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I can
change things.
I can make
things happen.

— SISTER THEA BOWMAN

Sister Thea Bowman Committee Report

THE CATHOLIC
UNIVERSITY
OF AMERICA





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LETTER FROM PRESIDENT JOHN GARVEY

In this city in 1963, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of his dream for a nation where people would not be judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their character. Last year Pope Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti*, asked us to dream of living as one human family, each with a distinct voice, sharing a common home.

In the decades between we have witnessed too many acts of racism, epitomized by the May 2020 killing of George Floyd. His death displayed the dangerous assumptions we may make about people different from ourselves, and the harm that institutions built on such assumptions can do.

It is time to make real the dreams of Dr. King and Pope Francis. The Sister Thea Bowman Committee Report will help us do this in a campus community that is committed to racial justice. It outlines ways in which we, as a Catholic community, can use our particular gifts to build a culture of love for our neighbors.

“Racism occurs because a person ignores the fundamental truth that, because all humans share a common origin, they are all brothers and sisters, all equally made in the image of God,” the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote in their 2018 pastoral letter, *Open Wide Our Hearts*. “Every racist act — every such comment, every joke, every disparaging look as a reaction to the color of skin, ethnicity, or place of origin — is a failure to acknowledge another person as a brother or sister, created in the image of God.”

The bishops explained how personal sins can infect the institutions we build, generating forms of discrimination that may appear impersonal in their

application, but are painfully personal in their impact: “The cumulative effects of personal sins of racism have led to social structures of injustice and violence that makes us all accomplices in racism.”

Sister Thea Bowman, now a candidate for sainthood, was an alumna of Catholic University (M.A. 1969, Ph.D. 1972) who used her gifts for oratory, music, and theology to call Catholics into a celebration of interracial solidarity. She taught the University's first class on Black literature.

The proposals in the Sister Thea Bowman Committee Report build on her efforts, calling us to identify structures of injustice and sin, and encouraging understanding and reconciliation. Much work remains.

In fall 2020 I took part in a Zoom “civility dialogue” that our Center for Cultural Engagement sponsored, with the Black Student Alliance, about the experience of being a Black college student. One of the juniors on the call shared what it was like to be in her fifth semester of college without ever having had a Black professor.

As I listened, I reflected on how that must feel. Reflection should lead to action, and ultimately to change. That was our goal in forming the Bowman Committee. It will continue to be our goal as we work to address the recommendations — with a commitment to continue listening and reflecting.

I want to express my gratitude to the committee that labored over the past year to produce this report. And I invite you to read it with minds and hearts open to dream, and a commitment to making that dream a reality.





THE UNIVERSITY'S STATEMENT ON RACISM

Catholic University's commitment to addressing the sin of racism, which is at once personal and social, is rooted in the Catholic faith, the faith on which Sister Thea staked her life. It is through thoughtful engagement with that faith that the University aspires to build up a Christian culture on campus and in the wider world. The Gospel of Jesus Christ provides the framework for the work of the committee.

We are one human family, united in our humanity and enriched by our diversity.

The Catholic commitment to overcoming racism and all forms of exclusion is ultimately rooted in our understanding of the human race as one family.

God created all people to be in communion with Himself and with one another. This communion requires that we recognize and appreciate the unique gifts of all individuals and cultures. Unity is not uniformity.

While envisioned and intended by God, this unity too often fractures because of sin. As people, we become divided and in conflict. Our differences should be mutually enriching and bring us into a deeper relationship with others, but too often they become the justification for domination, exploitation, separation, ridicule, and rejection.

1 Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, encyclical letter, Nov. 30, 2007, sec. 1.
2 John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, encyclical letter, Dec. 30, 1987.

In Christ, God seeks to gather all people, divided by sin, once again into a communion of love and truth. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, what he calls our “great hope” is “communal salvation” and “the reestablishment of unity” broken by our sin. He points to an understanding of sin as “the destruction of the unity of the human race, as fragmentation and division.”¹

This “great hope” should enliven every other hope we have and inspire us to fight against divisions within our human family that separate rather than unite us and become swords used to violate human dignity.

Our Catholic faith gives us an imperative to dismantle the structures of sin.

Understanding our shared call to unity and the forces against it is not enough. Divisions within the human family don't go away just because we say nice words about unity. Words must be matched with action.

Sin — a personal choice that reflects a divided heart pulling us away from God's loving vision and into narrow self-centeredness — builds up over time in human life and in social institutions.

Saint John Paul II wrote vividly about “structures of sin”² that go beyond individual action to distort our common life.



— “ —
God created all people
to be in communion
with Himself and
with one another.

As a University that seeks “to discover and impart the truth through excellence in teaching and research, all in service to the Church, the nation and the world,”³ we have a particular intellectual responsibility to reject the structures of sin and to eradicate these structures, especially in their manifestation of what Saint John Paul calls “real forms of idolatry: of money, ideology, class, [and] technology.”⁴

We must examine and act when we encounter structures within our own institution, and in the larger Church and society that we serve, that perpetuate division among God’s family and protect unjust privileges for some racial or ethnic groups, rather than serving all the children of God’s family.

We are called to practice everyday solidarity.

Lofty statements, new structures, and organizational flowcharts cannot ultimately guarantee the gentleness and encounter between people that is needed to achieve unity.

Real unity for a family or community relies upon the daily acts of mutual support, care, and mercy toward each other that form what we refer to in our Catholic tradition as solidarity.

Pope Francis has called this everyday commitment to solidarity “social love.” He has challenged us to be radically open to others

— even, and perhaps especially, others who are very different from us — instead of closing ourselves and our societies off from one another.

Solidarity must be proactive; it must cross the boundaries that so often divide us from each other. In classrooms, offices, residence halls, and dining halls, we are constantly offered opportunities to enact this solidarity.

This is not always easy. When we “enter into the reality of other people’s lives,” humbling ourselves and allowing differences to mutually enrich us, our lives become, as Pope Francis promises, “wonderfully complicated.”⁵

It can be difficult to know how to practice solidarity. The University has a responsibility to assist students, faculty, and staff to grow in daily solidarity and to encourage this virtue in the structures of our community.

3 Our Mission, The Catholic University of America.

4 John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, encyclical letter, sec. 37.

5 Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, apostolic exhortation, March 19, 2006, sec. 308.



THE SISTER WHO INSPIRES OUR EFFORTS

Sister Thea Bowman, F.S.P.A., an evangelist, educator, artist, and advocate for social justice, drew on her studies at The Catholic University of America to mesmerize audiences with orations on the Black Catholic experience.

She made them taste the pain of injustice and the glory of faith as she invited them into a vision of God's love.

"We unite ourselves with Christ's redemptive work when we reconcile, when we make peace, when we share the good news that God is in our lives, when we reflect to our brothers and sisters God's healing, God's forgiveness, God's unconditional love," she wrote shortly before her death.⁶

In 2018 the Vatican declared her a Servant of God, the first step toward sainthood.

"I can change things. I can make things happen,"⁷ she said. "I know that God is using me in ways beyond my comprehension,"⁸ saying on another occasion, "We each have a light and God didn't give us that light to sit on it."⁹

Born in 1937, she was the only child of an older, professional couple in Canton, Miss., and the grandchild of slaves. She absorbed the stories, song, dance, dialect, and traditions of those who had held to faith, hope, love, and dignity in the face of denigration and brutality.

Her Methodist parents sent her to a Catholic school. There the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration so inspired her that she became Catholic at age 10. At 15, she became the only Black member of their order.

Sister Bowman arrived at Catholic University around 1968 as a graduate student in English. She established Catholic University's first course on Black literature and used her operatic singing voice to shape presentations on African-American life and faith.

"While studying literary theory, methodology and criticism at Catholic University I began to realize the extent to which music encodes values, history and faith of my people," she told *CUA Magazine*.¹⁰

Dressed in a dashiki, she sang spirituals and engaged audiences in call-and-response, speaking in a cadence that bordered

on chant. For academic audiences, she later explained each element, from her rhetorical style to hand gestures.

Sister Bowman wrote her 1972 doctoral dissertation on St. Thomas More's *A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation*. More wrote it in 1534 while awaiting execution in the Tower of London for refusing to renounce allegiance to the pope as the head of the worldwide Church. He warned Catholics that they faced difficult choices with eternal consequences.

Sister Bowman analyzed his use of pathos — appeal to sympathetic emotions — to produce action. She wrote of his "conscious desire to quicken imaginations, stir affections, and inflame hearts; the indefatigable endeavor to replace ungodly emotions by their opposites and to stir wills by confronting the emotions with their proper objects."¹¹

That characterized her future ministry as an educator, advocate and evangelist. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 1984, she vowed to "live until I die."¹²

On June 17, 1989, her bones too brittle for her to rise from her wheelchair, she addressed the Catholic bishops of the United States in a tour de force that epitomized all she had become since her days at Catholic University.

"How does it feel to be Black in Church and society? I'm gonna tell you about what it's like in the Church," she declared. Then she burst into the song "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child."

"A pilgrim on a journey looking for a home. And Jesus told me the Church is my home," she continued. "Bishops, my brothers, please help me to get home."

When she concluded, the 250 bishops were standing with arms linked, singing "We Shall Overcome." Some had tears in their eyes.¹³

She died nine months later, age 52, on March 30, 1990. Her influence at the University is memorialized through the Sister Thea Bowman Lecture Series on Social Justice and the work of the Sister Thea Bowman Committee.

6 "Educator Missionary Disciple, Advocate for Cultural Awareness and Racial Harmony," Sister Thea Bowman Cause for Canonization, Diocese of Jackson.

7 Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, "Contemplate: Perspectives Update," 2015.

8 "Sister Thea Bowman on dying with dignity," U.S. Catholic, Sept. 24, 2020.

9 Brother Michael O'Neill McGrath, O.S.F.S., "The Sister Thea Bowman Black Educational Foundation Twelfth Annual Scholarship Dinner," (Speech, April 23, 2008).

10 Thea Bowman, "A Case of Multiple Inspiration," *CUA Magazine*, 1990, pp. 7–9.

11 Thea Bowman, "The Relationship of Pathos and Style in *A Dialogue of Comforte Agaynste Tribulacyon*: A Rhetorical Study," PhD Diss., The Catholic University of America, 1972, p. 180.

12 Educator Missionary Disciple, Advocate for Cultural Awareness and Racial Harmony," Sister Thea Bowman Cause for Canonization, Diocese of Jackson.

13 Ann Rodgers-Melnick, "'On a Journey' Black Nun Stirs Bishops with Speech." The Pittsburgh Press, July 19, 1989.



THE PATH WE HAVE TRAVELED

The Sister Thea Bowman Committee Report is perhaps the most significant commitment the University has made to furthering racial diversity on campus, but the University's history leading to this point is long and complex.

In 1895 Black men were among the University's first lay students. U.S. President William McKinley, who visited the campus in 1900, said that the University "knows no race line and no color line."¹⁴

However, as President Woodrow Wilson's administration instituted Jim Crow in Washington, the University followed. By 1914 Black students were excluded. Black alumni and others — including the future saint, Mother Katharine Drexel — protested in vain to trustees, the U.S. bishops, even the pope.¹⁵

Among their leaders was Thomas Wyatt Turner, a prominent Black biologist who had studied at the University in 1901. He organized Black Catholics to advocate for full inclusion in the Church, and in 1976, at age 99, was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University.

In 1918, Classics Professor and Administrator Roy J. Deferrari began an 18-year campaign for integration. Finally in 1933, the University admitted two Black women religious, Sister Mary of Good Counsel Baptiste, O.S.P., and Sister Mary Consolata Gibson, O.S.P.¹⁶ In 1934 they became the first Black graduates in nearly 20 years and the first Black female graduates.

When Bishop Joseph Corrigan became rector of the University in 1936, Deferrari slipped "admission of Negroes" onto their first agenda. The bishop responded, "Why not?"¹⁷ By semester's end, 26 Black students had enrolled.¹⁸

The University broke a national barrier in 1943 when Euphemia Lofton Haynes became the first Black woman in the United States to earn a doctorate in mathematics.¹⁹ Her Catholic faith

14 Cited in C. Joseph Nuesse, "Segregation and Desegregation at The Catholic University of America," *Washington History*, 9, no. 1 (spring/summer 1997), p. 58

15 *Ibid.*, p. 64

16 Shannon Dee Williams, "Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate Catholic America After World War I," PhD Diss., Rutgers University, 2013, p. 8, 38, 85.

17 Roy J. Deferrari, *Memoirs of The Catholic University of America 1918–1960*. Boston: St. Paul Editions, p. 284, 1962.

18 Nuesse, "Segregation and Desegregation," p. 65

19 Euphemia Lofton Haynes, Ph.D. 1943, The Catholic University of America.

motivated a career in education and civil rights. In 2018 the University created a mathematics award in her honor.

In 1948 University Chancellor, Washington Archbishop (later Cardinal) Patrick O'Boyle ordered local Catholic schools to desegregate — six years before the U.S. Supreme Court mandated it for public schools.²⁰ In 1963, he gave an invocation at Dr. Martin Luther King's March on Washington.²¹

By then faculty and students had played a leading role in desegregating Washington's theaters. Father Gilbert Hartke, O.P., who founded the Department of Speech and Drama, was instrumental in reviving live performance in Washington after World War II. He cast Black actors and refused to work in segregated venues.²²

Father Cyprian Davis, a Benedictine scholar whose books have been a guiding light for Black Catholic history and racial reconciliation, was a student in the 1950s. His papers are a cornerstone of the University's vast collections on Catholicism and diversity, which the library is digitizing.²³ The Catholic University of America Press republished some of his work this summer in *The Black Catholic Studies Reader*.

In 1964 students and faculty held civil rights prayer services and campaigned to abolish Jim Crow and establish voting rights.²⁴ The University's Commission on American Citizenship published a futuristic comic book series about the first Black candidate for President of the United States.²⁵

Around 1968 Sister Thea Bowman, the Black evangelist and activist who is now a candidate for sainthood, arrived to pursue her doctorate in English. She launched the University's first course on Black Catholic literature.

She may have taught Samuel Williams, who organized library sit-ins at Catholic University in the early 1970s to press for a Black Studies program. Administrators had begun to explore that possibility when Williams died in a car crash. His dream

has been revived as a recommendation by one of the Bowman subcommittees. An annual award is given in Williams's memory to a student who promotes intercultural understanding.²⁶

Thaddeus F. Aubry Jr. and Leon LeBuffe established the Partnership Program in 1969 to provide scholarships to promising young students of color from the Washington, D.C., area. Black alumni who benefited from the University scholarships subsequently established an endowment in their names to support educational diversity. Longtime track and field coach Joe Fisher, B.A. 1975, and Ronny Lancaster, B.A. 1973, were instrumental in this effort.

In 2019 Pope Francis named the first Black archbishop of Washington. Cardinal Wilton Gregory is, by virtue of his office, the first Black chancellor of the University.

In 2021, Associate Dean Mel Williams was named a special assistant to the president to coordinate diversity initiatives, and the Board of Trustees welcomed new members who broadened its racial and ethnic diversity. In August 2021, President John Garvey joined 50 student leaders on a leadership retreat to explore community-building and inclusion.

The University has become increasingly diverse, with a vibrant presence of Latino, Asian, and Black students. The Center for Cultural Engagement was founded six years ago to engage students from all backgrounds in campus life and help them succeed academically. Its signature program, *Take Flight*, is for those in the first generation of their family to attend college. In 2019, the University provost launched a committee dedicated to diversifying the Catholic University community to reflect the demographics of the Catholic Church.

Implementation of the Sister Thea Bowman Committee Report will be crucial, said Center Director Javier Bustamante, "because it directly affects the type of Church and institution that I want my kids to be a part of as I transmit the faith to them."

20 Bart Barnes, "Cardinal O'Boyle dies at 91," *The Washington Post*, Aug. 11, 1987.

21 "Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle," Digital Exhibits, The Catholic University of America.

22 "Father Gilbert Hartke," Digital Exhibits, The Catholic University of America.

23 Juan-Pablo Gonzalez, "The Archivist's Nook: The Darkness is the Light - Father Cyprian Davis and the Black American Catholic Experience," *The Catholic University of America*, Feb. 8, 2018.

24 "Civil Rights Activities on Campus," Catholic University Civil Rights Walking Tour.

25 Maria Mazzenga, "Pettigrew for President Treasure Chest Series Now Online," *The Catholic University of America*, Oct. 9, 2009.

26 "Samuel Williams and the Mullen Library Sit-ins," Catholic University Civil Rights Walking Tour.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as chair of the Sister Thea Bowman Committee — a committee charged with examining the University’s current practices, and making recommendations to promote racial equality in all aspects of its operations. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of this important initiative at such an historic time. I also am confident that Catholic University will continue to be a leader in making meaningful change regarding racial justice and equality because of its Catholic identity, its strong sense of community, and its willingness to conduct an honest assessment of itself in order to identify opportunities for growth and positive change.

During her lifetime, Sister Thea worked to break down racial barriers, and encouraged people to communicate with one another so that they could better understand and appreciate other cultures and races. In her address to the United States Bishops at their annual meeting in 1989, she explained that being African American meant bringing her “whole self” to the Church community. This included her history, her culture, her traditions, and her experiences. All these things, she believed, were unique gifts that she offered the Church.

Regina T. Jefferson
Professor of Law

Over the course of the last year, the Sister Thea Bowman Committee members fully embraced Sister Thea’s philosophy and brought “their whole selves” to the process. The committee comprised a diverse group of University faculty, students, staff, alumni, administrators, parents, and representatives from the Archdiocese of Washington. They all worked cooperatively and were willing to listen to and appreciate different viewpoints and perspectives.

I have never worked with a more dedicated and thoughtful group of individuals. Everyone cared deeply about the meaning and mission of the committee and was committed to making significant change regarding racial equality and justice.

Sister Thea’s pursuit of equity, peace, and reconciliation served as inspiration for the committee, and guided it throughout this process. As the Sister Thea Bowman Committee concludes its work and entrusts the recommendations contained in this report to the University community, it does so with confidence that those who implement and build on them will continue the work of the committee in the spirit of Sister Thea.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE BOWMAN COMMITTEE REPORT

In fall 2020, The Catholic University of America took a major step forward toward fulfilling its commitment to embrace and reflect the racial and ethnic diversity that enriches our Church, city, and nation.

President John Garvey announced the creation of the Sister Thea Bowman Committee, named for an alumna of the University who today is on the path toward recognition as a Catholic saint. During her life, Bowman provided an outspoken witness to what it meant to be Black and Catholic.

The Committee was placed under the leadership of Regina Jefferson, a professor who previously served as the dean of the University's Columbus School of Law.

The Bowman Committee members were "directed to study all facets of University operations and make recommendations concerning racial equality to the University leadership."

In recognition of the significance this issue has for the University community and for our larger community, and the importance of inclusion, committee members were drawn from among students, parents, alumni, faculty, administrators, and the Archdiocese of Washington.

Shortly after the launch of the Bowman Committee, five subcommittees were formed to focus the work:

- Academic Affairs
- Community Building
- External Affairs
- Personal Formation
- Workforce Development

Each subcommittee was tasked with examining, assessing, and making recommendations in its area of responsibility to improve the University's efforts toward racial equality. Over the course of the academic year, the subcommittees met regularly, conducted interviews and surveys, gathered and analyzed data, considered steps taken by other universities, and developed a series of recommendations.

The committee as a whole met each month to report on their progress to date. Final recommendations were submitted by the close of the academic year.

The subcommittees developed comprehensive and wide-ranging proposals that reflect the principles laid out in this report: to recognize that we are one human family, enriched by our diversity; to live out our Catholic responsibility to dismantle structures of sin that perpetuate division; and to practice everyday solidarity.

A number of recommendations seek to address structural issues that may limit or create barriers to inclusion and equality. These include calls for the creation of a chief diversity officer or similar position; more diverse leadership for the Administrative Council and University Board of Trustees; and a more intentional focus to recruit and retain diverse students, faculty, and staff.

Another set of recommendations addresses implementing more diverse academic programs and course content, potentially creating a Center for Racial Justice and Human Dignity, and providing faculty training.

Student-focused recommendations include strengthening support for students of color, including expanded mentoring with faculty, changes to Orientation, expanding support for the first-generation student program, and leadership training.

Another group of recommendations focuses on solidarity through cultural awareness, dialogue and listening, expanded service opportunities, and stronger engagement with the broader community.

All of the recommendations, by subcommittee, are set forth in this report. Some have already been implemented with the approval of the President, most notably the appointment of Associate Dean of Engineering Mel Williams as Special Assistant to the President to coordinate diversity initiatives, a student leadership weekend with the President, and a more diverse Board of Trustees.

REPORTS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEES

Academic Affairs Subcommittee

John McCarthy (*chair*)

Dean, School of Philosophy

Angela McRae

Professor, Department of Education

Jada Haughton

Student, Columbus School of Law and
President, Black Law Students Association

David Cloutier

Professor, School of Theology and Religious Studies

Kevin Medina

Assistant Dean of Admission

The Academic Affairs Subcommittee was charged with reviewing, assessing, and proposing recommendations that would measure and improve how effectively the University's course offerings and academic programs address matters of race, culture, and faith.

The subcommittee met numerous times over the course of the 2020–21 academic year. Through individual conversations with all of the students and young alumni on the Sister Thea Bowman Committee, members of the subcommittee sought to inform themselves about the experience of Black students on campus. The group and/or chairman interviewed five student/young alumni members and the subcommittee reviewed online posts from Black alumni about their experiences. The chair also met with two Black alumni who graduated in the mid-1970s, one of whom went on to a storied career as a head coach at the University.

Members also reviewed graduate and undergraduate enrollment data by race. They found that white students are more likely to enroll in the University than students of other races/ethnicities.²⁷ As of 2019, white students comprise roughly 65 percent of undergraduates who are not attending the University on a student visa;

another 14 percent of undergraduates are Hispanic/Latino; 4.4 percent are Black; and seven percent either did not identify their race or ethnicity or selected “multi/other” to characterize themselves.²⁸

At the graduate level, 50 percent of the students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents are white and just under 12 percent, Black. Just under seven percent are Hispanic/Latino, and less than six percent marked themselves down as “multi/other.” Almost eight percent of graduate students did not provide a race/ethnicity.²⁹

In spring 2021, the Academic Affairs Subcommittee members met with a committee from the School of Arts and Sciences that had been asked by that School's dean to explore the possibility of launching one or more courses that might lead eventually to an Africana Studies Program.

Recommendation 1

Develop a panel presentation for faculty, involving Black undergraduate students, who will share what, in their experience, works well in the classroom. The presentation would be organized by the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Center for Cultural Engagement.

Recommendation 2

Develop faculty workshops involving groups of faculty facilitators and a compilation of resources for faculty interested in integrating topics pertaining to race into their courses, both to be coordinated by the Center for Teaching Excellence.

Recommendation 3

Review existing course offerings pertinent to the academic study of race.

Recommendation 4

Explore the possibility of an Africana Studies Program (or an African American Studies Program) befitting the distinctive academic mission of the University.

27 Catholic University Degree-Seeking Freshmen Application vs. Enrollments by Race and Ethnicity,” The Catholic University of America Office of Financial Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment, 2019.

28 “Full-time and Part-time Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment by Ethnicity, Gender, and School,” The Catholic University of America Office of Financial Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment, Statistical Profiles, Report B-12 (Fall 2019).

29 Ibid.

Recommendation 5

Host a series of faculty panels focused on race-related topics. These panels would primarily be targeted for students but could be open to the general public. Their goal would be to contribute to a deeper understanding of the moral, social, and political challenges pertaining to race in light of Christian faith.

Recommendation 6

Provide funding to support faculty research and teaching on topics pertinent to the work of the Sister Thea Bowman Committee.

Recommendation 7

Foster volunteer mentoring between Black students and Black junior faculty and alumni.

Recommendation 8

Compile and study data on minority student recruitment and retention.

Community Building Subcommittee

Javier Bustamante (*co-chair*)

Director, Center for Cultural Engagement

Duilia de Mello (*co-chair*)

Professor, Department of Physics and
Vice Provost for Global Strategies

Taylor Nelson

Undergraduate student, School of Psychology

Victor McCrary, B.A. 1978**Jaime Walls**

Assistant Athletic Director

Emmjolee Mendoza-Waters

Associate Director of Campus Ministry and
Community Service

The Community Building Subcommittee was charged with examining, assessing, and making recommendations to improve how the University influences non-academic matters as they relate to race, culture, and faith. The subcommittee was asked to consider but not be limited to looking at University governance, the diversification of the student body, and the University's relationship with alumni and nearby communities.

The subcommittee, which met weekly from October 2020 to April 2020, focused its efforts in three areas: student experience, governance, and the surrounding community. Members reviewed board composition, training resources, and strategic plans at other Catholic universities, held listening sessions with Black students, conducted an online survey completed by nearly 250 students, identified areas for faculty training, assessed the availability of support from existing student and professional student organizations, and identified strategic community partners.

The listening sessions with Black students revealed experiences that included microaggressions and incidents of racism on campus and in classes. Students felt a lack of empathy from some faculty and desired more support, such as a more diverse faculty and advisors to serve as mentors for students of color. The Center for Cultural Engagement is appreciated but has limited resources. Students also recommended racial-diversity training and a better orientation experience for new students that would include cultural affinity content for the campus and region.

The student survey revealed a strong desire for the University to engage with issues of diversity and inclusion outside the classroom setting. This would include campus-wide efforts to educate peers about issues of diversity and inclusion, particularly those dealing with race.

The subcommittee also considered the University's diversity compared to national data. In fall 2020, nearly 12 percent of the University's Board of Trustees were from underrepresented communities. By fall 2021, this increased to nearly 17 percent.

The University's student body (undergraduate and graduate) is slightly more white (59 percent)³⁰ than the nation's overall population (54 percent)³¹ and less Hispanic/Latino. Eleven percent of the University's students are Hispanic/ Latino compared to 18.5 percent in the U.S. population. Nearly eight percent of students are Black/non-Hispanic compared to 13.4 percent in the U.S. population, and less than four percent are Asian/non-Hispanic. The U.S. Census data from 2020 indicates the U.S. population has become increasingly multiracial and diverse.³²

An application submitted to a college guidance organization that gives equity and inclusion badges resulted in recommendations for the University, including a centralized equity and inclusion plan, targeted recruitment, support for employees of color, and on-campus support for students of color once recruited.

Recommendation 1

Strengthen the cultural competency curriculum for all student leaders, with collaboration between departments. Create a train-the-trainer program for cultural competency for staff responsible for student leadership development.

30 "Full-time and Part-time Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment by Ethnicity, Gender, and School," The Catholic University of America Office of Financial Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment, Statistical Profiles, Report B-12 (Fall 2019). (Source for all University data in this subcommittee report)

31 US Census Bureau (2019). *Quick facts, United States*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

32 Mike Schneider, "Census data: US is diversifying, white population shrinking," Aug. 13, 2021, apnews.com

Recommendation 2

Develop a comprehensive and appropriate racial training/formation program for all University members, including faculty, staff, and students.

Recommendation 3

Develop Title IX-style training to address racial discrimination, including the reporting process for racial discrimination. Training should be provided for students, staff, and faculty, and the number of racial discrimination claims and investigations should be publicly reported.

Recommendation 4

Host an annual Sister Thea Bowman speaker series, with a variety of speakers addressing relevant and timely issues of diversity and inclusion. (Note: The Department of Library and Information Science currently sponsors the Library and Information Science Sister Thea Bowman Lecture Series on Social Justice.)

Recommendation 5

Initiate a national search for the position of chief diversity officer (or equivalent senior position), who will oversee implementation of recommendations from the Sister Thea Bowman Committee.

Recommendation 6

Diversify the ethnic/racial composition of the University's board of trustees.

Recommendation 7

Develop a detailed plan for increasing the diversity of the student population.



External Affairs Subcommittee

Jacqueline Leary-Warsaw (*co-chair*)

Dean, Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Drama, and Art

Sean Sullivan (*co-chair*)

Associate Vice President and Director of Athletics

Karna Lozoya

Vice President for University Communications

Jeannine Marino

Secretary for Pastoral Ministry and Social Concerns, Archdiocese of Washington

Matalyn Vennerstrom

Graduate student, Department of Politics

The External Affairs Subcommittee was given a charge to examine, assess, and make recommendations to measure and improve how effectively the University influences matters of race, culture, and faith in society and the world.

The subcommittee focused on the University's role for participating in and influencing the conversation about race within academia, in the media, with the Church, and with community and civic institutions (government). Members reviewed available data on faculty and graduate student diversity, data that indicated racial disparities in how residents of Washington, D.C., experience daily life; and data on how universities have been responding to race since spring 2020. They also considered Church statements and teaching on racism, diversity, and culture, and current engagement with the local community through the University.

A full 82 percent of universities, such as Catholic University, have engaged in external communications about race since June 2020, according to Education Advisory Board, while 39 percent have made long-term

commitments such as anti-racism training, recruitment and retention changes, provision of campus-based resources, and improved partnerships with local and regional communities.³³

Faculty data indicates that Catholic University's full-time faculty is three percent Black compared to six percent reported by the National Center for Education Statistics (2019). Catholic University full-time faculty is five percent Hispanic/Latino faculty members versus six percent nationally.^{34, 35}

The data shifts at the graduate student level, which the subcommittee notes is important since graduate students are the path to faculty recruitment. Twelve percent of Catholic University graduate students are Black versus 13.5 percent nationally, while seven percent are Hispanic/Latino versus 9.2 percent nationally.^{36, 37}

A survey of 36 alumni provided insight into their experience at the University. Respondents were asked how race was handled at the University, and their perception of whether persons of color had an overall positive experience. Results were mixed. A majority noted that their experience at Catholic University inspired them in a positive way to "think more deeply or differently" about issues of race. A number of respondents called the University to a deeper commitment to racial equality and understanding, with several recommending this occur through the context of Catholic values and teaching.

One respondent wrote, "Most of the time they [incidents of racism] are the small things that go unnoticed." Another, who had been an instructor, wrote, "Figuring out the best ways to help [Black and minority students] learn inspired me to think more deeply about questions concerning race, privilege, and how those experiences are often tied to a challenging socioeconomic background or being a first-generation college student."

33 Kurubel Belay, "What has higher education promised on anti-racism in 2020 and is it enough?" Education Advisory Board, Nov. 16, 2020.

34 "Full-time Instructional Faculty by Rank, Ethnicity, and Gender," The Catholic University of America Office of Financial Planning, Institutional Research and Assessment, Statistical Profiles, Table H-3 (Fall 2019).

35 Fast Facts, "Race/ethnicity of college faculty," National Center for Education Statistics, 2018.

36 "Full-time and Part-time Undergraduate and Graduate Enrollment" (Table B-12, Fall 2019)

37 Lorelle L. Espinosa, Jonathan M. Turk, Morgan Taylor and Hollie M. Chessman, "Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education: A Status Report (Chapter 4)," American Council on Education, Data for 2015–16. <https://www.equityinhighered.org/resources/report-downloads/race-and-ethnicity-in-higher-education-a-status-report>

Recommendation 1

Create the Sister Thea Bowman Center for Racial Justice and Human Dignity, with a focus on issues related to racial justice and human dignity through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching and the Catholic response to racism and injustice. The center would house the chief diversity officer, and have visiting faculty, symposiums, resources, and support for dioceses in the area of racial justice and engagement with the local community on issues of race, justice, and civic engagement.

Recommendation 2

Work with the government relations liaison to build relationships and pursue funding opportunities for initiatives that seek to promote racial equality.

Recommendation 3

Promote racial equality in Brookland through work with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce in the National Catholic School of Social Service.

Recommendation 4

Obtain Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) designation from the U.S. Department of Education.

Recommendation 5

Develop a Catholic University statement on race.

Recommendation 6

Create a website that would clearly communicate the University's commitment, goals, action steps, and progress, serving as a first step to help others identify Catholic University as a school committed to diversity.

Recommendation 7

Promote original scholarship on race, offering opportunities to be in the conversation at conferences, through books and articles, and as experts in the media.

Recommendation 8

Hold visible projects and initiatives addressing racism to increase conversation and awareness, such as an exchange program with an Historically Black College or University, a visiting scholar or faculty chair, podcast, high-profile symposium, or a moment of atonement.

Recommendation 9

Utilize the structures already in place (advisory neighborhood commissions, wards, Council of the District of Columbia) to listen, learn, collect data, and share ideas for intentional, external outreach.

Recommendation 10

Deepen the partnership, and opportunities for communication, with leaders of the city's advisory neighborhood commissions and further prioritize the "town and gown" relationship by telegraphing University interests and respecting and supporting those of local communities.

Recommendation 11

Further establish a multi-faceted collaboration with leaders of each ward, and then the Council of the District of Columbia.

Recommendation 12

Pursue opportunities to collaborate with local business officials that reach beyond usual boundaries of partnership.

Recommendation 13

Create a series of local engagement or "community dialogue" events focused on matters of race. Invite local citizens and leaders to campus to participate in and/or lead the discussions.

Recommendation 14

Acknowledge and take actions based on the University's role as a leader in Catholic higher education.

Recommendation 15

Develop programs that other Catholic institutions will be inspired to model.

Recommendation 16

Advance recruitment of faculty from underrepresented communities including position(s) focused on ethnic and multicultural studies and positions that build upon intellectual leadership on topics of race.

Recommendation 17

Advance recruitment of graduate students from underrepresented communities with increased funding for scholarships and expanded teaching opportunities, as well as the creation of assistantships, internships, post-doctoral fellowships, grants, and awards that encourage students of color.

Personal Formation Subcommittee

Rev. Jude T. DeAngelo, O.F.M. Conv. (co-chair)
University Chaplain and Director of Campus Ministry

Judi Biggs Garbuio (co-chair)
Vice President for Student Affairs

Ansel Augustine
Past Executive Director for Cultural Diversity
and Outreach, Archdiocese of Washington

Schola Eburuoh
Undergraduate student, School of Architecture
and Planning

Juan Jones
Member of the Board of Trustees

The Personal Formation Subcommittee was charged with examining, assessing, and making recommendations to improve how effectively the University influences the attitudes and experiences of its students, and other members of the community, as related to matters of race, culture, and faith.

This subcommittee began its work by revisiting the University mission statement, leading to a recommendation to review and potentially update the statement to reflect a commitment to the whole person.

Additionally, the team reflected upon the experiences and contexts that influence students before arriving at the University, noting that “many students’ primary and secondary educational institutions and neighborhoods were not populated by people of different races, religions, and socio-economic backgrounds.” Today’s students are influenced by the culture and find great “meaning and purpose in serving others.”

Three recommendations from the subcommittee focus on building connection and understanding between students. The proposed experiences would focus on a number of outcomes, including strengthened communications; servant leadership; awareness, deeper respect for, and appreciation of cultures, life

experiences, and heritages, especially those that are different from one’s own; and an understanding of personal formation as a lifelong experience that benefits not only oneself, but our community.

The subcommittee’s final recommendation would help support the Center for Cultural Engagement’s (CCE) transition program for first-generation students, provide advice for student organizations, and support programs and events that promote student development and community building.

Recommendation 1

Hold a President’s Weekend focused on servant leadership that provides an opportunity for student leaders to engage one another, the President and other University administrators, faculty, and staff in formal and informal settings off-campus.

Recommendation 2

Create an assistant director position for the CCE.

Recommendation 3

The University’s Board of Trustees should revisit the University’s mission statement, aims, and goals in order to make systemic changes that clearly articulate the University’s role in educating the whole person, describing the community to which we aspire, and conveying how this relates to working for the common good.

Recommendation 4

Offer personal formation not only during August Orientation, but throughout the academic year to expand student understanding of the relationship between the University community and Brookland; greater Washington, D.C.; and global communities.

Recommendation 5

Create a “Welcome to THE Catholic University of America” community experience, which would serve as the launch of a personal-formation year. These experiences would be held over several late spring/early summer weekends prior to online summer Orientation from the Division of Student Affairs.

Workforce Development Subcommittee

Marcus Lucas (*co-chair*)

Senior Director of Facilities Maintenance and Operations

Melvin Williams Jr. (*co-chair*)

Associate Dean, School of Engineering

Kirk McLean

Associate Vice President for Public Safety and Emergency Management

Matthew McNally

Senior Associate Vice President for Administration

Scott Rembold

Vice President for University Advancement

Jordan Tibbs, B.S. 2021

The Workforce Development Subcommittee was charged with examining, assessing, and making recommendations to measure and improve the University's efforts in the areas of recruitment, training, and retention of its staff and faculty, as the decisions relate to race, culture, and faith.

The subcommittee reviewed the University's strategic goals and policies related to this charge, obtained feedback from more than 25 percent of the University's full-time workforce, reviewed employee demographic and retention data, and conducted in-depth meetings with 28 administrators, faculty, and staff.

The current University workforce is 51 percent white, 17 percent Black, nine percent Hispanic/Latino, and eight percent Asian. About 78 percent of tenured and tenure-track professors are white. Seventy percent of Hispanic/Latino employees and 57 percent of Black employees are in blue-collar positions.³⁸ The subcom-

mittee noted the University offers limited professional development and growth opportunities for staff and has a decentralized hiring process, which may affect efforts to surface a diverse pool of candidates.

Upon reviewing employee survey results, the subcommittee found the responses to the commitment of University leadership to racial diversity to be somewhat divided on a scale of 1–5. One survey question asked if the leadership at Catholic University encourages racial diversity, and 34 percent of the responses were favorable, 24 percent were neutral, and 42 percent were not favorable. Respondents were strongly positive regarding their own supervisor's commitment to racial diversity and most indicated they understood the procedures to report incidents of discrimination and/or bias in the workplace.

Recommendation 1

Execute the University's strategic goals and policies and maintain leadership accountability, with the University's Staff Leadership Council to track and record the accomplishment status of the strategic goals.

Strategic Goal 1. Ensure that every aspect of the University is clearly and distinctively grounded in our Catholic identity.

Strategic Goal 2. Aim for the highest standards of academic and professional excellence.

Strategic Goal 3. Provide a vibrant, challenging, and uplifting collegiate experience.

Strategic Goal 4. Offer a demanding, efficient, productive, and rewarding work environment.

Strategic Goal 5. Use our distinctive identity as a basis for securing the resources needed to fund this Strategic Plan.

³⁸ Special report based on campus human resource records, The Catholic University of America EEO, 2020.

Recommendation 2

Establish a University statement that covers diversity, equity, and inclusion, and includes definitions and why this is important to mission performance.

Recommendation 3

Diversify the composition of the Staff Leadership Council, appointing racial minority members.

Recommendation 4

Proactively recruit racial minority students, faculty, and staff via leveraging the diocesan system locally, nationally, and globally.

Recommendation 5

Establish and implement a voluntary “This Is Who We Are” program, with weekly voluntary presentations from staff, faculty, and students about the person’s role at the University, personal story/family background, culture, etc., followed by Q&A to increase community and understanding.

Recommendation 6

Create a written policy that the composition of members of the Staff Leadership Council is more representative of the University’s demographic population.

Recommendation 7

Diversify the composition of the Board of Trustees’ lay members to achieve greater diversity and inclusion.

Recommendation 8

Investigate how to address, via policy and action, the racial stratification situation within the workforce, and the salary disparity by race and gender, make recommendations, and implement.

Recommendation 9

Improve efforts to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce and student population by establishing and leveraging an internal network of mentors and advocates that may be able to connect— via personal relationships — with prospective and current faculty, staff, and students.

Recommendation 10

Standardize staff hiring practices via the establishment of a standardized policy and practice for hiring new staff, to include forming a diverse ad hoc committee, including the chief diversity officer (or chief performance officer) and a representative with experience in the skill area of the position to be filled.

Recommendation 11

Establish a team to define the content and budget needs of a centralized human resources training and professional development program to improve retention and professional development. This might include professional development course listings available to full-time employees at no-cost.

Recommendation 12

Improve efforts to recruit, hire, and retain a more diverse workforce by creating one new human resource staff position/member in support of diversity and inclusion in University hiring practices.

Recommendation 13

Improve mission performance with diversity and inclusion as a priority by hiring and/or appointing a chief diversity officer (or a chief performance officer). This could be a part-time position from within the faculty with the possibility of a full-time endowed position in the future. The individual should focus on execution of University strategic goals, serve on the Staff Leadership Council, and work closely with the President’s chief of staff.

Recommendation 14

Provide centralized human resources budget for marketing job postings to reach a broader pool of candidates.



F.O.C.U.S.

MISA

THE FILIPINO ORGANIZATION
of CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY STUDENTS



WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

It is my honor and privilege to serve as the inaugural Special Assistant to the President for matters relating to race relations and equality at The Catholic University of America.

As stated in the Sister Thea Bowman Committee report, “Catholic University’s commitment to address the sin of racism and to building a Christian culture on campus is rooted in the Catholic faith upon which the University is founded and thrives.” I look forward to serving and supporting the entire Catholic University community, and I offer the following additional concepts toward our common understanding and commitment.

We are a diverse institution. People come to the University with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, to include those related to their race, upbringing, and opportunities. Our challenge is to value, understand, and respect those differences; and understand how a diverse mix of people can make us a stronger institution through commitment and day-to-day support of Catholic University’s core values and improving the University’s mission performance.

We are committed to provide fair access, opportunity, and advancement for all members of the University community; while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that may have prevented the full participation of some individuals or groups.

Addressing these issues on an ongoing basis should foster an environment where different perspectives are welcomed and respectfully expressed and heard, and every individual feels a

sense of belonging. This includes bringing traditionally excluded and underrepresented individuals or groups into processes, activities, and decision making in a way that shares power and ensures equal access to opportunities and resources.

All of these programs, initiatives, and improvements are inextricably linked to Catholic University’s efforts to improve mission performance.

The University’s mission performance is continually enhanced as enabled by improvements in all areas of race relations and equality, and the University maintains persistence such that the associated goals and aspirations are institutionalized within the culture of the University.

As I take on the duties of special assistant, please know that you have my commitment toward working with the University leaders and our entire Catholic University community to ensure that the recommendations of the Bowman Committee are fully considered. A couple of the recommendations have already been implemented, including the creation of my role and assumption of the leadership at the start of the academic year. I will be a persistent voice in ensuring that the Bowman recommendations are honored, but I also intend to consider other issues that, in the spirit of Sister Thea, demand attention and action. I can be reached any time at williamsme@cua.edu. Feel free to come to my office in Pangborn Hall, Room 100, or please invite me to visit you. I look forward to hearing from you as we move forward. My plan is to report back to you periodically.

Mel Williams, Jr., Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Associate Dean of Engineering, Special Assistant to the President



Melvin Williams Jr., associate dean of engineering, is a retired vice admiral (three star) in the U.S. Navy, who, among many assignments, was the commander of the Second Fleet. Williams is one of the U.S. Navy Submarine Force “Centennial Seven,” the first seven African Americans to command a U.S. submarine in the first 100 years of the submarine force. Williams and his father Mel Williams Sr. are the only African American father and son in our nation’s history to reach (respectively) the top officer rank (vice admiral/O-9) and the top enlisted rank (master chief/E-9) in the U.S. Navy.

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