of diverse opinion (especially minority) to dialogue

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

1. **Inventory of Stetson’s Existing DEI Initiatives and Structures for Conversations and Support:** To be more intentional and help facilitate a sense of belonging within Stetson’s University culture, Stetson administration should immediately develop an inventory of our existing DEI structures and initiatives. This inventory should include established (as opposed to one-time or pilot efforts) administrative/departmental and academic initiatives, as well as identifying safe spaces and centers for DEI conversations and support. As further detailed in the next Recommendation, this inventory should also be prominently made available on the website, ideally with help of an **experienced** DEI Communications Consultant and made accessible through the front page. This webpage(s) should be well-developed and properly maintained through quality web design, visuals, and easily accessible and interactive features to help better market Stetson’s inclusion efforts to both current and prospective students, faculty, and staff.
2. **DEI Communications Consultant and Strategic Plan:** More prominent and intentional messaging throughout Stetson’s website, etc. to better create a sense of belonging and illustrate how **specific identities** are welcome on our campuses. Our Communications and Web Teams should hire a consultant to help develop a specific DEI communications strategic plan to better highlight and market Stetson’s existing (and upcoming) efforts and “safe spaces” for students, faculty, staff from underrepresented identities.

For example, as they visit our current websites, prospective faculty, staff, and students who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQ+, religious minority, political views, and other identities may find it difficult to assess if Stetson and the surrounding community is specifically welcoming to them and others who share their identities.

Additionally, while there is some existing messaging for current students, there is a large vacuum of direct messaging for underrepresented faculty and staff, which may partially hinder our faculty/staff recruitment and retention efforts. The more specific and intentional we can be, the better. For example, as opposed to merely saying that we embrace “diversity” or “people of color”, we should **specify** Black/African American, AAPI, Latina/o/x, and other underrepresented identities whenever appropriate. A consultant who specializes in this type of communication strategy may be helpful to assist Communications with this important effort.

3. **DEI Hiring Strategic Plan and Benchmarks:** Stetson should develop a transparent and specific strategic plan/process and benchmarks to strategically recruit diverse candidates for positions and share this strategic plan widely with the entire Stetson community. Within this strategic plan, Stetson Administration should require a critical core explanation of diversity as a priority for all employment positions and within all job descriptions (faculty, staff, student workers, Board of Trustees).
4. **Job Descriptions and Application Documentation:** Stetson should rewrite position descriptions and application/document requirements for hiring purposes to ensure that Stetson’s culture is enriched by the culturally sensitive and those who celebrate diversity. These practices more or less follow Schneider’s *Attraction-Selection-Attrition Model* and these position descriptions may dictate fundamental transmogrifications in position descriptions and daily work outcomes. *Schneider, B. (1987). The people*

make the place. Personnel psychology, 40(3), 437-453. An example of an application question includes a statement on how that candidate has promoted diversity and inclusion in their previous/current roles.

5. **Evaluate Diversity Attrition:** Stetson’s Diversity Officer(s) should communicate with prior Stetson faculty, staff, and a sampling of withdrawn students who self-identify with an underrepresented or marginalized status to determine common causes and themes for departure. Minority status often correlates with higher rates of job exit. *Hom, P. W., Allen, D. G., & Griffeth, R. W. (2019). Employee Retention and Turnover: Why Employees Stay Or Leave. Routledge.* This information should be used to develop or enhance Stetson retention strategy.

If this information is already collected, a DEI retention strategy based on that and other data should be shared widely and consistently with the Stetson community.

III. GREATER TRANSPARENCY

Findings:

There is a need for greater transparency between higher administration and faculty/staff/students regarding Stetson’s values and decision-making. Administrative decisions regarding departmental and curricular matters can sometimes *appear* exclusive. Ex: Concerns about funding being used to improve a fountain on campus versus using those funds for student scholarships or staff salaries.

Applicable Stetson Value:

Students/staff/faculty are educated on how to embrace the uncomfortable conversations associated with transparency and are working together in unison or in debate for greater outcomes

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

1. **Develop Structure for High-Level Policy Planning and Communication:** It is important that policy and plans from high-level decision-making bodies are developed through inclusive processes, and whenever possible, with opportunities for input. A clear structure should also be created to communicate these policies/plans at the beginning of each semester, and to promote transparency and accessibility, particularly among community members who may not be represented among the decision makers. Examples of high-level decision-making bodies include the Board of Trustees, President’s Cabinet, VP Operations, Provost’s Office, and the Council of Undergraduate Deans. To make it consistent and transparent, the structure should include required elements, such as:

Summary of decision: No more than 2-3 sentences to ensure accessibility

Context: Need for policy/change

Link to the full text of policy/plan

Decision makers involved

Process and important considerations for decision

Statement on how it will advance or impact Stetson’s culture, inclusion, and social justice goals

Opportunity for non/anonymous feedback

Update to provide information showing how feedback was used and implemented

2. **Normalize DEI conversations throughout our Stetson Community:** Stetson administration should develop a structure to annually train select student, staff, and faculty leaders/volunteers on how to facilitate DEI and difficult conversations. Students could be “trained” through for-credit coursework in a leadership and/or diversity program. This potentially could become a distinguished/significant program at Stetson University, if implemented with intention and support.

Further, Stetson administration should prioritize DEI concepts in all existing University trainings, including those offered by third parties, and provide a resource to access relevant trainings, where accessible. Lastly, to serve as a resource for all for all programming efforts, Stetson should create and encourage the use of a database of University experts in intercultural competence (e.g. WORLD, ODI, faculty/staff leaders in inclusive excellence).

3. **Normalize Direct Student Engagement in Conversations around Student Funding:** Since affordability and finances have an impact on the student experience, Stetson administration should regularly involve students in conversations about donors and impacts on student funding. For example, include the SGA Executive Board annual funding conversations with the Board of Trustees and the University’s Development and Alumni Relations offices that are directly student-need focused. This will not only annually educate the University about student finance concerns, but also educate the students about some of the factors that go into funding and operational decision-making and thereby help provide some transparency.
4. **Adequate DEI Staffing:** Evaluate if Stetson University has the needed staffing of Diversity and Inclusion officers to realistically coordinate/achieve the University’s DEI goals and strategic plans, and to create more centralized transparency in achieving these goals/plans. In areas that require additional staffing, make it a priority to hire appropriate staff who can focus on and meet these needs.
5. **Access to Staff Communication and Closed Captioning:** Formalize a structure that ensures important announcements reach staff and other community members who do not have regular access to computers/technology (email, social media, etc.) and/or are not native English speakers. Important communications should also be shared in both English and Spanish. Also, ensure all institutional webinars and videos have closed captioning. This is not only helpful for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, but also for our community members who are not native English speakers.
6. **Virtual Spaces for DEI Conversations:** Concurrent or immediately after DEI training, Stetson should create a virtual space (webpage) that serves as a discussion/chat line encouraged by administration/faculty for students to enter. This online space should be communicated via all social media portals as well as through fliers on campus encouraging speaking. This virtual space expresses the importance of feedback to all students and faculty as non-white students process racist microaggressions and other social contexts they find harrowing. Support for this solution is expressed in higher education including, Quaye, S. J., Harper, S. R., & Pendakur, S. L. (Eds.). (2019). Student engagement in higher education: Theoretical perspectives and practical approaches for diverse populations. Routledge. All these tasks should be headed by the Diversity and Inclusion officer(s) here at Stetson Deland campus.

The Office of Institute Technology, through collaboration with Canvas, should create another virtual space “placed” within each office under a VP and department for providing feedback to leadership that encourages this feedback and encourages anonymity if desired by the parties. The supervisor should be trained through Chair’s meetings or other for staff for improvement on techniques necessary to herald this feedback arena as a safe and welcoming space as well as an opportunity for creating dialogue. Myrick, M., (2018). What makes a space “safe”: Adjuncts in the MeToo era. *Academe the journal of AAUP International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 104(6), online. All of these tasks should be headed by the Diversity and Inclusion officer here at Stetson Deland campus.

Development and longitudinal progress may be publicly documented via a diversity and inclusion website (i.e. <https://diversityandinclusion.uchicago.edu/resources/di-studio/> (diversity and inclusion), <https://dib.harvard.edu/> (diversity, inclusion and belonging), <https://dei.gsu.edu/> (diversity, equity & Inclusion).

IV. UNIVERSITY-WIDE EFFORT

Findings:

Stetson’s current inclusion initiatives and goals do not appear to be permeating down to individual community members and the various departments/offices/student groups. There is a need to communicate and promote these goals and values and encourage specific inclusive initiatives in all corners of the University to make this a “community-wide” effort – not just for a few individuals or departments/student organizations to address.

Applicable Stetson Values:

University leadership take decisive action to prioritize inclusion at all levels through allocation of resources and creation of systemic structures to support.

Stetson shall be a place where there are institutional and regular, grassroots efforts towards improving and welcoming communication at an office or departmental level

Recommendations for Immediate Action:

1. **DEI Resource and Training Banks:** As part of an annual DEI evaluation structure, Stetson should identify and recognize departments and offices that offer DEI training specific to the discipline within their departmental levels. Stetson administration should also create a resource, or “training bank”, along with an expectation that all departments adopt or adapt DEI trainings that are specific their needs. In addition, this “bank” should be promoted widely among employees and, where appropriate, students.
2. **Train the Trainer and Clear Pathways for Voluntary Trainings:** Employees and students often trust people that they know from their own departments. Similar to Recommendation #2 under “Greater Transparency”, Stetson Administration should invest in training select/volunteer faculty, staff, and student leaders on how to help facilitate basic DEI conversations and trainings. There should be a clear and widely available pathway or program for Stetson community members who want to

learn these skills and ideally achieve a Stetson certification or designation. This will help create a “culture” of DEI trainers and conversations. For the students, this will give them important skillsets for their future endeavors after their Stetson experience. This will also communicate that DEI learning and efforts should not just be a priority of a few people or departments, but rather a University-wide pursuit with specific pathways for all who want to learn and share.

3. **On-boarding Information:** The first step of every employee’s and student’s experiences at Stetson begins with the on-boarding process through Human Resources and/or Orientation. Stetson Administration should immediately conduct a thorough review of the on-boarding process and, where needed, incorporate intentional DEI components.
4. **Heavily Promote Self-Guided DEI Training:** In order encourage DEI training on a more personal level, employees and students should be encouraged and incentivized to complete engaging DEI learning opportunities, ideally those during a specific time frame that is promoted University-wide. For example, there are multiple learning “challenges” that Stetson can model, including the [ABA’s 21-day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge](#), and provide certificates and/or other acknowledgements upon completion.

The Brown Center shall lead an initiative wherein faculty/staff participants become adept at training students and other staff/faculty as difficult-discussion facilitators. These students could be “trained” through for-credit coursework in a leadership and/or diversity minor. This relates to the liberal learning identity of the institution and shows how these discussions can be held at all levels of the university. At Stetson, staff and faculty rally around and embrace students at a deeper level than many institutions. Supporting our students may be the buy-in needed by faculty and staff who may not be naturally inclined to participate in difficult conversations. This potentially could become a distinguished/significant program at the institution if implemented with intention and support.

Recommendations for Long-Term Interventions:

Build, assess and reinforce structures on campus that create a sense of belonging through acknowledgement of inequity and challenge of those normative assumptions (such as false binaries, race as biological fact, sex as determinative, disability as per se prohibitive) in order to develop more complex understanding of socio-economic, political, and cultural experience. As a university we need to couple deconstruction of normative assumptions with reconstruction to move from critique to change.

CONCLUSION

Throughout our discussions as a Working Group during Spring 2021, there were consistent acknowledgements of how far Stetson University has progressed over the years in growing diversity among the student, staff, and faculty communities, as well as efforts to improve the overall University culture. Without question, the 2016 and 2020 Climate Surveys, as well as Working Group’s fact-finding processes described in this report, clearly reflect significant and persistent concerns about Stetson’s overall culture and prevalent instances of in/direct exclusion across multiple constituencies. The Working Group applauds the recent steps taken by the current Administration’s and encourage that these efforts persist to proactively address these issues at the systemic levels – with intention, effectiveness, and transparency.

In addition to sharing our applause and enthusiasm, we also share our collective aspiration and expectation that the findings and recommendations in this report will be heavily considered and diligently used to help facilitate a culture that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion at Stetson University – a community for which we all care deeply and are committed to see thrive as an ideal place to learn and work. We request that the Administration consider meeting with our Working Group to discuss our recommendations in more detail.

On behalf of the committed and talented group of students, staff, and faculty members of this Stetson Culture Working Group, we are thankful for the opportunity to share our findings and recommendations with the Stetson University Administration and Community.

Last, but certainly not least, we wish to thank each of the Working Group members for the significant time and input they contributed throughout this important process. As evidenced and often amplified throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our students, staff, and faculty are pulled in multiple directions, often with little or no recognition. The fact they volunteered for this effort in addition to all their other priorities, in our opinion, is a reflection of their commitment to the Stetson community and we cannot thank them enough for their collaboration.

Sven Smith
Faculty Co-Chair
Stetson Culture Working Group

Carmen Johnson
Staff Co-Chair
Stetson Culture Working Group