

**Aligning Staff Recruitment Strategies with School-wide Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
Strategies**

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# **Aligning Staff Recruitment Strategies with School-wide Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategies**

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University of Pittsburgh, 2022

This dissertation in-practice analyzes the impact of reforming the staff hiring process and its potential to affect culture within the campus racial climate. The study uses the improvement science model, which is a methodological approach built on pragmatism and science that uses disciplined inquiry to solve problems of practice (Perry et al., 2020). Through an intervention focused on the staff hiring process and all of the components involved, this study analyzes the impact of redacting resumes and cover letters, requiring implicit bias training for search committees, and using clear criteria and characteristics to rate, rank, and interview candidates. The Hurtado (2008) campus racial climate framework is used to align the intervention with research and better understand the dimensions of a campus climate that must be addressed in order to encourage cultural change.

The three interventions all played a role in creating an equitable search process, and the data includes interviews with the search committee, surveys, and detailed documentation of the process. Throughout the interviews with the search committee, it was clear that the redacted resumes and cover letters helped the search committee members focus on the skills and experience in relation to the established characteristics that the committee was looking for, instead of allowing bias to enter the process. The establishment of clear criteria and characteristics helped to create a sense of familiarity among the committee for what skills and attributes they were actually looking for in the candidates from the beginning of the search to the end. Lastly, there was consensus that

the implicit bias training helped limit bias for each member individually, as well as helping them better understand their own attitudes and stereotypes.

The search committee members voiced that the structure within the process helped create an equitable process for all and allowed each of them to experience a sense of consistency throughout the process. Although the process was effective, the study also includes future considerations to improve the process and ensure sustainability. A reformed staff hiring process is a step in the right direction when working to create culture change in higher education.

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## Preface

I wish to show my appreciation for my family, friends, and colleagues for their support throughout the process of working towards my EdD. To my wife, Jordan, thank you for your unwavering support and patience throughout the process. To my parents, thank you for your support from the beginning of my educational career and for always being there for everything. To my siblings, your success has fueled me to be better. Thank you for always pushing me and I look forward to all that we will accomplish in the life in front of us. And Mimi, you have been a constant, steadying force and I am thankful for all that you have done for my parents, my siblings, our cousins, and myself. Pap Pap is proud of this one.

The guidance and assistance provided by my doctoral advisor Mike Gunzenhauser has been greatly appreciated and he has been a reliable constant throughout the process. I would like to personally thank two of my colleagues Arjang Assad and Karri Rogers. Arjang, Henry E. Haller Jr. Dean at Pitt Business has been an incredible leader and colleague throughout my time at Pitt Business. Karri Rogers, Assistant Dean of Operations, has provided me endless opportunities and has been the best mentor I have had throughout my professional career. The support and trust from Arjang and Karri have made all of this possible. Finally, thank you to Heather Trainor who is always so willing to try new ideas towards creating meaningful change at Pitt Business.

Lastly, I hope this work and degree inspires the next generations of our family to be lifelong learners. Whether that applies to kids that we have in the future, our nieces and nephews, any grandchildren, my hope is that they know they can achieve anything they set their mind to, and they have the full support of our friends and family. Education is a powerful tool that transforms lives, cultures, and the world. Your name here, you're next.

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Problem Area**

Equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts in higher education have become pillars of the strategic planning process for colleges and universities. A myriad of campus diversity issues led to the emergence of efforts to influence the culture on college campuses, most significant of which were recurring racial incidents that sparked media attention (Hurtado et al., 2008). Over time, campuses began climate assessments as a proactive rather than reactive attempt to deal with significant issues affecting women, racial and ethnic minorities, students with disabilities, and LGBT students (Michigan Student Study, 2008).

As it relates to higher education, faculty and staff representation has shown to be necessary on college campuses to promote a positive campus racial climate, which will be the focus of this paper. Administrators, faculty, staff, and students from different ethnic and racial backgrounds are likely to view diversity and campus climate in different ways. It is our duty to understand the differences and similarities between populations, cultures, and ethnicities to equip leaders to cultivate a diverse and inclusive environment on our college campuses.

### **1.2 Organizational System**

The University of Pittsburgh Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business and College of Business Administration (Pitt Business) develops dynamic global business leaders who are

confident, ready, and prepared to lead. With more than 2,800 students enrolled in its undergraduate, specialized master's, MBA, Executive MBA, and doctoral programs, Pitt Business is one of the largest academic units on the main campus of the University of Pittsburgh (Pitt) in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh. The mission of Pitt Business is to leverage the opportunities created by its urban location and strong research culture to prepare students to be catalysts for change. The mission is to merge communities of knowledge with communities of practice to create exceptional experience-based learning outcomes for students and relevant insights for business leaders.

Pitt began offering business education in 1907 with a primary business degree, the bachelor's degree in business administration (BBA). In 1960, the graduate school of business was established, and the undergraduate business program closed. For 30 years, Pitt's graduate business education was the main program offering. But the absence of an undergraduate program limited the school's opportunities. In 1993, Pitt created the College of Business Administration and established a new undergraduate business degree – the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) to complete what is known today as Pitt Business.

In relation to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), Pitt Business has a limited history. On the graduate side, the dean offers three full-tuition scholarships to Black MBA students and the Katz graduate office staff are all members of the National Black MBA Association. In the College of Business Administration (CBA), the curriculum involves programming related to EDI through the David Berg Center for Ethics and Leadership. The CBA programming involves lessons on implicit bias and how diversity efforts translate into the business world. Lastly, there is a faculty EDI recruitment committee that focuses on the recruitment and retention of a diverse faculty body. Outside of the items listed, there is a limited history of substantial EDI efforts at Pitt Business.

Table 1 below represents a force field analysis to better understand the facilitation and obstruction of creating a culture of EDI at Pitt Business.

**Table 1 Force Field Analysis**

<b>Forces FOR Change</b>	<b>Change Proposal</b>	<b>Forces AGAINST Change</b>
University of Pittsburgh Leadership	<b>Create a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion at Pitt Business.</b>	Funding and financial model at Pitt
Pitt Business Faculty		Pitt Business Faculty
Dean & Associate Deans		Process for changes to the curriculum
Majority of students		Resources for trainings
Majority of staff		Politics
Current events		Generational differences
Accrediting body (AACSB)		Appetite for change
Board of Visitors (BOV)		

The force field analysis above highlights the forces against change, which have made it difficult to create a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion. The force field analysis was informed partially through empathy interviews that I completed for a course within the EdD program, where I was able to learn more about the faculty and their limited appetite for change. The empathy interviews were conducted with both tenure-stream and appointment stream (non-tenure stream) faculty. The empathy interviews helped to reinforce that there are many faculty members who support the change, but with many changes that happen in higher education, there are faculty members who may oppose the proposed change, especially when the issue becomes slightly

partisan such as EDI. In addition, the force field analysis above shows that limited university resources make it hard to implement any initiatives related to EDI without eliminating current funding that we have for other resources. The budget at Pitt Business has decreased over the past three years, although costs have been rising, which indicates a budget model that does not support long-term strategic initiatives.

When looking at the force field analysis and analyzing EDI initiatives implemented over the past few years at Pitt Business, equity and justice are only slightly visible within our space. Out of the 90 staff within Pitt Business, more than 90% of the population is White. The faculty have much more diverse representation than the staff at 65% White. In addition, the University of Pittsburgh recently enrolled one of its least diverse undergraduate student bodies in 2020 when compared to the last decade. Due to the lack of representation within the business school and greater campus community, equity and justice have yet to be present within our community. In contrast, there are dozens of efforts being executed today to help bridge that gap to ensure that equity and justice are present in the future. During Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, Pitt Business introduced a six-part EDI series, in conjunction with the University of Pittsburgh Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI), for all faculty and staff to educate and inform, while creating a space for dialogue on topics such as race, gender diversity, age, and the value of EDI in business. Through Fall 2021, 110 faculty and staff members successfully completed the six-part EDI series.

In the most recent strategic plan for 2020-2025, Pitt Business intentionally makes equity, diversity, and inclusion a priority to ensure that its efforts are more visible in the future. The Plan includes five values-based aspirations and one of them is to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. The underlying themes of the aspiration include:

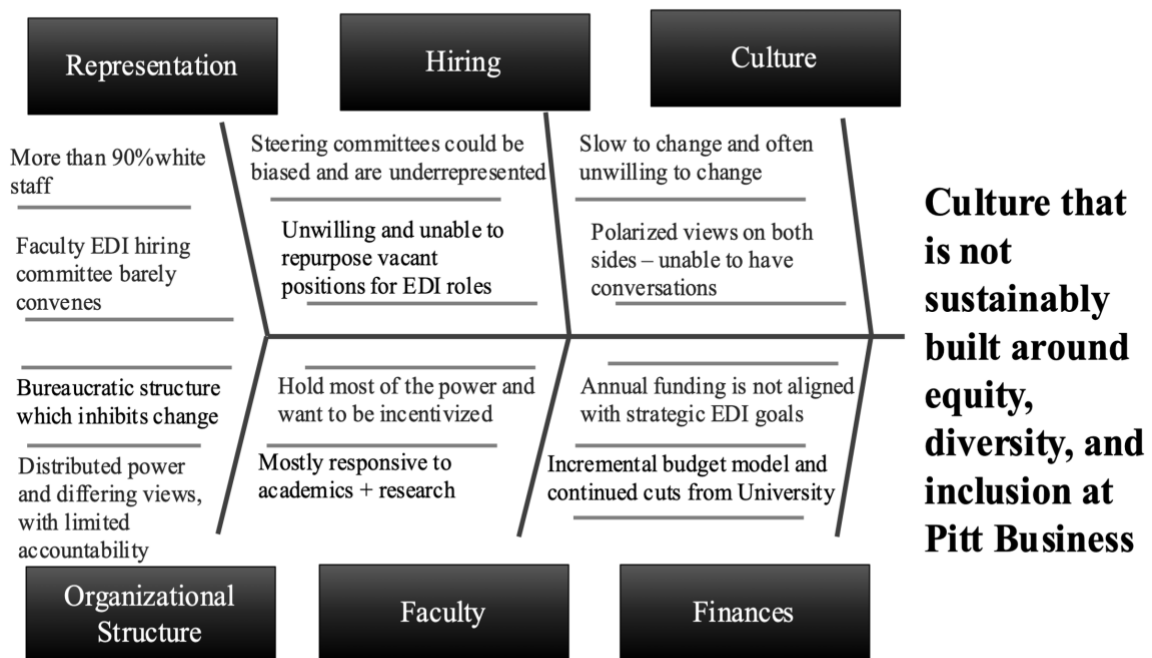
1. Recruit diverse faculty and support diversity-focused research.

2. Emphasize diversity in faculty recruiting, addressing women's issues, and focusing on disadvantaged socio-economic populations.
3. Research and apply wicked problem-solving techniques as a response to the challenge of enhancing diversity and inclusion.
4. Explore issues and benefits of diversity and inclusion as an element of humanity.
5. Strengthen recruiting of minoritized populations and international students.
6. Build relationships with minority-led organizations.

The organizational system analysis has helped to inform my fishbone diagram and my Problem of Practice in many ways. A fishbone diagram is used as a framework for illustrating the various root causes contributing to the problem of practice (Perry et al. 2020). Perry et al. (2020) suggests the use of a fishbone diagram helps to discover, organize, and summarize the current knowledge surrounding various causes contributing to the problem's existence.

Figure 1 below shows the various aspects of Pitt Business hindering the progress of EDI initiatives and efforts.





**Figure 1 Fishbone Diagram**

The fishbone diagram and force field analysis are important tools when analyzing the organizational structures in place within a system. The forces against change in the force field analysis play into the politics, culture, and organization design challenges that exist within Pitt Business. Understanding the organizational system and the stakeholders within the system are important factors to consider when implementing change. Leaders must continuously remember the history, mission, and values of an institution to not only be successful in carrying out the goals of a school, but to also understand how their improvement efforts have the best chance of being successful.

### 1.3 Stakeholders

A key feature of Improvement Science methodology is that it involves the direct impact that human interaction may have on a process or change idea. Because improvement science is directly influenced by stakeholders within an institution or organization, it is important to understand the stakeholders that impact the problem of practice. One way to better understand my Problem of Practice (POP) is to consider multiple perspectives related to the POP. In the stakeholder description that follows, I outline and analyze the people involved, and who impacts my POP throughout the process.

When I think about the stakeholders that impact or are impacted by my POP, the list ranges from leadership at the top and continues to trickle down to the friends and families of our students. See below for the list of stakeholders:

1. Dean
2. Associate/Assistant Deans
3. Senior-level staff
4. Staff
5. Students
6. Alumni
7. Faculty
8. Board of Visitors
9. Pitt Business EDI Steering Committee
10. Pitt Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
11. Pitt Community (outside of Pitt Business)
12. Friends and families of our students

The stakeholders have varying levels of influence and also bring different lived experiences and perspectives to the complexity of my POP. In my empathy interviews at the beginning of the process, I was able to speak with faculty, staff, and senior-level leadership at Pitt Business. The interviews helped me to better understand the power dynamic and relationships between all of the stakeholders. As a complement to the interviews, the tools within the Bryson (2010) article really helped to visualize and map out those relationships. See below for more detail on a few of the key stakeholders.

#### Dean, Associate/Assistant Deans, & Senior-Level staff

This group of stakeholders is intimately involved in the vision, strategy, and implementation of the strategic plan. With that, they understand that EDI initiatives need to be front and center and help to communicate the importance of these efforts to the rest of the stakeholders on the list.

#### Board of Visitors

The Board of Visitors is a group of distinguished alumni and/or members of the community that have tremendous influence on the long-term strategy and viability of the business school. To obtain funding or donations to help advance the EDI initiatives, this group of stakeholders will not just have to be involved but see it as a strategic mission to help advance Pitt Business to the next level.

#### Pitt Business EDI Steering Committee

The steering committee is a group of faculty and staff who are responsible for advancing the day-to-day efforts of the EDI initiative. The committee was formed in July 2020, reporting up through the dean, and has membership from throughout the school. Their ability to stay in tune

with current events, communication strategies, and trainings will help to sustain forward momentum as EDI continues to be integrated into the operations of Pitt Business.

As another way to understand more about the stakeholders, Figure 2 below from Bryson et al. (2010) helps to better understand the relationship between power and support and/or opposition.

<b>Support</b>	<b>Weak Supporters</b>	<b>Strong Supporters</b>
	Staff Students Alumni Pitt Office of Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion <i>Faculty</i> Friends and Families	Dean Senior Level Staff Associate Deans/Assistant Dean Pitt Business EDI Steering Committee <i>Faculty</i>
<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Weak Opponents</b>	<b>Strong Opponents</b>
	<i>Faculty</i> Friends and Families Board of Visitors	<i>Faculty</i>
<b>Stakeholder Power</b>		
<b>Weak</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>Strong</b></span>		

**Figure 2 Stakeholder Analysis**

In figure 2 above, Pitt Business senior leadership falls into the “Strong Supporters” quadrant. The leadership team at Pitt Business strives to always be responsive to the needs of our students and the greater community, which is why they are prepared to support EDI efforts in a greater capacity. Students on college campuses have high expectations of our leadership and the leadership at Pitt Business has been incredibly supportive of the movement. One of the more interesting group of stakeholders is the faculty. I placed them into all four quadrants within the chart because their complexity cannot simply fit into one categorization. The majority of the faculty likely lie within the right side of the Figure, simply due to the level of power that comes with the faculty roles within higher education. There are many faculty members who are strong

supporters of my POP, and anything related to EDI. There are others, weak supporters, who believe it is important but do not act as advocates and/or go the extra mile to ensure that EDI is a staple within Pitt Business. The last bucket of faculty are strong opponents of my POP. Less than 10% of the faculty have expressed that they do not see the importance of extensive EDI components in the business curriculum and/or do not see a problem existing related to the topic.

Due to the shared governance structure of higher education and the influence of faculty, and general trends within schools, it is likely that the voice of the opposition will naturally be much louder, although it is likely a smaller group of individuals. Since the proportion of faculty in opposition is much less than those that are supportive, the faculty may not be a roadblock for helping to solve the problem of EDI within Pitt Business, yet the process may be slowed due to the bureaucratic shared governance structure.

With all of the senior leadership team being strong supporters, a lot of the power is distributed to those who do not have as much influence. Staff, alumni, and students do not have much, if any, decision-making power, yet they have the power and influence to shift the culture. Students are driving the need for increased EDI efforts and will hold the leadership accountable with their voice. Staff members within Pitt Business have a lot of student interactions and will also need to be well equipped to handle any and all EDI initiatives. My interviews with staff reinforced how they sincerely want what is best for the students and will be advocates for what the students believe is best for them.

When I look at the list of stakeholders, I am missing the perspective of the University of Pittsburgh community outside of the business school. I am curious how they perceive Pitt Business and how we are handling EDI initiatives. Based on my view from the balcony (Heifetz et al., 2009), I would assume that others believe we are behind the rest of the University of Pittsburgh, as well

as many academic units, due to the lack of heavy EDI involvement prior to 2020. In order to get their perspective, I could reach out to my colleagues in other units to get their candid opinion on how they believe we are handling EDI at Pitt Business. Their thoughts and suggestions could prove to be helpful as the whole university also focuses on ensuring an inclusive and diverse campus climate. By learning from them and what has been done before, we will be more efficient and effective in our implementation.

The stakeholder description has highlighted the importance of understanding the distributed power within the school and how certain individuals play critical roles in my problem of practice. To truly understand the problem, I must continue to dig to find a deeper understanding of how the stakeholders play a role in some or many of the root causes that are outlined in the fishbone diagram. The stakeholder description and organizational system analysis act as context behind the problem of practice and help to inform the review of scholarly knowledge, which is a deeper dive into the equity, diversity, and inclusion space in higher education.

#### **1.4 Statement of the Problem of Practice**

My problem of practice is that Pitt Business makes equity, diversity and inclusion a priority in its strategic plan, yet has no strategy to effectively recruit, empower, and retain a diverse set of faculty and staff. As the Director of Business Administration at the Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business and College of Business Administration (Pitt Business), I oversee finance, human resources, marketing, and the day-to-day operations of the Dean's Office. The Pitt Business 2020-2025 Strategic Plan outlines a goal to promote diversity and inclusion and to emphasize diversity in faculty and staff recruiting. The plan to build diversity of our faculty and staff also

includes the exploration of the benefits of equity, diversity, and inclusion as an element of humanity. Pitt Business has a need to align with their strategic plan and to implement effective equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts.

In its current state, Pitt Business does not have a formal framework or strategy to ensure that equity, diversity, and inclusion is a top priority. In many ways, Pitt Business has made efforts to advance EDI through certain initiatives, such as its six-part certificate program for faculty and staff, yet Pitt Business leadership cannot expect to be able to foster a diverse environment if the faculty and staff are not properly trained, developed, and represented. To learn more about the problem, I worked with a student group within Pitt Business to complete an EDI survey that was sent out to all faculty and staff. The goal of the survey was to learn more about the problem and better understand how our faculty and staff felt about Pitt Business's efforts around equity, diversity, and inclusion. The data suggests unfavorable ratings related to our efforts prior to 2021 with racial diversity. In addition, younger faculty and staff did not perceive the efforts positively on age diversity while older staff believed the current efforts were stronger. In addition to race and age, we looked at many other areas of diversity which show that EDI is a weakness of Pitt Business, which validates the need to create a strategy to effectively recruit, empower, and retain a diverse set of faculty and staff.

Pitt Business has a limited history in relation to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Chapter 1 of this study has framed the inquiry and stated the problem within Pitt Business, which incorporated how the organizational system and stakeholders contribute to the complexities within the problem, and also serve as gateways to a possible solution. The next chapter presents a scholarly review in the area of equity, diversity, and inclusion on college campuses, and how a campus climate can be changed through certain interventions. Chapter 3 then discusses the

intervention for this study, which is a reformed staff hiring process. In addition to the inquiry, chapter 3 also outlines the data, collection methods, analysis of the data, any limitations to the study, and overall timeline for the intervention. Chapter 4 discusses the findings of the study which include the data and the analysis of the data. Lastly, chapter 5 summarizes what was learned through the interventions and discusses the implications for administrators and future interventions.



## **2.0 Review of Supporting Scholarship**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The following chapter introduces the review of supporting scholarship, which is an in-depth look at Sylvia Hurtado's (2008) framework for the campus racial climate model. The model is used to better understand and promote multiple dimensions that play a role in the climate on a given campus, as well as strategies to effectively impact a culture through focusing on areas such as representation, quality of interactions, organizational design, and how a culture has been created due to its historical context.

The present inquiry utilizes the campus racial climate model to focus on how faculty and staff influence equity, diversity, and inclusion within a campus climate (Hurtado et al. 2008). The campus racial climate model, developed by Hurtado et al. (2008) is being reviewed because of the way it outlines many different aspects of a culture that are intertwined and need to be impacted in order to make meaningful change on a college campus.

Campus racial climates include five dimensions: historical, compositional, behavioral, organizational, and psychological, which are driven by institutional and external forces such as policy, government, and sociohistorical contexts (Hurtado et al., 2008). Hurtado et al.'s (2008) framework drives the direction of this inquiry by reviewing the influence of different interventions on the student, faculty, and staff experience within higher education.

The *compositional dimension* of the framework refers to the numerical representation of individuals from diverse social identities among students, faculty, staff, and administrators

(Hurtado et al. 1999; Milem et al. 2005). Increased and balanced representation on a college campus can lead to a greater sense of belonging for all groups. Greater compositional diversity is also positively related to satisfaction with the college experience as well as ethnic identity development (Hinrichs 2011).

The *organizational dimension* of the campus climate identifies structures and processes that embed group-based privilege and oppression or confer resources that often go unquestioned, such as tenure processes, decision-making processes regarding recruitment and hiring, budget allocations, curriculum, and other institutional practices and policies (Milem et al., 2005). Theory and research on or around the organizational dimension of the climate generally approaches the topic from three angles: that of the broader context for institutional policies and practices, specific policies or practices that structure the environment, and processes to improve the climate for diversity on an organizational level (Hurtado, 2008). For example, the organizational dimension of the climate can be understood as reflecting the pervasive, systemic, and ordinary nature of racism in American institutions (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001), and perpetuate inequity through status quo processes in education. Scholars have also long identified these organizational structures and processes as the key source of barriers to representation and inclusion of women and minorities in the academy.

The *behavioral dimension* of the campus climate refers to the context, frequency, and quality of interactions on campus between social identity groups and their members (Hurtado 2005; Hurtado et al. 2008). This dimension studies both the formal and informal interactions that occur in higher education. Formal interactions are often referred to as campus-facilitated interactions that may occur in the classroom or co-curricular settings and are the result of intentional educational practice (Gurin et al. 2002; Hurtado 2005). Informal interactions occur in

the everyday interactions between individuals outside of coordinated events and activities. The behavioral dimension often consists of training and professional development programs to help advance diversity and inclusion efforts.

The final two elements of the framework will not be reviewed in detail, yet are important to acknowledge in review of the framework. Hurtado and colleagues (2008) describe the psychological dimension of campus climate as including views held by individuals about intergroup relations as well as institutional responses to diversity, perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict, and attitudes held toward individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The dimension of historical legacy refers to the institution history of segregation within the nation's schools and colleges which has a lasting effect on efforts to achieve racial and ethnic diversity within institutions (Hurtado, et al., 2008).

## **2.2 Compositional Dimension**

The compositional dimension of the Hurtado framework refers to the numerical representation of individuals from diverse social identities among students, faculty, staff, and administrators (Hurtado et al. 2008; Milem et al. 2005). The more balanced representation of a diverse set of individuals within a college or university can lead to more inclusive experiences for members of all groups because no group is tokenized and there will be greater opportunities for interactions across difference for all (Hurtado et al., 2008).

Throughout research, there are many findings that point to the importance of compositional diversity on campus, yet it is important to reiterate the five aspects of the framework that need to be addressed, and higher education institutions cannot expect results by simply focusing on one

dimension. The compositional dimension recognizes the importance of People of Color yet does not address the historical aspect of understanding how we got to where we are today on campus. Milem, Chang, and Antonio (2005) would also agree to focus on the historical aspect of diversity; in fact their second highlighted factor is the historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion at the university (Longmire-Avital, 2018). He asserts that only when academic institutions move away from simply counting students and begin to address the issues of power and privilege that can be historically rooted on campus, can a dialogue take place to start to enact transformative equity. Specifically, Bourke (2016) writes that members of underrepresented racial groups are underrepresented not only numerically but also systemically through social structures and the ways in which power is situated among groups.

As university leaders and community members recognize the importance of all five elements, compositional diversity itself has shown to foster stronger pluralistic orientation during college (Engberg 2007), as well as in post college years (Jayakumar 2007). Students who attend more compositionally diverse institutions are more likely to report positive interracial interactions on campus, which in turn, promote pluralistic orientation (Jayakumar 2007). Emerging research also indicates that experiences with diversity in college extend to openness to other social dimensions beyond racial/ethnic diversity. Exposure to diverse learning environments in college also leads to more accepting attitudes toward individuals with different sexual orientations (Jayakumar 2009). This research suggests that fostering a positive campus climate for diversity enhances the development of much-needed multicultural competencies.

Additionally, People of Color report positive interracial interactions on campuses that have increased representation, and there is also support that highlights organizational performance and the business case around focusing on the compositional dimension. A recently published summary

by McKinsey (2015) called Diversity Matters summarizes findings of various studies related to diversity and organizational performance. In the summary, they state that not only does increased racial representation increase employee satisfaction and reduce conflicts between groups, but it also improves collaboration and loyalty. Diversity fosters innovation and creativity through a greater variety of problem-solving approaches, perspectives, and ideas.

Not only does increased representation foster innovation and creativity, it also can lead to more inclusion throughout campus. Bowman's (2010; 2011) research seems to support additional social science research that more balanced representation of a diverse set of individuals within a college or university can lead to more inclusive experiences for members of all groups. One of the aspects that needs to compliment student diversity is the diversity of those who work at a given institution. When it comes to representation of faculty, staff, and administration, it is important to acknowledge the impact of a lack of representation, and what it means for those in the minoritized population. Being the only member of one's race or gender in educational or work settings is more detrimental to the performance of women and racial minorities than Whites and males, which signals the importance for campuses to continue to diversify each group within the university. (Thompson and & Sekaquaptewa, 2002). In the same study, Thompson and Sekaquaptewa (2002), find that being in the racial or ethnic minority within a certain community or group has negative effects on performance for African Americans.

The compositional dimension is complex, and we must continuously highlight the synergies with the other dimensions within the model. In terms of increasing representation and rebalancing the distribution of racial representation, the composition of our workforce relates closely to the organizational dimension of having policies in place to help reach the diversity goals. Employers auto-reject more Black and Hispanic candidates than White or Asian applicants

because of their GPA requirements alone (Maurer, 2020). One example is how a minimum GPA may be required for someone's first job out of college. For example, many companies have GPA requirements above 3.0. As a result, they are losing a substantial number of Black candidates who may apply and be rejected due to GPA minimums, or who may not apply at all if they see the requirement. A report from Georgetown University shows that close to 70 percent of all college students work while in school, but low-income working students are disproportionately Black (Maurer, 2020). As a result, these low-income students put in more working hours than their counterparts. This creates a socioeconomic-fueled GPA inequity, given that more hours studying statistically correlates to a higher GPA. Only 10 percent of Black applicants for Fortune 500 jobs get an interview, and the majority of the Black students were getting screened out because of their GPA. As we look at the Maurer findings, leaders and decision-makers will need to acknowledge the policies in place and how they may be excluding or limiting certain populations from being a part of a given campus community.

Not only is representation a crucial practice to implement when hiring new talent, there is also a need to increase representation in senior leadership roles in higher education. For 25 years, Black U.S. college and university presidents have remained relatively unchanged, representing only 5.9% of the total (American Council of Education, 2012). With regard to the racial breakdown across 4-year degree granting institutions, Blacks are a total of 7.9% of senior-level administrative staff at U.S. colleges and universities, which is 5.1 percentage points below the Black population percentage of 13% in the United States (Gasman et al., 2015). If a higher education institution wants to build a positive campus racial climate, Black senior-level administrators need to represent much greater than 7.9% of the total campus population. Academic research has shown that diverse groups' decision making often outperform experts (McKinsey, 2015). To achieve a racially diverse

workforce that leads to an enhanced campus racial climate, the Hurtado framework suggests the need to look at the policies in place that may be limiting institutions, and search for equitable ways to post jobs to be more inclusive.

To achieve racial diversity and implement meaningful change, studies recommend that higher education institutions adjust their hiring practices to include a more diverse hiring pool and that all interview panels are diverse in their makeup, changing the weight of the interview in the selection process, and reviewing jobs and job descriptions to focus on requirements as opposed to style preferences (Gasman et al., 2015). When there is not an even representation of minority candidates in the hiring process, it is much easier to highlight the shortcomings and perceived deficiencies of a candidate when he or she is the only person of color in a pool dominated by other qualified White applicants (Gasman et al., 2015). To achieve representation goals, many institutions have created task forces to focus on racial disparities in senior administration which are comprised of both seasoned and newly hired administrators, in addition to students, faculty, and alumni.

The compositional dimension of the framework discusses the importance of diverse representation among the workforce of faculty, staff, and administration to contribute to a positive campus racial climate. One of the issues with diversity efforts is that leaders focus only on the compositional dimension and look to increase representation. Milem (2008) argues that although representation may be one of the first steps, institutions have a tendency to focus on diversity as an end itself, rather than as an education process that - when properly implemented - has the potential to enhance many important educational outcomes.

### **2.3 Organizational Dimension**

Historically, university campuses in the United States have been dominated not only by White students, but also White faculty and staff, White academic advisors, and White administrative leadership (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). The organizational dimension of the campus climate identifies structures and processes that embed group-based privilege and oppression or confer resources that often go unquestioned, such as tenure processes, decision-making processes regarding recruitment and hiring, budget allocations, curriculum, and other institutional practices and policies (Milem et al., 2005). Theory and research on or around the organizational dimension of the climate generally approaches the topic from three angles: the broader context for institutional policies and practices, specific policies or practices that structure the environment, and processes to improve the climate for diversity on an organizational level (Hurtado, 2008). For example, the organizational dimension of the climate can be understood as reflecting the pervasive, systemic, and ordinary nature of racism in American institutions (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001), and perpetuate inequity through status quo processes in education. Scholars have also long identified these organizational structures and processes as the key source of barriers to representation and inclusion of women and minorities in the academy.

Harper and Hurtado (2007) suggest that administrators and faculty proactively monitor and assess their campus climates and cultures to determine the need for change. As long as administrators espouse commitments to diversity and multiculturalism without engaging in examinations of campus climates, racial/ethnic minorities will continue to feel dissatisfied, all students will remain deprived of the full range of educational benefits accrued through cross-racial engagement, and certain institutions will sustain longstanding reputations for being racial toxic environments (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). In regard to the organizational dimension, Eckel and



Kezar (2003) defined transformation as the type of change that affects the institutional culture, is deep and pervasive, is intentional, and occurs over time. A deep change reflects a shift in values and assumptions that underlie daily operations.

The themes that are outlined in Hurtado's research help to improve the climate for diversity within the organizational dimension. The four themes include: having a clear definition of diversity that influences practice, working with multiple elements of organizational culture, creating shared responsibility for assessing, planning, and improving the climate, and having comprehensive evaluation and assessment systems (Hurtado, 2008). The themes help to outline and simplify the organizational dimension by acknowledging that the structure of a given institution or the units within will drive culture, accountability, planning, and overall satisfaction of its members. The ability to impact the organizational dimension starts with leadership, and then leans on faculty and staff to implement change and to integrate specific strategies into the organization plan, given the proper support is in place.

The organizational dimension also focuses on policies and procedures, and how they impact the campus racial climate. When implementing policies and procedures, higher education institutions are characterized by administrative nonresponse to climate issues, perhaps reflecting an artificial commitment to diversity or misalignment between resources and symbolic action, or nonperformatives. Institutional policy, on the other hand, concretely reflects the level of institutional commitment to diversity, which is a key aspect of the organizational dimension. Rankin and Reason (2008) identify that this is readily seen in university policies, programs, and services, which must be tied to institutional mission. Institutional policies and processes have the potential to create more equitable conditions and outcomes for diverse students and can be assessed for equity and diversity.

As with any change process, there are stakeholders and external contexts to consider. Shifting demographics, political and legal dynamics, societal inequities, and workforce needs all influence organizational behavior, and are forces that influence the policies and practices within the organizational dimension of the climate (Hurtado, 2008). External contexts and relations are key factors to improve the campus climate for diversity, in addition to the elements of exosystem and macro system levels that influence organizational decision-making, including state financial aid policies, local, state, and national agendas, trustee decisions with regard to access, and the influence of alumni (Rankin & Reason, 2008).

### **2.3.1 Promotion and Retention**

Within higher education, the faculty and staff models for retention and promotion are much different. The faculty tenure and promotion process (Milem et al., 2005) and salary inequities (Hart and Fellabaum, 2008) are located within the organizational dimension of the climate, and may be justified as fair, however, are likely to embed privilege for some groups and systematically disadvantage others. As a solution to poor internal processes, administrators' initiatives to develop mentoring structures within and across departments may help recruit and retain faculty of color, redistribute privilege that comes from informal sponsorship networks, as well as to empower them to engage in transforming the climate for diversity (Kezar et al. 2008). Once higher education institutions begin to increase their representation among their faculty and staff, the next step is to retain that talent. Glasman (2008) recommends the creation of formal support programs and mentoring networks to develop the pipeline of scholars of color. There needs to be more structured mentoring and advising opportunities between current senior administrators with prospective minority leaders, which can aid in increasing retention of minority faculty and staff (Alger, 2000).

Additional models of implementation support a collegial approach that involves and empowers faculty to engage in the change, and that committees must include campus-wide representation and provide training for all leaders charged with disseminating the vision and implementing the diversity plan (Williams et al. 2005). Throughout change processes, campus leaders must also keep in mind the political nature of the work, effectively manage resource allocation, and acknowledge related power, interests, and conflicts that arise (Williams et al. 2005).

Lastly, specifically related to wages, there are racial inequities that are found throughout industry and higher education. A recent study by PayScale (2020) analyzes the salaries of 1.8 million male profiles of professional white-collar workers with at least a bachelor's degree. In the study, they found that Black men earn \$0.87 for every dollar a White man earns. When addressing the organizational dimension, racial inequities need to be considered within the whole structure, which includes compensation and benefits. In all, the organizational dimension of the campus climate identifies structures and processes that embed group-based privilege and oppression or confer resources that often go unquestioned, such as tenure processes, decision-making processes regarding recruitment and hiring, budget allocations, curriculum, and other institutional practices and policies (Milem et al., 2005).

As stated earlier, how the compositional dimension intersects with the other dimensions of the model, the organization dimension closely follows the compositional dimension in many ways. Aspects of the compositional dimension focus on the hiring of People of Color and the organizational dimension uses those recruitment strategies to create retention and promotion policies and equitable pay structures that align with the compositional dimension.

## **2.4 Behavioral Dimension**

Equity, diversity and inclusion trainings are becoming more prevalent in higher education due to the need for more awareness and teaching, and the expectations being set by the students of today (Lightfoote, 2016). For direct job application and company success, diversity among colleagues has proven to be a means for better utilization of talent by increasing creativity within organizations (Lightfoote, 2016). Not only does a culture that fosters diversity increase a company's productivity, but it is also used as a method to attract and retain diverse employees. To increase the quality of the campus racial climate, many colleges and universities implement training programs, yet with any change, there are limitations and challenges such as lack of interest or the program backfiring on administration that need to be researched.

The behavioral dimension of the campus climate refers to the context, frequency, and quality of interactions on campus between social identity groups and their members (Hurtado 2005; Hurtado et al. 2008). Through diversity and inclusion training programs, higher education institutions can equip their faculty and staff to increase the quality of their formal and informal interactions with colleagues and students. Although some programs are instituted to avoid litigation or remain in compliance with federal and state policies, it is mostly due to an effort to develop awareness and sensitivity to discriminatory and prejudicial behaviors (Chavez & Weisinger, 2008).

When implementing training and professional development programs, one of the main points throughout the research that drives the success of equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives is institutional support from leadership. If leadership at the top is not completely supportive and set the tone from the beginning, training programs are unlikely to succeed. In addition to support from top leadership, research has found that it is just as important for direct supervisors to be aware

of inclusive practices (Bourke, 2020). This suggests the importance of consistency in support through a positive diversity climate and inclusive leadership for people of color (Shore et al., 2018).

#### **2.4.1 Mandatory or Voluntary Trainings**

In a Harvard study that analyzed three decades' worth of data from more than 800 U.S. firms and interviewing hundreds of line managers and executives at length, researchers found that companies get better results when they focus more on culture and less on training mandates (Dobbin, 2016). It is more effective to engage managers in solving the problem, increase their on-the-job contact with female and minority workers, and promote social accountability—the desire to look fair-minded (Dobbin, 2016). Decades of social science research point to a simple truth: institutions will not get managers on board by blaming and shaming them with rules and continuous reeducation.

When implementing equity, diversity, and inclusion training programs within a college or university, one major question is whether to make the trainings mandatory or voluntary. Individuals have strong negative reactions to threats to personal autonomy and may resent being selected for training. In contrast to mandatory training, voluntary training, and other voluntary approaches such as mentoring and assigning diversity managers have strong, positive effects. Creating a sense of ownership, autonomy, and pride can lead to better outcomes and less backlash (Legault, 2011). With universities being focused on research and positive ways to impact society, faculty especially look to understand how the trainings will be supported by literature or include research that shows the benefits of such training. By including research that supports the cause,

showing the direct benefit that it will have to students, leaders will likely receive less push back from faculty and staff when implementing training programs.

To highlight the difference between a mandated training and one that was voluntary, one study had White subjects read a brochure critiquing prejudice toward Blacks. When people felt pressure to agree with it and the training was mandatory, the reading strengthened their bias against Blacks. When they felt the choice to participate was theirs, the reading reduced bias. The voluntary trainings led to open discussion and gave people the chance to make decisions at their own pace, which creates positive outcomes with diversity training. Voluntary trainings, or ones lacking a stern mandate, may allow for more progress collectively and positively impact the campus racial climate.

#### **2.4.2 Training Execution and Format**

Another factor impacting the successful implementation of training programs is finding the right people to lead and facilitate the trainings. For facilitation, it is essential that the trainers are competent facilitators who have a good information base, reflect diversity (including White males), and make worthy role models (Mobley & Payne, 1992). Additionally, some research shows that White males are rated less effective than minority trainers due to being viewed as less credible. Lastly, in some cases, women and racial minorities are viewed by White participants to be pushing an agenda onto White people in diversity training. There are various challenges with who should lead diversity initiatives, yet it is consistently found throughout research that the leaders need to have social awareness and an ability to facilitate meaningful dialogue.

The format of the training and utilization time has shown to be of importance when assessing the outcomes and effectiveness. Diversity trainings are more effective when it is more

of a dialogue and less of a formal PowerPoint presentation. Formal presentations tend to be less effective due to the lack of engagement, while most of the learning in diversity and training programs happens when individuals get the chance to hear others' perspectives. A trend which gained momentum in 2020 was to engage the participants in small breakout groups, which was brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of the platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams allow the facilitator to present to a whole group, and then break the larger group into smaller groups to have dialogue or answer a few structured questions. This strategy has allowed individuals to be able to speak on certain topics without the pressure of a whole group listening. When the group is much smaller, three or four others, participants are more comfortable and more likely to speak up and leads to more effective dialogue and better outcomes.

In terms of content and what to discuss in a diversity training, research has shown that it is important to identify what the diversity program highlights (Holladay et al., 2003) and how the training is framed (Quinones, 1995). The training goals should be set early and be made clear throughout the course. As diversity trainings are implemented within higher education institutions, one of the first lessons within a diversity training series is implicit bias. Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner (Kirwain Institute, 2015). Implicit biases are pervasive. Everyone possesses them, even people with avowed commitments to impartiality such as judges. The goal of bias training is to make one aware of their biases and give people the tools to gradually unlearn certain biases through a variety of trainings. Additional topics that are generally at the top of the priority list for organizations are race and gender. The trainings that focus on race could incorporate history and open dialogue to ensure there is a baseline understanding around the topic and how we, as a society, got to where we are today as it relates to race.

Not only are the concepts and teachings important within the trainings, but human psychology also plays a role in how much one learns in a training session. Within diversity trainings, a fundamental question has been raised to highlight the importance of diversity within trainings to enhance the overall impact of such training. A strategy that has been effective is to focus on the features that people have in common with each other and to highlight our similarities. Various researchers looked into the structure of the trainings and found that comparing differences between people often became divisive which led to a lower effectiveness of the training.

Although it may be more effective to focus on similarities among trainees, it is still important to recognize the differences among people. The recognition and acceptance of differences is an important step highlighted throughout the research, mainly because the differences are what separates people and causes divides between groups. In conclusion, the trainings should not always be about how much can be learned, but how we can bring people together to feel a greater sense of belonging.

### **2.4.3 Risks and Challenges**

Although many studies discuss the importance of diversity programming, there are risks and possible downsides to implementing diversity programs. Researchers have been examining that question since before World War II, in nearly a thousand studies. It turns out that while people are easily taught to respond correctly to a questionnaire about bias, they soon forget the right answers (Dobbin, 2016). One study cites that the positive effects of diversity training rarely last beyond a day or two, and a number of studies suggest that it can activate bias or spark a backlash. Nonetheless, nearly half of midsize companies use it, as do nearly all the Fortune 500 companies and higher education institutions.



#### **2.4.4 Dimensional Synergies**

As referenced before, the compositional dimension and organizational dimension relate to representation, policy, procedures, and organizational structure. The behavioral dimension is present within both of those dimensions as it highlights the importance of quality interactions on campus between all groups and all identities. Once leaders are able to increase representation through the compositional dimension and structure the organization effectively through the organizational dimension, organizations will be better-equipped to focus on the behavioral dimension and positively impact the culture.

In conclusion, the behavioral dimension of the campus climate refers to the context, frequency, and quality of interactions on campus between social identity groups and their members (Hurtado 2005; Hurtado et al. 2008). Through equity, diversity and inclusion training programs, higher education institutions can equip their faculty and staff to increase the quality of their formal and informal interactions with colleagues and students, thus leading to a more inclusive educational environment.

### **2.5 Conclusion**

Equity, diversity and inclusion efforts in higher education and around the world have become pillars of the strategic planning process for colleges and universities. Hurtado's (2008) framework around the campus racial climate helps to better understand how the historical, compositional, behavioral, organizational, and psychological dimensions of an institution's environment impact its ability to adopt and implement diversity initiatives.

The framework, which this inquiry focused on three aspects, helps to study the impact of different interventions on the student, faculty, and staff experience within higher education. The compositional dimension of the framework refers to the numerical representation of individuals from diverse social identities among students, faculty, staff, and administrators (Hurtado et al. 1999; Milem et al. 2005). The organizational dimension of the campus climate identifies structures and processes that embed group-based privilege and oppression or confer resources that often go unquestioned, such as tenure processes, decision-making processes regarding recruitment and hiring, budget allocations, curriculum, and other institutional practices and policies (Milem et al., 2005). Lastly, the behavioral dimension of the campus climate refers to the context, frequency, and quality of interactions on campus between social identity groups and their members (Hurtado 2005; Hurtado et al. 2008). The three dimensions listed, if successfully structured and implemented, work to enhance the campus racial climate of higher education institutions.

With the conclusion of the review of supporting scholarship, the following chapter will highlight the theory of improvement and implementation plan for the intervention. The theory of improvement is not only the goal of the intervention, but also the prediction on what is expected to happen with the implementation.

### **3.0 Inquiry Plan**

The campus racial climate model, developed by Hurtado et al. (2008) helps to outline the components of a culture and climate that need to change in order to achieve a positive and diverse campus climate. Pitt Business strives to build a culture that is strong in each of the five dimensions of the framework, and the following intervention will touch on each aspect of the model yet focus mostly on the compositional and organization dimensions.

When it comes to implementation, the logic and framework of the inquiry are built around improvement science, which is a methodological approach built on pragmatism and science that uses disciplined inquiry to solve problems of practice (Perry et al., 2020). This methodology starts small and moves through multiple cycles towards a well-thought-out aim of improvement (Perry et al., 2020).

If Pitt Business is able to build a culture and community of inclusion, we expect to see increased morale and retention among our faculty and staff. By creating a culture around EDI, we would expect to hear direct feedback from all of our stakeholders that we are making progress in a meaningful way. We expect student satisfaction to increase, representation of faculty and staff to be more diverse, and to see improved retention of faculty and staff. A culture built around EDI can yield positive results within the culture of the business school.

To achieve real change, the leadership team at Pitt Business is working to develop strategic, adequate, and attainable goals related to EDI at Pitt Business. The key to seeing real change is through transparency of the goals and accountability throughout the process. As part of the leadership team at Pitt Business, we are looking to build a culture and community of inclusion, one that values EDI and works to continuously improve in the EDI space.

### 3.1 Inquiry Questions

The overall aim of my inquiry and improvement plan is by May 2023, Pitt Business will begin to create a culture of improvement related to equity, diversity, and inclusion – one that is able to recruit and retain racially and ethnically diverse staff. Through the implementation of a reformed hiring process, I anticipate the hiring pools will have greater representation of People of Color, leading to greater representation among our staff.

To achieve this aim, I will follow improvement science and the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle (Deming, 1993; Langley et al., 2009). A PDSA cycle is a framework that turns ideas into action, connects that action to learning, and helps to test a change (Perry et al., 2020). The Planning (P) consists of asking questions, designing a change, making predictions, and designing measures to determine if the change made a difference. Doing (D) consists of carrying out the change effort and collecting data on it, paying special attention to implementation challenges and unexpected consequences. Studying (S) is analyzing the data, comparing it to the predictions, and summarizing. Acting (A) consists of making decisions about the change, whether it should be adjusted, expanded, or abandoned, and formulating next steps (Perry et al., 2020).

Within the PDSA cycle, inquiry questions are used to clearly define how the research will help achieve the desired aim. The following questions will guide the inquiry:

1. How will the redacted resumes and cover letters change the initial review process of applicants?
2. How will implicit bias training be beneficial to the search committee to help limit bias during the process?
3. How will clear criteria and characteristics for the job shape the interview and selection process?

### 3.2 Approach and Methods

My change idea is to reform the staff hiring process at Pitt Business through the introduction of three changes to the hiring process, with the goal of more equitable practices and increased representation of underrepresented groups. When an open position is approved to be filled, we will move forward with the reformed process. The reformed process will include the following three interventions:

The first intervention will be for search committee members **to attend a one-hour implicit bias training** facilitated by Pitt's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (OEDI) and Pitt's Office of Human Resources (HR). The implicit bias training aims to provide the tools to maintain an objective view when assessing candidates and making hiring decisions. The trainings are held once monthly via Zoom and each search committee member will be required to attend.

The next intervention in the PDSA cycle is **to establish clear criteria and characteristics for the job** to ensure measurable logic when selecting candidates. To do so, I will ask the search committee to carefully review the job description and to utilize their current understanding of the role and the needs of the school. Each committee member will be asked to independently list out eight to ten job-specific characteristics. Then we will aggregate the group's results and come together to finalize the list to be used for the process.

The final intervention will be to **remove all names and addresses from resumes and cover letters** for the first-round initial review. The goal is to help the search committee evaluate candidates based on their skills and experiences, instead of factors that could lead to bias.

To supplement the interventions above, the following actions will also be included in the process:

1. Put together a diverse search committee of staff members within Pitt Business.

2. Advertise the position in diverse outlets which will be guided by Pitt HR's recommendations.
3. Consider adjacent and nontraditional talent pools through the utilization of professional networks and community organizations.

To formalize the whole process, I will create a document for all search committee members to utilize throughout the process to ensure they fully understand the process and the chain of events that will be a part of the intervention.

The targeted participants for the PDSA cycle will be five search committee members to be determined based on the job opening at the time. The participants will include the hiring manager for the position and a group of four other individuals from throughout Pitt Business. All participants will be full-time staff members within Pitt Business and hope to have 100% participation among the five individuals when collecting data. Confidentiality and anonymity will be critical within the search committee to ensure that their comments and results of the search will remain completely confidential.

### **3.3 Inquiry Methods**

#### **3.3.1 Data Collection Procedures**

This project will be qualitative, and the data will determine if the interventions are successful and what adjustments will be necessary for future PDSA cycles. I plan to engage in qualitative data gathering with the following data:

1. Survey

2. Observation data
3. Interview data

**The survey** will be distributed at the conclusion of the search. It will gauge the impact of the implicit bias training and the redacted resumes on the process and line of thinking of the search committee members. The survey will also gauge the effectiveness of establishing clear criteria and characteristics for candidates and allow for open-ended responses. The data gathered will help to determine if the intervention is successful and what modifications will be required for future PDSA cycles. The survey will use a 6-point Likert scale and range from Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree OR be a Yes/No question to gauge one's understanding of certain interventions. There will also be open ended questions to provide additional feedback.

The questions are as follows:

*Implicit Bias-related questions:*

1. Did you complete the implicit bias training? (Y/N)
2. If so, was this your first implicit bias training? (Y/N)
3. The implicit bias training was helpful to better understand your own implicit attitudes and stereotypes. (6-point Likert)
4. You learned something new about yourself. (6-point Likert)
5. The implicit bias training impacted your behaviors in search committee meetings and when reviewing resumes and cover letters. (6-point Likert)
6. The implicit bias training helped to limit bias within the search for you individually. (6-point Likert)

7. The implicit bias training helped to limit bias within the search for the search committee members. (6-point Likert)

*Redacted resume and cover letter-related questions:*

1. The redacted resumes helped me to choose candidates based on experience and established criteria. (6-point Likert)
2. The redacted resumes and cover letters allowed me to review candidates objectively. (6-point Likert)
3. The pool of top candidates was different than it would have been if the resumes and cover letters were not redacted. (6-point Likert)
4. The redacted resumes and cover letters will lead to a change in how people review resumes and cover letters. (6-point Likert)
5. Would you recommend redacting all resumes and cover letters for future searches? (Y/N)
  - a. Open ended box – Justify your answer

*Clear criteria and characteristics*

1. I agreed with the established criteria and characteristics that were chosen by the search committee. (6-point Likert)
2. The search committee stuck to the established criteria and characteristics when evaluating candidates. (6-point Likert)
3. The established criteria and characteristics were helpful when selecting candidates to advance and eventually offer. (6-point Likert)

*Open-ended*

1. How was the review process different when you could not see names or addresses? (Open ended)



2. What parts of the intervention were most effective? (Open ended)
3. What parts of the intervention can be improved? (Open ended)
4. How did your process of reviewing resumes and cover letters change with the redaction of identifying information? (Open ended)
5. Would you estimate that it took longer or shorter to review resumes when redacted? Why or why not? (Open ended)
6. Please provide any other comments about the process that you feel are important. (Open ended)

**The observation data** will be gathered throughout the process and be specifically focused on the process of identifying the criteria and characteristics that the search committee establishes, in addition to compliance with the overall process and intervention. As the observer throughout each of the meetings, I will have limited participation in the meetings. Hatch (2002) recommends that the observer records raw field notes which are written on the spot while the researcher is in the setting. Raw field notes are usually descriptions of context, actions, and conversations written in as much detail as possible given the constraints of watching and writing in a rapidly changing social environment. Raw field notes are then converted into more formal field notes through a process of “filling in” the original notes. Filling in means going through the raw data as soon as possible after leaving the field and making a more complete description based on the raw notes and what is remembered from the setting (Hatch, 2002).

Within the observation and data collection, Wolcott (1995) recommends that I try to assess what I am doing as the observer (participation), what I am observing, and what I am recording, in terms of the kind of information I will *need to report*, rather than the kind of the information I feel I *ought to gather*. Wolcott (1995) and Hatch (2002) recommend continuing to refer back to the

research questions within the inquiry, which will help the observer know what to look and listen for during the interactions with the participants.

**The interview data** will be gathered through a series of one-on-one semi-structured interviews that will be conducted with each member of the search committee at the conclusion of the search. Additionally, the Pitt Business HR Administrator will be interviewed as an ex officio member of the search committee with a few additional questions to add context to the process and overall search. Semi-structured interviews are being used since they are conversational and informal, yielding an open response from participants rather than a ‘yes or no’ type answer. The interviews will follow a structured format and ask the same questions to each search committee member.

Formal interviews are often accompanied by observation data, which is true in this study. In formal interview settings, both the researcher and participant know they are there to generate data (Hatch, 2002). The importance of having a structured interview is for the explicit purpose of gathering information from the participant that will be used directly within the data analysis.

Although the interviews will be semi-structured, Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein (1997) describe interviewing as an ironic contradiction:

You must be both structured and flexible at the same time. While it’s critical to prepare for an interview with a list of planned questions to guide your talk, it is equally important to follow your informant’s lead. Sometimes the best interviews come from a comment, a story, an artifact, or a phrase you couldn’t have anticipated. The energy that drives a good interview – for both you and your informant – comes from expecting the unexpected. (p. 233)

The questions for the semi-structured interviews with each search committee member individually are as follows:

1. Overall, how was the process for the search?
2. What was your experience within the implicit bias training and how did it make you feel?
  - a. Probing question: What aspect did you remember most?
3. What was it like not seeing names on resumes and cover letters?
  - a. Probing: Do you believe it changed your process?
4. Tell me about your thought process when reviewing redacted resumes.
  - a. How did it change as you proceeded?
5. What were your biggest decision points during the resume and cover letter review when deciding where to rank a candidate?
6. What was the experience like meeting candidates for the first time after not knowing their name or city?
7. What made the search fair? Equitable?
8. What made the search unfair? Inequitable?
9. What can be improved within the process that you would like to see for the next search?
10. What was your experience in terms of the hybrid format?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

The questions for the semi-structured interviews with the **HR Administrator** are as follows:

1. Overall, big picture, how was the new process for the search?
2. What was your impression on how the implicit bias training went?
  - a. Probing question: What aspect did you remember most?

3. Describe how the process went for the group when reviewing the redacted resumes and cover letters.
  - a. Probing question: Did you notice a shift in the conversation versus prior searches with the use of redacted resumes?
  - b. Probing question: Did anything specifically stand out that was said by the search committee? Did anything surprise you or was there anything particularly memorable?
4. What are some of the general observations that you had within the search committee meetings?
5. What was the experience like meeting candidates for the first time after not knowing their name or city?
6. What made the search fair? Equitable?
7. What made the search unfair? Inequitable?
8. Talk more about your experience with the oversight of the search and what might be required for future searches.
9. What can be improved within the process that you would like to see for the next search?
10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

### **3.4 Participants**

As the Director of Business Administration within Pitt Business, with oversight of human resources and the day-to-day operation of the dean's office being a part of my role, I am in a unique position to facilitate the process of investigating the problem of practice. My role in the process

will be as an observer in each of the meetings, interactions, emails, and anything that relates to the search for the role. In order to limit my influence on the search committee's behaviors, it is important for the search committee to understand my role as an observer and my intent of changing the culture within Pitt Business.

The participants for the intervention will be the five members of the search committee, all of whom will be staff members within Pitt Business. Participants will be decided upon by myself and the HR Administrator. All participants will be invited via email, followed by a meeting to explain and outline the research behind the search. In the email and meeting, I will inform them of the process and ask for their approval to move forward as a member of the search committee. The search committee members will be included in the survey data, observation data, and semi-structured interviews.

### **3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The data analysis will look to summarize overall intervention effectiveness, and possible process improvements for future cycles. When analyzing the data, Hatch (2002) identifies themes and suggestions to help guide the analysis of qualitative data through interviews, observation, and other qualitative data collection techniques. Hatch uses a typological model which first suggests identifying the typologies to be analyzed, which will directly relate back to the Hurtado (2008) campus climate model in the data analysis. The qualitative data will be framed by the dimensions of the Hurtado framework which are: compositional diversity, organizational structure, behavioral, psychological, and the historical legacy of inclusion/exclusion. These five dimensions will act as typologies and will be key reference points for the analysis and summarization of the data.

When reading the qualitative data, the typologies identified will be key reference points to guide the interpretation of the data. The data from interviews, observation data, and open-ended survey questions that relate to the typologies will be highlighted or separated from the whole to reference later. All interviews will be requested to be recorded to be able to transcribe and analyze the data in depth, in addition to analyzing direct quotes. Each interview and observation session will have a few main takeaways after reading through the data and transcript, which will lead to making a summary of the main points to refer to as the analysis continues. The key is to have solid summaries that can be easily located, identified, and manipulated (Hatch, 2002).

I will also utilize the observation data to look for trends that exist within the search committee meetings and to better understand the interactions between members as the process moves forward. The observation data will help me gauge interest in the different interventions and see to what extent search committee members are simply “checking the box” or are actually invested in working towards a more equitable hiring process for staff.

At the conclusion of the thematic coding, the next step is to look for patterns, relationships, and themes within the typologies. Patterns are regularities and they come in several forms, including similarity (things happen the same way), difference (they happen in predictably different ways), frequency (they happen often or seldom), sequence (they happen in a certain order), correspondence (they happen in relation to other activities or events), and causation (one appears to cause another) (Hatch, 2002). Once the patterns within the data are identified and tied back to the Hurtado (2008) framework, the next step will be to identify relationships between the data elements and how these relationships within the data will help to measure effectiveness of the intervention and guide further inquiry.

As a way to advance the analysis of the qualitative data, the patterns and relationships that were identified will help to form generalizations about the data and how they relate to the Hurtado (2008) framework, especially the three dimensions outlined in the scholarly review. The data will be used to look for excerpts that support the generalizations. In preparation for writing up findings, the last step in the typological model is to go back to the data to select powerful examples that can be used to make your generalizations come alive for your readers (Hatch, 2002).

Up to this point, patterns and relationships within the data will be identified through the observation data, interview data, and open-ended section of the survey. The survey data, outside of the open-ended questions, will be analyzed in a few different ways. For the survey questions using a 6-point Likert scale, responses will be converted into the following scale: “strongly disagree” will be scored “1”, disagree will be scored “2”, slightly disagree will be scored “3”, slightly agree will be scored “4”, agree will be scored “5”, and strongly agree will be scored “6”. The scores will help to generate a score for each participant and each of the items within the survey. Each participant and each question will have a mean score, which will be presented in tabular form. The survey questions that ask for a “yes” or “no” response will be counted per question and per response. Each “yes” will have a total number and each “no” will have a total. The mean scores will be analyzed to look for trends within a particular participant, and also within a certain question.

In summary, the data will help me understand when a change has occurred. Throughout the data analysis, I will measure if search committee members agree the interventions helped to remove bias and create a more equitable process, which was the aim of the intervention.

The lagging measure of the intervention is the rate at which our representation increases or decreases as a result of a more equitable hiring process. The outcome will be measured by

measuring compliance with the updated processes and procedures, as well as the number of underrepresented minorities among the candidates that are offered positions within Pitt Business.

### **3.6 Statement of Positionality**

The statement of positionality is a summary of the personal identities carried by the author within an inquiry or study. As Scharp and Thomas (2019) argue, scholars engaged in critical social science research should assess how their own positions and experiences might contribute to their interpretations of people's lived experiences. Positionality includes but is not limited to race, ethnicity, age, lived experiences, and identity.

The term positionality both describes an individual's worldview and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context (Foote and Bartell, 2011). These are colored by an individual's values and beliefs that are shaped by their political allegiance, religious faith, gender, sexuality, historical and geographical location, ethnicity, race, social class, status and (dis) abilities and so on (Sikes, 2004, Wellington et al., 2005, and Marsh, et al. 2018). In the context of the following inquiry, positionality statements are especially important when discussing equity, diversity, and inclusion, and how the researcher's specific personality may impact the inquiry.

I grew up in a middle-class family in the eastern suburbs of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As the youngest of three siblings to parents that remain married, I identify as a White male in my lower thirties. I grew up in a Catholic household and still hold Christian religious beliefs. My hometown and school district (Penn Hills) demographics are 64% African American, 26% White, and 10% as a mix of other races. As a three-sport athlete, senior-class president, and valedictorian,



I was exposed to various groups of people, races, and social identities throughout my childhood and early adult life. I am recently married and have a golden retriever dog.

Professionally, I am in a position of power as the Director of Business Administration at Pitt Business within the University of Pittsburgh. I acknowledge the power and privilege that the position carries as a White male with barely any identities that fall into the minority. As the study is conducted, my influence and power may play a role in the behavior and actions of those individuals that are a part of the inquiry. When gathering qualitative data through surveys and interviews, it is important to acknowledge and observe how individuals that may report up through me or be at a lower level may not give direct feedback within the study, especially if critical.

### **3.7 Acknowledgements of Limitations**

There are several limitations to the study. First, the search is isolated to one staff position within Pitt Business and the specific position will be limited to what is vacant and needs to be filled at that time. In addition, the five participants within the search committee create a small sample size, and all of the staff are working for the same school. They know each other reasonably well, with varying interest and engagement in the process. These limitations will lead to generalizations and representation issues that do not and may not reflect the feelings or expected experience of other staff members had they been the participants in the study. In addition, participants may act differently with the investigator observing each meeting and interaction throughout the process. Without an observer, compliance with the process and behavior within meetings may vary.

### **3.8 Proposed Timeline**

#### **October 2021**

- Overview with Doctoral Committee
- Identify position to be posted
- IRB Submission and Approval
- Choose search committee members
- Explain the intervention to the search committee
- Post the position

#### **November 2021**

- Introduce the invention to the search committee
- Observe meetings and process – collect observation data
- Continue the review and interview process for all candidates

#### **December 2021 – January 2022**

- Finalize review and interview process and select candidate
- Collect survey data and conduct semi-structured interview

#### **February - March 2022**

- Data analysis
- Draft report of findings

#### **June 2022**

- Finalize and submit report

### **3.9 Institutional Review Board**

This study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board and it was determined on November 18, 2021 that this project does not meet the regulatory definitions to require IRB review. Documentation of this decision is included as Appendix B.

## **4.0 Findings**

The following chapter shares data and analysis of the data from the intervention. The chapter includes the job description, demographic information for the applicant pool, themes from the data, and implications on future PDSA cycles.

### **4.1 Position & Candidate Pool Overview**

The process for the intervention began when there was a vacancy within the Pitt Business marketing team for the Marketing and Communications Analyst role (Communications II classification). This role is a mid-level individual contributor within the marketing and communications team within the Dean's Office that focuses on various publications and communications within Pitt Business. The marketing and communications team is led by the Director of Marketing and Communications, who has four direct reports and a student worker. The following information represents exact excerpts from the job posting and detailed job description.

#### **Job Description:**

The Marketing and Communications Analyst for the Joseph M. Katz School of Business and College of Business Administration (CBA) is primarily responsible for project management, writing, and editing of various publications and other communications, and management of electronic communications (such as website, social media, etc.). The role includes ensuring a high level of overall community engagement.

The incumbent will also assist with marketing and communications planning, video production, mailings, and oversight of other projects as assigned. A minimum of a bachelor's degree is required, along with good organizational, coordination, communication, and excellent, professional writing skills. Knowledge of technology and social media tools (e.g., Drupal, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Hootsuite) are required based on the assignment. The employee should be comfortable using data and metrics to measure success.

**Pitt Business Diversity Statement Included in the posting:**

Pitt Business is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. All qualified applicants are encouraged to apply and will be considered without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability or veteran status. In order to be considered for the position, please attach a resume and cover letter to your application. Please highlight how your skills and experience relate to the following competencies: written communication, informing, self-knowledge, time management, learning on the fly, and planning.

**Job Duties:**

**40%** - Incumbent will identify and write articles and other copy for magazine, website, social media, videos, brochures, emails, executive and other communications as needed.

**35%** - Employee will develop and execute assigned projects across Pitt Business that engage a variety of internal and external audiences. Manages all aspects of projects,

including client relationships, project workflow, and deadlines. Works closely with external vendors as necessary to complete assignments.

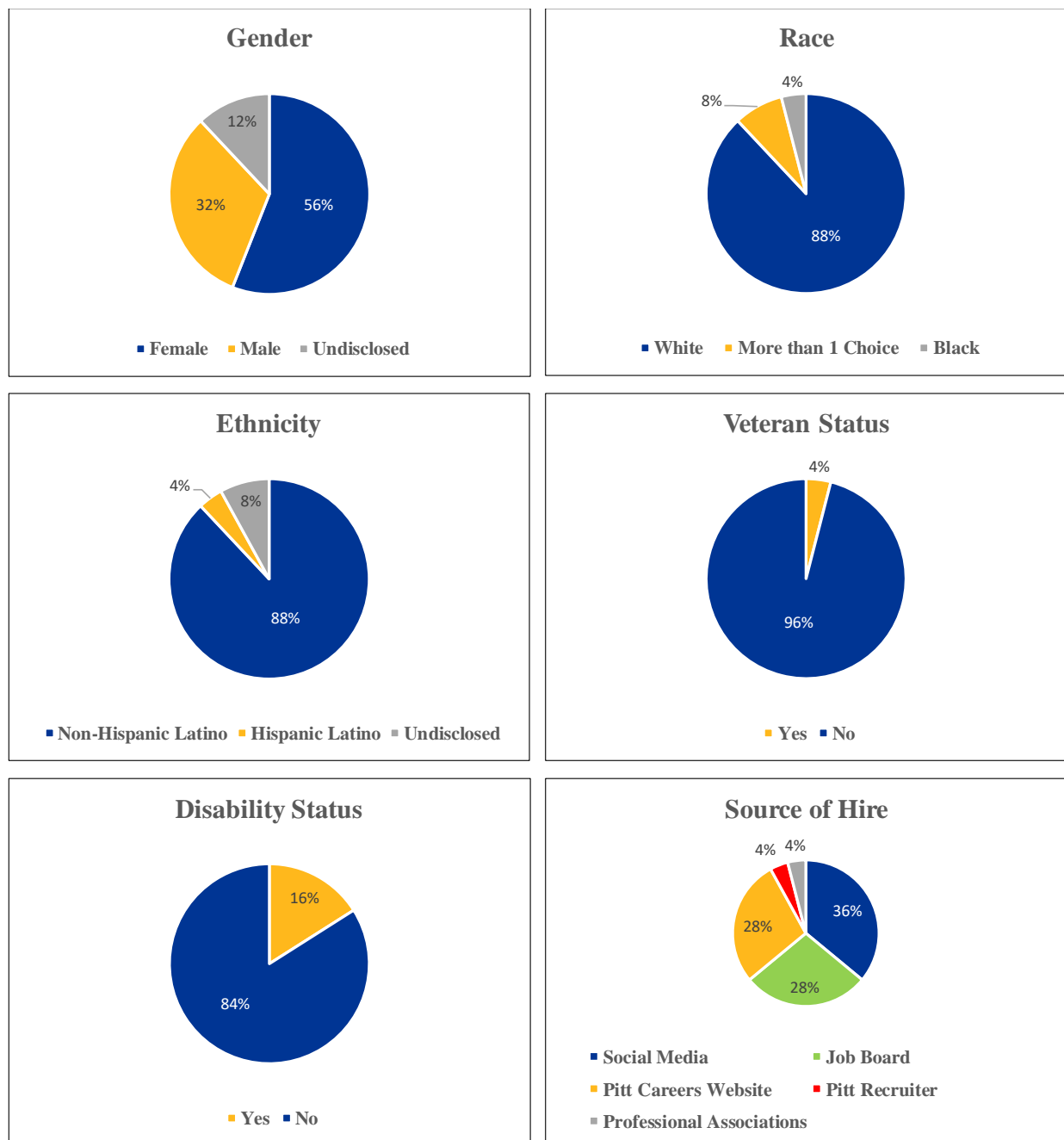
**15%** - Employee will assist with technology-based marketing and communications tools (e.g., website, social media).

**10%** - Employee works with Director of Marketing and Communications to develop strategic marketing and communications plans for assigned areas.

In addition to posting the role on the University of Pittsburgh HR website, the job was posted in additional free and paid outlets to strategically expand the reach as shown below.

1. Included at no cost to the school
  - a. University of Pittsburgh HR website
  - b. The Pennsylvania Job Board
  - c. The Higher Education Recruitment Consortium
  - d. Glassdoor
  - e. Indeed
2. Incremental costs paid for by Pitt Business
  - a. LinkedIn (\$334 for 30 days)
  - b. Diversityjobs.com (\$230 for 30 days)
  - c. Vibrant Pittsburgh via partnership with University of Pittsburgh
3. Additional postings for this role
  - a. American Marketing Association, Pittsburgh Chapter (LinkedIn)
  - b. Professional networks via LinkedIn from three search committee members

Figure 3 below shows the demographic information of all 25 candidates in the pool. Each candidate self-disclosed their demographic information.



**Figure 3 Demographic Information Charts**

## **4.2 Summary of the Hiring Process**

The process began with establishing and organizing all details related to the search. The HR administrator and I put together a three-page summary outlining the whole process for the search committee and set up a channel within Microsoft Teams for search committee members to access all documents related to the search in a central location. Once the procedures were in place, the search committee members were chosen. The search committee met to walk through the procedures and answer any questions related to the search. In addition, the search committee also used this time to discuss the competencies required for the job and were given a chance to finalize those competencies within the week. Once the committee met and kicked off the process, the position was posted.

Before the committee could review resumes and cover letters, the search committee met with Pitt's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion to complete a one-hour implicit bias training. In the meantime, an administrative support staff member redacted resumes and cover letters of all personal identifying information and organized the contents within the Microsoft Teams channel. After receiving applications for a month, the search committee went through and scored all candidates using the agreed upon competencies and invited seven individuals for first round interviews. Once we reached out to the seven candidates, two had withdrawn their name from consideration so the committee was left with five candidates. The first round interviews were completed by the search committee via Zoom, which resulted in inviting four finalists for on-campus interviews.

The final round interviews were completed by the hiring manager (who was also a search committee member) and members of the current marketing team within Pitt Business. At the conclusion of the interviews, the search committee and marketing team chose a top candidate and



a runner-up. The top candidate declined the offer, and the runner-up candidate accepted the offer for hire. Both were White women.

## **4.3 Data Summary and Themes**

### **4.3.1 Implications of a Clear Search Process and Structure**

Throughout the interviews and survey feedback, each committee member expressed their satisfaction with the general theme of the process and also the logistics throughout. The formalization of the process allowed committee members to focus on what mattered by streamlining each step of the process and making it clear to each search committee member of their charge each step of the way.

*The consistent structure throughout the process, from the redacted resumes to the same questions for all candidates, helped to make it a more equitable process for all involved. –*

*Paul*

*The process was really straightforward. I thought it was one of the smoothest processes I have ever seen being on an interview committee. – Rachel*

The search committee members voiced that the structure within the process helped create an equitable process overall. Because of the structures that were put into place, the search committee was unable to resort to old habits, such as looking individuals up on the internet or trying to find them on social media. The structures and process put into place ensured that all committee members looked at the exact same data during the first-round review process.

*By having a defined process, I think it definitely made me more focused on the information that was provided to me. – Emily*

Additionally, the search committee was appreciative of the clear process for scoring candidates and relating that directly back to the criteria and characteristics that were established by the search committee. The survey revealed consensus from the committee that the criteria was agreed upon, strictly used to evaluate candidates, and helpful when selecting candidates to advance and eventually offer.

Another item that helped add structure to the process was the use of Microsoft Teams as a central resource where the search committee could access all materials related to the search. The search committee members spoke about the ease of finding information they needed, the ability to go into the folder when it worked best for them, and how it was better than trying to find emails or remember passwords to a folder, where files and resumes were historically housed.

*The use of Microsoft Teams was really effective. Instead of people having to search for emails to find a specific candidate's information, to have a centralized kind of resource and place to find everything I thought was really effective. – Paul*

In summary, the survey and interview respondents made it clear that the structures that were put into place added value to the search and allowed each of them to experience a sense of consistency throughout the process. The characteristics that were created continued to appear through the rating system, interview questions, and evaluations of who to extend an offer. The process and structures created a sense of validation and legitimacy of the search that may not have been present in prior searches.

#### 4.3.2 The Effectiveness of Redacted Resumes and Cover Letters

The redacted resumes seemed to get the most praise and support from the search committee members through the survey and interview data. We reached a consensus from the committee saying that the redacted resumes helped them to choose candidates based solely on experience and the established criteria. Throughout the interviews with the search committee, it was clear that the redaction helped the search committee members focus on the skills and experience in relation to the established characteristics that the committee was looking for.

*I think it really made you focus on their skills and background. I had never been through the process that way. I'm not sure why, but I guess if there are biases based on somebody's name, that could influence you as you then read about their experience. I thought the redaction made me more fair or impartial in terms of honing in on the skill set versus the individual. – Paul*

*The redaction was fine. I don't know that it really helped me in my process, because I look at the responsibilities. I look at the words that are written on the paper, and again keeping those criteria in mind. So, it probably did. Maybe it helped more than what I realized. I think when you've read enough resumes you see styles of writing. So, even if the name is not there it doesn't necessarily mean that I can't create some pictures in my mind based on writing styles. – April*

The quotations above show that the redaction helps to create an environment that places more emphasis on the criteria and characteristics that are previously established by the search committee. Although the effectiveness of the redaction seems to fall on a spectrum, the actual implementation of redacted information is a reminder to the search committee that we are aiming to have an equitable search process. The second quote, which mentions that the writing style can

lead the reader to create pictures in their mind, is interesting and problematic when trying to limit bias. The reader, by design, should not be able to create an image, whether the image is accurate or not, but that image could lead to ineffective scoring of candidates. With writing and storytelling being a large part of the marketing role, this type of thinking from a search committee member could invite bias to the process and lead to subjective scoring.

In addition, many mentioned that their review time was also reduced because they were not distracted by names, locations, or the temptation to look individuals up on the internet – all of the time was spent analyzing skills and experiences. The redaction of identifying information keeps reviewers focused on central and relevant details, which is especially important in a resource-constrained environment, or one that is simply looking to become more efficient and effective.

In addition, three of the five search committee members mentioned that they usually look individuals up on the internet once they see their name and location. The search committee members may believe that looking individuals up on the internet allows them to have another data point in the process, yet it likely leads to an increased chance for bias to enter the process. Below, the bolded quotes highlight the use of the internet as a tool that search committee members were used to doing in prior searches as a way to learn more about candidates.

*I think it definitely made me more focused on like the information that was provided to me, rather than being able to be like, oh what's this program at this school or like what's this department do, or like, **where can I find you online**, and stuff like that. So, I think it like it's easier to focus on like the actual information. – Emily*

*At first, I didn't think of it too much that it was any different. Um, but then as I kept reviewing them, **I realized the urge to search that name online**, like didn't happen right*

*like the nosy part of me. I couldn't do that. So, it actually was like, I felt very grounded and just specifically to look at exactly what you know their past experiences had been and just align them with what we were looking for. – Rachel*

*Went pretty well. I think it went really well. I think that the redacted resumes **were super helpful when I was not able to Google them because I feel like that's always my first instinct** when I'm looking at somebody's resume **to see what I can find about them on the internet** and maybe not fully scan their experience before. So, I think that was super helpful for sure. – Emily*

The three search committee members who disclosed that they look up individuals on the internet are the three youngest members of the search committee, and two of the three are millennials. The two millennial search committee members are mentioned in the quotes above and state that they use the internet to exhaust all options on where to find information, not just limited to social media or one specific site. They use Google to see any and all options of information on the internet that is available. Millennials are known to be shaped by the internet, and they made it clear that they use the internet to evaluate candidates as soon as they learn their name and other identifying information.

#### **4.3.3 Search Committee Composition and Impact**

The five search committee members were intentionally selected due to their relationship with the position being hired, and their involvement with the marketing team. The undergraduate programs representative and graduate programs representative were both nominated to participate by the Associate Dean of their respective areas. Two of the five members are current staff on the marketing team within the Dean's Office, one of which is the hiring manager. The fifth member

is another staff member within Pitt Business who works directly with the vacant role with marketing, planning events, and executing on communications campaigns. All five individuals regularly contribute to service within Pitt Business and are advocates for positive change and student impact.

In addition to being advocates for Pitt Business, all five search committee members are generally receptive to change and are supportive of EDI efforts. The greatest strength of the committee was the diversity in positions with four distinct functional areas working with distinct constituencies, including undergraduate students, graduate students, and alumni. The four teams represented, which includes the Dean's Office, have similar investment in relation to the role, which sits in the marketing and communications team.

The search committee was very bought into the process, and each member of the committee was intentionally chosen. Not all search committees will be as focused, responsive, and invested as the one we used for the intervention. For future searches, we may run into committees that are resistant to the process and/or the work that goes into equitable hiring.

*Everyone seemed committed to the process, and that was good. – Skylar*

*I don't know that every search committee will always be like that, but I hope that they will.*

*I think sometimes we are going to run into people who are a little more resistant, but I didn't get the sense that anybody in this particular group was resistant. – Harmony*

The members of the committee also all had good working relationships with each other. All of the individuals on the search committee had worked together before and had trust built before entering into the search committee process. That trust allowed for open dialogue and one member mentioned that this was the first search that they felt no one on the search committee had

any preconceived notions and the process was followed from start to end, resulting in the group choosing the best candidate.

Lastly, the search committee was able to build trust in the process from the beginning due to the structures and formality placed on the process. We met to kick off the process to explain each step, which included the purpose and meaning behind the implicit bias training. From then on, there was open communication among the committee and the group was overall well-functioning. The search committee from this search worked well together and voiced appreciation for the quality of interaction throughout the search.

*I thought we had the right people and that's always so important to bring the right people to the table, so I thought we had the right people around the table. – April*

*I felt like there were different perspectives on things when we did the initial interviews, and we came back to debrief and there was a lot of positive discussion on who to bring in as the third candidate. – Harmony*

The quotations above show the importance of having the right people around the table who can have constructive conversations around the selection of candidates. If the group did not get along or if there was any tension between members, the discussion around a disagreement may turn negative which will negatively impact the relationships of staff members and the components of the campus racial climate model. The search committee was composed of individuals who are supportive of the process, and one self-identified as an EDI champion within Pitt Business. The composition of the committee could have led to increased attention to the process but also gave good feedback on possible improvements for the future due to their heightened awareness and knowledge of the EDI space.

Had the search committee not been so bought into the process or as familiar with the process, there may have been a different outcome. For this specific role, each member was very aware of the duties of the role and had worked with the position numerous times before. For future searches, we may not have that level of familiarity between the search committee and the exact role for which we are recruiting. The disconnect between the two could lead to a process that requires work on the front end to bring the search committee up to speed on the role, something that we did not have to do in this case.

An additional consideration with the search committee was the size. We were fortunate to have five staff members from throughout the school to represent and serve in this capacity. With a staff of 90 within Pitt Business, we will have to think about resource constraints, especially with an average of four to five searches going on at once at any given time during the year. In what many staff say is an already resource constrained environment, it will be hard to mimic this high level of engagement and participation that we saw for this search. Some of the challenges will be staff who are less inclined to serve, a lack of enthusiasm to help, and an unfamiliarity with the position(s) being recruited.

#### **4.3.4 Clear Characteristics to Rate, Ranks, and Interview Candidates**

At the beginning of the search process, the committee selected six competencies from a provided list of 67 competencies to be used for grading and shaping the questions for the interview process. The group reviewed the list of 67 competencies and discussed as a group some of the competencies that would be required for the successful candidate. After discussion, the group ended the meeting and individually submitted six to eight competences that they believed should be used. After aggregating the results, the following six competencies were selected:



## **1. Action-oriented**

- a. Enjoys working hard; is action-oriented and full of energy for the things he/she sees as challenging; not fearful of acting with a minimum of planning; seizes more opportunities than others.

## **2. Written communication**

- a. Is able to write clearly and succinctly in a variety of communication settings and styles; can get messages across that have the desired effect.

## **3. Learning on the fly**

- a. Learns quickly when facing new problems; a relentless and versatile learner; open to change; analyzes both successes and failures for clues to improvement; experiments and will try anything to find solutions; enjoys the challenge of unfamiliar tasks; quickly grasps the essence and the underlying structure of anything.

## **4. Creativity**

- a. Comes up with a lot of new and unique ideas; easily makes connections among previously unrelated notions; tends to be seen as original and value-added in brainstorming settings.

## **5. Project management**

- a. Planning, overseeing, and delivering projects, many of which will be happening concurrently with each other.

## **6. Interpersonal savvy**

- a. Relates well to all kinds of people, up, down, and sideways, inside and outside the organization; builds appropriate rapport; builds constructive and effective

relationships; uses diplomacy and tact; can diffuse even high-tension situations comfortably.

In addition to the six competencies above, the search committee also added a focus on digital content, and another scoring section related to EDI per the established procedures. The EDI component was to ask an interview question about each candidates' experience working with diverse populations and what equity, diversity, and inclusion means to them.

The consensus building that the search committee completed was a process that many members had not been through before. By looking through the packet of competencies that was provided by the HR administrator to consider, individually submitting their top six to eight competencies, and then getting back together as a group to finalize the list that would be used, it helped build trust and agreement before the resume review process even began. Those same competencies were then used for not only the first round review of resumes, but they also were used to select interview questions to be used throughout the whole process.

The competency process helped to create a sense of familiarity among the committee for what skills and attributes they were actually looking for in the candidates. By having the competencies flow through from start to finish, the committee felt that they were able to select candidates that best fit the desired competencies.

*I thought it was very helpful to have the criteria spelled out before we met with candidates.*

*Because I would keep the criteria in mind as I was going through and reviewing resumes.*

*– April*

*I thought the consensus building that we did on competencies was a really important step that I had not done before. You know, normally in a search for me, we have the job description and an idea of the skillset, and then we look at candidates. But the fact that we*

*took that a step further, especially with a committee of what I would consider the clients, partners, and colleagues of the position, the competencies that the group agreed to were really the most important competencies that we needed. And then right after that, we built the questions related to those competencies. So that to me was a new step and also thought it was effective because that's another example of where we could limit bias by having the group decide together and use them throughout the process. – Paul*

The quotes above reinforce the effectiveness of the criteria and how it was used from beginning to end by the whole search committee. An important detail is how the criteria was spelled out and agreed upon before any of the search committee members reviewed resumes, which places confidence in the process and ensures not only consistency, but also a step towards limiting bias across the whole search committee. The search committee member who stated it was their first time building consensus around competencies has been a supervisor for over 20 years, which speaks to the need for continued structures in place to help increase equity in our search processes.

#### **4.3.5 The Value of Implicit Bias Training for Search Committees**

The search committee voiced support and satisfaction with the implicit bias training. Not only was the training effective, but it was also well-timed. The training followed quickly thereafter the kick-off meeting with the search committee and HR administrator, and right before the resume review process began. There was consensus that the implicit bias training helped limit bias for each member individually, as well as helping them better understand their own attitudes and stereotypes. Although only three of five members indicated they learned something new, all agreed that the training helped to limit bias within the search. The two search committee members who indicated they did not learn anything new were the most vocal at the end of the training and wanted

clarification from Pitt OEDI on the selection of the best available candidate versus the best candidate. This committee member was the most engaged throughout the whole training and also was the only one who pushed for clarification and higher-level understanding. Although they may not have learned anything new, they may have led to increased engagement from the other search committee members and drove the conversation in a way that would benefit the overall search.

Of the two members of the search committee who indicated they did not learn anything; one had the following quote during the interview at the conclusion of the process:

*I'll be honest, I didn't really learn anything new. I'm coming from a place of having done a fair amount of study on the topic. Because we were talking about how we were going to apply this to this selection process, that was helpful from a very practical standpoint. So, this was something new from that standpoint so that was very helpful. – Skylar*

Although this specific search committee member did not learn anything new, it is important to acknowledge that they not only think it was still effective, but it is a good, practical reminder for those that are already heavily engaged in the EDI space. There may be value in having an EDI champion or an established EDI committee member to help drive others deeper not only during the training, but throughout the search process. The EDI-focused member of the search committee could be an established role on each search committee in the future.

The implicit bias training was designed by Pitt OEDI and centered around the idea that diversity is essential to excellence in business. The training is structured around defining critical elements of EDI, suggestions on how to limit bias within the search process, and ways to retrain and empower underrepresented minorities. The following list outlines the components included in the implicit bias training:

1. Defining discrimination and discussing protected classes.

2. Benefits of diverse teams in business & in the workforce.
3. Racism and implicit bias definitions and examples.
4. Dos and Don'ts within the job description and interview process – how to write the job description to be more inclusive.
5. Recommendations to limit bias such as redaction, establishing clear characteristics, and taking the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT).
6. Retention strategies for URM, how to ensure employees are heard, and how to make employees part of the process to make the institution better.

There is a clear challenge when designing a one-hour implicit bias training tailored to search committees. Pitt's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion has developed the specific training to deliver to both faculty and staff search committees. Although the content seems to hit on many of the necessary items related to bias, there is little room for dialogue and not much time for discussion or questions at the end. Due to the time constraints and the need to fit so much content into one-hour, the training may not be as effective since the content is surface level and does not allow for much depth of discovery.

The timing of the training is intentionally right before the review of resumes and cover letters begins. Although the information in the training may not be as rich as we may prefer, the conduction of the training is effective to convey Pitt Business's commitment to EDI and equitable hiring processes at the start of every search, which is arguably just as important as the content itself.

*I was happy that we did that implicit bias training. What I think I liked the most about it was that it was timely. We were asked to do it just as we were getting ready to go through this selection process. Training in general about implicit bias is great. As you know, I'm*

*very committed to the school's EDI effort and have been involved in different ways and to get this type of training to the right people at the right time, I really appreciated the timing of it. It was good, it was a good training. – Skylar*

As the quote outlines, the timeliness of the implicit bias training is an important consideration when structuring a search process. In the quote above, the search committee member was supportive of the timing since the group was asked to complete it right before they started to review resumes and cover letters.

The following quotes discuss the effectiveness of the implicit bias training, in addition to how it related to other trainings that were organized for all of Pitt Business.

*From what I could observe in the implicit bias training, I think that it went well. I think that everybody on this particular search committee was really open to it, and I think that is a big bonus for us. I don't know that every search committee will always be like that, I hope that they will. I think sometimes we're going to run into people who are a little more resistant, but I didn't get the sense that anybody in this particular group was resistant. – Harmony*

*It was really good as well I also thought it was very helpful. Personally, I've learned a ton over the past few years about everyone having biases and so it's good to have a better understanding and try to remain as moderate as you can. So, I thought it was really good. – Rachel*

*I thought the training was interesting because I think it was slightly different than the university's EDI certificate that we did as a school. Just because [the facilitator] touched on things that I probably wouldn't have thought of before. [The facilitator] mentioned that he went to IUP so he gets really excited when he sees other people that went to the same*

*school as him, and I feel like that's true for everybody. And that's like something that I never kind of associated with. I know it's bias but like not in the general sense that you would think when you're looking over like resumes and stuff. - Emily*

The quotations above state that the implicit bias training was a good training and was helpful for the search committee. Harmony, while observing the training, communicated through the interviews that not every search committee will always be so open to the training, and we may face resistance in the future. Additionally, Pitt Business had just gone through a six-part EDI certificate training and the Pitt OEDI training for this search committee was both different from the series of trainings and specifically related to hiring. Rachel voiced that she had learned a ton over the last few years related to implicit bias and the provided training for the search still seemed to fit into her trajectory of learning. It is important to acknowledge that the training seems to work for various levels of understanding related to bias and still works for individuals who have been more immersed in the topic over their careers.

In closing, the search committee members, all of which are either moderately or intimately involved with EDI engagement at Pitt Business, saw the importance of such training and were complimentary of the timing. The implicit bias training, although very high level and only one-hour long, seemed to be effective for all search committee members, and was given at the appropriate time right before the group began reviewing candidates. The training added value to the search process and helped to set an equitable tone for the rest of the search. The committee member who was most engaged throughout the whole training was the one who didn't learn anything new, but they were in fact the one driving the conversation for more clarification and higher-level understanding. This observation could have an impact on future PDSA cycles and the composition of future search committees.

#### **4.4 Areas for Improvement Within the Search Process**

It seemed that all of the areas that we did not focus on within the intervention were the areas of greatest weakness within the search process. One of the areas to improve is the interviews themselves with how we ask questions and how the interview is generally structured. Two search committee members communicated a level of rigidity of the actual interview that came from the increased structure of the process. Within the interviews, both on Zoom and in-person, each group was given a structured protocol and process to follow. Due to this, some felt that our personality as a group and as a school did not shine through. Because of that, candidates did not have a chance to better understand what it would have been like to work with us or in our environment or the comradery between our team.

In addition to the interview structure, the committee also gave feedback on the debrief process in between interviews. After each interview, the search committee was looking to discuss each candidate. Within our procedures and as we waited between interviews, we were intentional to not talk about how the interview went and encouraged each search committee member to use that time to independently score candidates based on how they believe the candidates performed. With how the process was structured, search committee members would not know how others reacted until the group got reconvened at the conclusion of all interviews to share results across the board. Because of this, information could have been forgotten, some information left out, and all discussion would have to be completed within the one-hour discussion instead of staggering the discussion leading up to the final discussion. By debriefing throughout, the search committee may have been able to use the final discussion more strategically and analytically, instead of surface level pros and cons of the candidates.



Another cause for concern within the process will be with first-time supervisors and getting them up to speed with why we are doing this, how we are implementing, and the value behind it, in addition to the learning curve that comes with any first-time supervisor. We will also want to make sure they have adequate support and oversight throughout the process to perform an equitable search, while also recognizing resource allocation within the school.

The HR administrator also included comments about how we can improve the overall flow of the process with the clear delineation of duties. Within the search, there is active involvement between the HR administrator, the hiring manager, and the administrative support staff member who redacts all information and maintains the Teams channel for the search. The process seemed to be manageable since there was only one search happening at a time, yet if there were multiple, there would need to be additional processes in place to help make the searches manageable. It may be important to incorporate some type of queue and prompt from an automated system to notify a person or a group that it was their turn to take over a step of the process. Without a process management tool, the process may become overwhelming and disorganized. The equitable hiring process is being added onto staff members' current day-to-day responsibilities, which makes it hard to sustainably implement the change without the help of technology or additional resources.

*I think overall the process went pretty well. I think there are some details that we need to work out through the process. But that's what this is for, and a pilot is just to kind of identify those details and let us refine everything so that when we roll this out to the entire department, it is more tightened up and will be a completely new process. – Harmony*

With this being a new process, with the hopes of it becoming something that is used for all searches, it will be important to continue to formalize the steps of the process and include any and all information that will be helpful for supervisors and search committee members. Not all search

committees will be as committed at this one, and the searches of the future will not have this level of oversight and attention to the process. With that, more detail for each step of the process could lead to more sustainable success.

#### **4.5 Future Search Considerations**

A few of the search committee members identified areas to consider for future searches. As the Director of Business Administration, being intimately involved in the search and present for all meetings, there may have been a heightened awareness for compliance to the process. An area to consider is how we maintain the integrity of the process while not needing to be intimately involved as administrators. How can we empower others to lead these searches and follow the necessary procedures to be as equitable as we aspire to be?

In response to the rigidity of the interview process, we may want to consider a different interview format that allows for more personality transfer and open discussion. We should also encourage follow up questions from the committee that will not only curb the rigidity but allow for richer information to likely be shared. In order to curb the rigidity of the interviews, we may want to have less questions or train the committee on how to ask probing questions for more information and increased dialogue.

An additional consideration for future searches is the composition of the search committee. Not only do we as a school want representation in terms of diversity of roles, but we should think about professional development and succession planning in the process. Among the 90 staff members within Pitt Business, there are 15-20 staff members that will likely be responsible for supervising other employees within the next 5 years, whether at Pitt Business or another

organization. By being a part of an inclusive and equitable search process, it will allow staff members to experience and learn from what is being introduced and be prepared to lead such a process as the hiring manager. Not only will it be a learning experience, but it could also spark an interest in being a part of more EDI activities in the school or their community. The bolded quote below highlights the dynamic that my role introduced to the search and how the process may be different in the future.

*Normally for this level of position that we are seeking to fill, someone at your level wouldn't be as involved in the process. It is generally the hiring manager, a couple members of the team, and a couple people from other parts of the school to give that stakeholder point of view. I recognize what we're doing here is changing the process, intervening in the process, assessing all the value in doing so, and then adopting that as a process change. But **I think that with your involvement, it felt like the leadership of the search committee was you rather than the hiring manager**, and so it'll be really interesting to see how we adopt this for other positions. It will be good to continue to collect feedback on how that goes and how we can implement this without you being as involved with the process, as well as how we ensure accountability of the process. – Skylar*

The quotation above raises an interesting point about my involvement in the search from beginning to end. Not only do I hold a leadership role within the school, but the committee was also aware of my additional purpose of the search with the implementation of the intervention. By being in every meeting and being involved throughout the process, there may have been an increased level of attention applied by each search committee member throughout the process. Not only did I provide the structures and procedures, but I also worked directly with Pitt OEDI to coordinate the training. The quotation about my involvement sheds light on the importance of

establishing a clear process and reinforcing that we are working towards a cultural change as a school. Without the big picture understanding for each search committee member for future searches, there may not be the heightened level of awareness that was added when I was so involved. As administrators at Pitt Business, we will have to likely accept the level of commitment and focus from this search will likely not carry through for all future searched. It will be important to capture data for future searches on the areas that may require additional oversight.

In addition to my involvement in each search, the way the job description is written is a critical component that could be a reason for our lack of diversity in the hiring pools. The way the job is written is quite often what draws people in through the way it conveys the experience of being a Person of Color in the actual advertisement. The advertisement and job description will want to act as a representation of the Pitt Business community through clearly stated EDI goals and actions that make applicants feel welcome. Not only will applicants want to feel welcome, but they will also want a level of assurance that they will be included, developed, and mentored if they are the successful candidate. Without any of that information within the job description, Pitt Business may not see increased representation within the job pool.

Lastly, there is a disconnect between the University's stated goals and the HR structures in place at the university level. The 2020 – 2025 Plan for Pitt, the university's strategic plan, specifically calls out the need to create an inclusive and equitable campus environment – one that welcomes, values and embraces the diverse perspectives of every member of the community. In addition, the plan includes a specific call to action related to recruiting, developing, retaining, and promoting a diverse set of student, faculty, and staff. Although the university has this stated goal, individual units within the university are liable to create their own equity and opportunity in hiring practices. To hire a diverse group of staff, the onus is on the units to find the resources to post in

diverse outlets or to redact resumes and cover letters. Both of those require time and money during a time of constrained human and financial resources. If the university has a goal of recruiting, retaining, and developing a diverse set of faculty, staff, and students, it must invest resources around that mission.

In closing, the surveys, interviews, and observation data were able to paint a picture of the effectiveness and overall process that can be drawn upon for future searches. The first PDSA cycle outlined positives that can be carried forward, suggested modifications, and other considerations that will be useful when working towards creating an EDI culture at Pitt Business.

## **5.0 Learnings and Action**

The following chapter summarizes the learnings of the intervention and any future action or changes associated with what was learned through the intervention. This chapter connects the Hurtado (2008) campus racial climate model as it relates to the intervention and data analysis, and how the theory is represented and present throughout the data. In addition, the following chapter discusses future interventions and PDSA cycles that will work towards effectively impacting change within Pitt Business. Lastly, the chapter frames the implications of continuous changes to hiring practices at Pitt Business.

### **5.1 Feasibility of Change: How to Impact the Culture at Pitt Business**

The campus racial climate model, developed by Hurtado et al. (2008) was used as the guiding principle of the intervention because of the way it outlines many different aspects of a culture that are intertwined and need to be considered in order to make meaningful change on a college campus. The focus on the staff hiring process is one small component of change that will hope to eventually play a role in a greater impact on the Pitt Business culture as it relates to EDI.

The three main dimensions of the model described in the Review of Supporting Scholarship help to outline different factors that contribute to the campus racial climate. To make progress towards impacting the culture at Pitt Business, the elements of the campus racial climate model must be individually impacted to result in a greater cultural change.

The aim of the intervention was to create a culture of improvement related to equity, diversity, and inclusion – one that is able to recruit and retain racially and ethnically diverse staff. Through the implementation of a reformed hiring process, I anticipated the hiring pools would have had greater representation of People of Color, leading to greater representation among our staff. The biggest challenge with the search was getting the pool to be diverse. Although we went above and beyond with where we posted the role in comparison to prior searches, the outcome was a lack of representation we had already been seeing. In order to effectively increase the number of diverse applicants, it is clear that posting the role in more places is not enough. We will have to look at additional interventions such as how the job is written, how our website acts as a recruitment tool, and how our culture can adequately support staff through professional development, mentorship, and creating a sense of belonging. The following section uses the Hurtado (2008) framework to address and analyze the lack of representation in the pool among other aspects of the search and culture.

The **compositional dimension** of the Hurtado (2008) framework refers to the numerical representation of individuals from diverse social identities among students, faculty, staff, and administrators (Hurtado et al. 1999; Milem et al. 2005). As stated before, Pitt Business does not have a racially diverse staff and the school struggles to increase representation of its staff. Many perceive the compositional dimension as the first step towards making progress related to EDI, but unfortunately, as the search proved, getting a pool to be diverse is much harder than one may think. Even with all of the extra effort that we went through to advertise in diverse outlets, there was only one Black applicant for the job. Had that individual not applied, there would not have been any Black candidates in the hiring pool. In addition to the one Black applicant, there were two

candidates who identified as multi-racial. Lastly, as it related to ethnic diversity, one candidate was Hispanic Latino.

There are many factors in addition to where the job is posted that will impact the pool. The way the job description is written can also drive people away from a job or create an increased level of interest in the role. Although the job description included the Pitt Business diversity statement, it did not include any information related to the culture, climate, or focus on the retention and development of People of Color. Each role within Pitt Business has a chance to impact the climate and the marketing role specifically acts as a storyteller for our faculty, staff, students, and alumni. To help structure the job description, the job details could have included the opportunity to work with diverse populations, tell their stories, and represent the school through digital and printed publications.

To continue to work towards improving the compositional dimension of the Hurtado (2008) framework, Pitt Business must think more about other ways to increase representation, not simply posting the job in more places. The compositional dimension is a product of successfully addressing the other four dimensions of the Hurtado framework. The campus processes, organizational structure, history, and interactions within a given culture can lead to positively impacting the compositional dimension and increased representation. Although the compositional dimension is often the first that schools try to change, it is realistically one of the last dimensions to change and is a product of impacting the other four dimensions.

The **organizational dimension** showed up throughout the search process because it relates directly to the structures and processes in place that embed group-based privilege, oppression, or inequities. The organizational dimension was represented in this search through the many processes that were instituted to create a sense of structure to hopefully lead to a repeatable and



equitable process for all staff searches. The goal and result of the intervention as it related to the organizational dimension was to limit that group-based privilege, oppression, and inequity.

The search committees voiced that the structures and processes were both effective and helpful in limiting bias. The process of redacting resumes was a new step for the search committee members, and a few members mentioned that it helped to break them of old habits of looking individuals up on the internet as the first thing they do when they see someone's name on a resume.

*I thought the redaction of resumes and cover letters was very effective as a starting point.*

*– Paul*

*I think that the redacted resumes were super helpful and not being able to Google them because I feel like that's always my first instinct when I'm looking at somebody's resume to see what I can find about them on the internet and maybe not fully scan their experience before. So, I think that was super helpful for sure. – Emily*

An additional structure that helped streamline and standardize the process was the use of Microsoft Teams as a central repository for all files related to the search. Not only did it house all of the resumes and cover letters for the candidates, but it also housed the outline of the search procedures, additional implicit bias resources, interview materials, and the scoring templates for all candidates. By having a central place to store all documents, each committee member was given the same level of access and consistency to ensure they had similar experiences, which Paul said outright in the interview, and helped to make it a more equitable process for everyone involved.

These exact structures and processes, when paired with the other dimensions of the campus racial climate model, can lead to a positive impact on the climate of the school. Less time searching for the search procedures, resumes, or cover letters, the more time that search committee members can allocate to the focused review of candidates. The process of selecting the search committees,

redacting resumes, deciding where to post jobs, and how to pay for additional job sites to post the jobs are all cultural challenges that impact the organizational dimension.

In addition to the structured interventions mentioned above, the organizational structure of Pitt Business also plays a factor in the organizational dimension. The senior leadership of the school including the Dean, Associate and Assistant Deans, and senior level staff are supportive of EDI. The stakeholder power and spoken support from those individuals helps to legitimize the work towards creating an equitable hiring process. The goal is to create a climate of EDI and the spoken support will help future searches to remain on track and give reason for the search committee members to buy in to the process.

In contrast to the structures and processes at Pitt Business that advanced the effort, the environment of the University of Pittsburgh central human resources processes hindered our ability to effectively impact the campus racial climate. The construction of the job description for each job within Pitt gives very little room for flexibility or customization. As jobs are created or posted, there are specific fields that are uniform within each job posting. Because of this, units within Pitt do not have the ability to customize job postings to better represent the culture within the unit, which may be a barrier to attracting candidates.

The organizational dimension is a dimension of the Hurtado (2008) framework that impacts the climate in many ways. Not only does it allow leaders to show support for EDI from the top, but it also provides tangible and visible signals for the school and campus community to see. By formalizing a process around staff hiring and openly supporting the equitable hiring initiative, the faculty, staff, and students within Pitt Business can tangibly see the movement towards an improved EDI climate. Over time, consistency through the organizational dimension can lead to success in the other four dimensions.

The **behavioral dimension** of the campus climate refers to the context, frequency, and quality of interactions on campus between social identity groups and their members. The behavioral dimension is broken down into formal interactions, which are campus or group-facilitated interactions, and informal interactions which are everyday interactions outside of coordinated events or activities. The behavioral dimension often consists of training and professional development programs to help advance diversity and inclusion efforts.

The very beginning of the search process was kicked off by a critical decision that directly impacts the behavioral dimension of the campus climate model. The selection of the search committee was both intentional and collaborative with the goal of putting together a search committee with diverse backgrounds from different teams within Pitt Business. The feedback from the search committee validated that we chose a group that was willing to do the work and bought into each step of the process. Because of the high quality of interactions throughout, the search committee gave positive feedback about the whole process, positively contributing to the climate of the school. An important note is that this search committee is not representative of future search committees and the behaviors and interactions of the group may be different in the future.

Additionally, future search committees may also have a different reaction to the implicit bias training or require more training than what was provided in this search. The search committee voiced that they were happy we did the training and appreciated the timeliness of the training. With all five members of the search committee being supportive of EDI in general, the one-hour training seemed to be sufficient and accomplished the stated goals. If there are future search committee members that are not as supportive of EDI, the training may need additional framing on the front end, as well as some sort of facilitated discussion after the training to ensure the search committee has a sufficient result to this intervention.

*I was happy that we did that implicit bias training. Training in general about implicit bias is great... I really appreciated the timing of it. – Skylar*

The implicit bias training for the search committee was a formal intervention to directly impact the behavioral dimension of the campus climate. The success of the training is also directly impacted by the organization dimension of the model. If there was not support from leadership at the top, or the training was not as structured, we may not have found as much success with the training.

In addition to the formal interaction of the training, the process of establishing clear characteristics is also within the behavioral dimension as a structured interaction between the search committee. By allowing the search committee to work together through establishing the criteria and characteristics themselves, the group remained on the same page throughout the process when scoring, ranking, and evaluating candidates. Had the group not been able to come to a consensus or interact productively, the behavioral dimension could have been negatively impacted throughout the search. Without that consensus, the interview questions, rating system, and all other items tied to the characteristics would have held less credibility.

In conclusion, the behavioral dimension ties closely to the organizational dimension through the process-oriented nature of the implicit bias training and group discussion around characteristics for the job. The selection of the search committee is a critical step of the process that will impact the search from start to finish, as well as the success of each intervention along the way. Over time, through a series of positive interactions through many searches, the behavioral dimension will hopefully spill over into other interactions between faculty and staff related to EDI. With time, those interactions will hopefully become the norm and lead to an improved campus racial climate.

The final two dimensions of the model that were not explored in detail are the psychological and historical dimensions. Hurtado and colleagues (2008) describe the psychological dimension of campus climate as including views held by individuals about intergroup relations as well as institutional responses to diversity, perceptions of discrimination or racial conflict, and attitudes held toward individuals from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

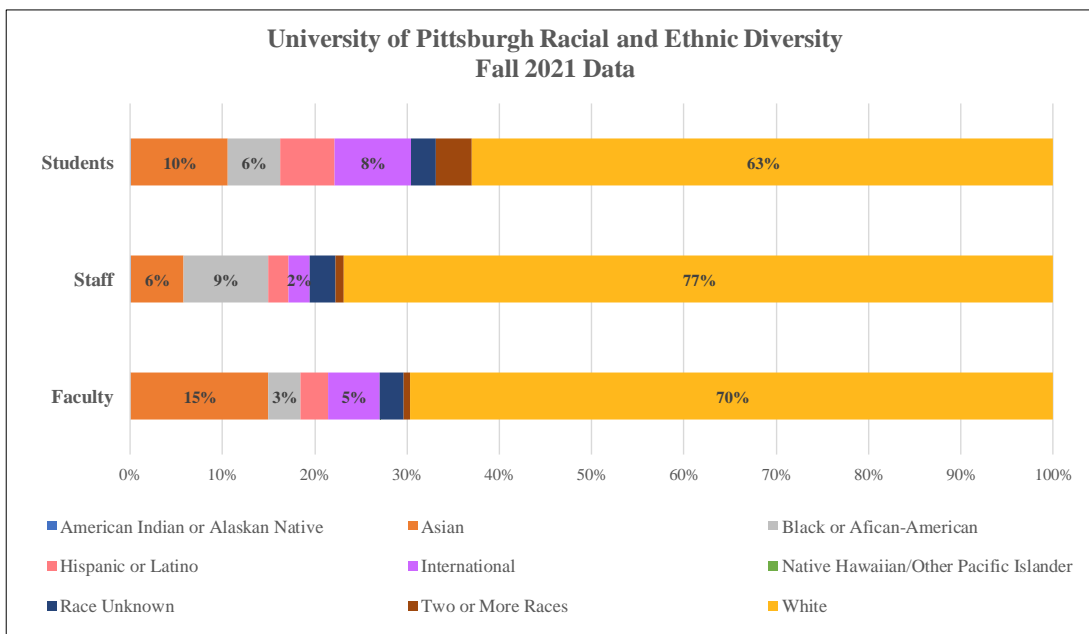
The **psychological dimension** is present within all meetings and interactions of search committee members, with the views that each member holds about other members of the committee or Pitt Business as a whole. Those views and attitudes towards different individuals from different backgrounds can impact the success or failure of an equitable search, as well as create barriers to change when trying to impact culture.

Again, the selection and composition of the search committee is a critical factor that contributes to the success of a given search, and the quality of interactions between search committee members. The psychological dimension of the campus climate model discusses how well the committee may work together and any preconceived notions they may have about each other.

In conclusion, the psychological dimension is a critical dimension for leadership in Pitt Business to discuss and understand. When selecting the search committee members, the Dean's Office will have to work closely with the Associate Deans to ensure we can maximize the effectiveness of the psychological dimension when driving change and positively impacting the Hurtado framework.

The **historical dimension** refers to the institution history of segregation within the nation's schools and colleges which has a lasting effect on efforts to achieve racial and ethnic diversity within institutions (Hurtado, et al., 2008). The historical dimension may have a greater impact at

the University of Pittsburgh level, versus the micro-scale within Pitt Business. See below for a chart that shows the diversity by race at the university level for faculty, staff, and students.



**Figure 4 Ethnic and Racial Diversity at Pitt**

As Figure 5 shows, the student body at the university is the most diverse body of the three. The staff is the least diverse at 77% White which is an ongoing challenge at the university level that further justifies the need to reform the staff hiring process. The historical dimension is generally the most difficult to impact since it involves embedded societal injustices that have been put into place that disproportionately impact People of Color and minoritized communities.

The job posting for the marketing analyst role did not acknowledge the historical lack of diversity at the institution and therefore comparable positions at other universities that acknowledge diversity may be more attractive to candidates. The advertisement for the job does nothing to convey the current state of diversity at the school or university, it only states that no one will be discriminated against throughout the hiring process. Because of this, applicants may

perceive the University of Pittsburgh and Pitt Business to be institutions that do not recognize the important components of the Hurtado (2008) campus racial climate model, thus driving People of Color away from applying for staff and faculty positions at Pitt. Lastly, the City of Pittsburgh itself is one of the most segregated cities in the United States which presents an inherit challenge for a university positioned within the city limits that may be striving to become more diverse (Baird-Remba & Lubin, 2013).

In conclusion, the Hurtado (2008) campus racial climate model is effective in establishing an outline for schools and universities to follow to positively impact the campus climate. For any intervention to be effective, schools must address each dimension of the model, and will not find significant success through simply addressing a few of the five dimensions. Although building structures or defining a clear process may lead to a positive change or a more equitable search, the climate and culture will not be drastically impacted unless all five dimensions are thoughtfully impacted.

## **5.2 Reflection to Research Questions**

### **5.2.1 Redacted Resumes and the Initial Review Process**

The first research question was, “How will the redacted resumes change the initial review process of applicants?” This question was addressed in the survey and semi-structured interview with each respondent. The redacted resumes and cover letters served many purposes within the initial review process, some of which were unexpected. The first positive was that all five search committee members agreed that the redacted resumes helped them to choose candidates based on

experience and the established criteria. The second positive was that all search committee members believe that redacted resumes and cover letters will lead to a change in how people review both materials. As Pitt Business looks to create cultural change, this is a step in the right direction.

The biggest behavioral change came from the search committee members who voiced that they usually use the internet to learn more about candidates instead of looking closely at the resume and cover letter. Those search committee members mentioned that the first thing they usually do when they see someone's name on the resume is Google search their name to learn more about them. Now that all identifying information is redacted, the behaviors of those individuals and others will change for future searches. Because individuals will not be able to Google search applicants during the initial review, the redacted resumes will lead to a change in behavior and a more equitable initial review process.

### **5.2.2 Implicit Bias Training to Limit Bias**

The second research question was, "How will implicit bias training be beneficial to the search committee to help limit bias during the process?" The second inquiry question was directly related to the effectiveness of the implicit bias training that was implemented as an intervention at the beginning of the search. The survey data directly addressed this specific inquiry question, and the interviews with the search committee were able to provide additional context.

Within the survey, all five search committee members agreed that the implicit bias training helped to limit bias within the search for the individual and that the training helped to limit bias for the other search committee members. Additionally, all five search committee members agreed that the training impacted their behaviors in search committee meetings and when reviewing resumes and cover letters.



Although only three search committee members learned something new about themselves in the training, the two that did not learn anything new were vocal during the training and helped to facilitate the conversation and ask meaningful questions. In all, the implicit bias training was beneficial to the search committee, and it helped to limit bias during the process.

### **5.2.3 Establishing Clear Criteria and Characteristics for the Job**

The final research question was, “How will clear criteria and characteristics for the job shape the interview and selection process?” Out of the three inquiry questions, this question was the highest rated through the survey responses. All five search committee members agreed with the established criteria and voiced that the criteria were helpful when selecting candidates to advance and eventually offer. In addition, the search committee adhered to the established criteria and characteristics when evaluating candidates.

In terms of how it changed the interview and section process, it seemed to impact a few aspects of the search process. The first thing that the clear criteria and characteristics did was bring the search committee together for meaningful discussion at the beginning of the process. Without the need to establish clear criteria and characteristics, the search committee would not have met to kick off the process and to discuss what they were looking for in the position. The hour that was spent simply discussing the role made a difference in how the search committee interacted throughout the search. With the goal of selecting five or six characteristics to use to evaluate candidates, the search committee needed to discuss and come to a consensus on those characteristics before moving forward with the search,

In addition to bringing the search committee together, the clear criteria helped to add consistency to the process. The criteria were used for first round review, first round interviews,

interview scoring, final interviews, and final interview scoring. The criteria were not only a scoring mechanism, but they also helped to create all of the interview questions for each round of interviews. In all, the criteria and characteristics required for the job helped to shape the process by adding formality, consistency, and legitimacy.

In conclusion, all three inquiry questions were able to be answered through the rich survey and interview data. The inquiry questions helped to guide the intervention and created an environment to learn much more about the staff hiring process. The Hurtado (2008) framework in conjunction with the inquiry questions brings a level of clarity and optimism for Pitt Business when working to create a culture that is receptive and supportive of EDI.

### **5.3 Implications of the Intervention on the EDI Culture at Pitt Business**

The introduction of a reformed staff hiring process aimed to have a positive impact on the EDI culture at Pitt Business. Two of the biggest signals of commitment from an organizational standpoint are time and money. If Pitt Business as a school is willing to increase the time devoted to staff hiring and is willing to set aside financial resources to address staff hiring, that is a clear signal to stakeholders within the school and within the University of Pittsburgh that Pitt Business is committed to creating a culture committed to EDI.

Although many studies discuss the importance of diversity programming, there are risks and possible downsides to implementing diversity programs. Researchers have been examining that question since before World War II, in nearly a thousand studies. It turns out that while people are easily taught to respond correctly to a questionnaire about bias, they soon forget the right answers (Dobbin, 2016). One study cites that the positive effects of diversity training rarely last

beyond a day or two, and a number of studies suggest that it can activate bias or spark a backlash. Nonetheless, nearly half of midsize companies use it, as do nearly all the Fortune 500 companies and higher education institutions.

This research reinforces the importance of talking about EDI in as many spaces within the school as we can. Staff hiring is one small effort that plays a key role in developing a culture that is receptive and supportive of EDI efforts. If the staff hiring process is not implemented alongside other EDI efforts, the culture likely will not be as receptive to change, and we will not see a cultural change within Pitt Business. The implicit bias training, the objectiveness of using characteristics and criteria, and the redaction of resumes keeps the importance of EDI top-of-mind for all involved in each process. Over time, these efforts will hopefully carry through to other processes within Pitt Business and create positive change.

Additionally, future PDSA cycles of the staff hiring process will lead to more data and continued understanding around the EDI culture at Pitt Business. Future cycles will include additional staff members that may not be as receptive or supportive of our EDI efforts which could offer rich perspective for leadership to digest. The data will be openly shared with the Pitt Business community, led by senior administrators, which can be a valuable tool when working to transform a culture. To show commitment, Pitt Business will be able to point to the allocation of time and money, as well as support from the top, all of which have proven to be necessary for any changes to happen within an organization.

## **5.4 Future PDSA Cycles**

The next PDSA cycle will include a series of four different searches for vacant staff positions that will all follow the same parameters but will be different types and levels of positions within the organization. The PDSA cycle will happen over a period of six to nine months to allow for all searches to be completed and data to be collected. One of the bigger questions that came from the first PDSA cycle was the resource constraints and how sustainable the process could be. I have confidence that the interventions are effective, but now it must be tested how each intervention will work with different search committees and varying levels of involvement.

The feedback from the first search committee and HR administrator highlighted the search committee as the biggest driver and variable for future searches. It will be important to analyze how different search committees interact with each other and how committed they are to the structure and process, while not being directly supervised each step of the process by anyone within the Dean's Office.

The next PDSA cycle will be structured to include both fixed and variable processes. The fixed processes will be present and required for all searches, while the variable processes will be dependent on the type and level of the position.

Within the next cycle and to formally kick off and communicate the next steps for staff hiring at Pitt Business, I will present the results of the first intervention at a faculty and staff town hall, and couple that with sharing the goals and processes for all future staff searches within Pitt Business. By sharing in a town hall that includes all faculty and staff, the presentation of data and goals will be a clear signal of commitment from the top, which is an important step when working to create a cultural change.

The following **fixed processes** will be proposed to be present in every staff search, regardless of the role:

1. Selection of the search committee in conjunction with the Associate Deans and hiring managers with a goal of representing areas of the school that work with the position.
2. Kick-off meeting with the search committee which is led by the Director of Business Administration and HR Administrator.
  - a. By having the Director of Business Administration kick off the process, it will help show the school's commitment to equitable hiring.
  - b. Will occur before the position is posted.
3. Implicit bias training required for all hiring managers and search committee members.
  - a. Will not be required if they have completed it within the previous twelve months.
4. Redaction of all resumes and cover letters for the first-round review process.
5. Establishment of clear criteria and characteristics at the beginning of the process that will be used for scoring candidates and developing interview questions.
6. Use of Microsoft Teams to house all materials related to the search.
7. Pay ranges will be openly shared within the job posting for all positions.
8. All final interviews will be in-person (exclusions as needed).
9. Survey at the end of the process to assess effectiveness and overall process of the search that will be distributed to all search committee members.
10. Continue to evaluate and make modifications for future PDSA cycles.

The following **variable processes** will be proposed to be contingent on the factors below, and will drive the size and composition of the search committee:

**Staff position level & search committee requirements:**

1. Low-level staff roles (Admin I and all comparable roles)
  - a. Search committee **not required**
  - b. Hiring manager + HR administrator
2. Mid-Level roles (Admin II-Admin III and all comparable roles)
  - a. Search Committee required (3 people)
  - b. Hiring manager + 2 other staff members from within Pitt Business
3. Leadership roles (Admin IV and above and all comparable roles)
  - a. Search Committee required (5 people)
  - b. Hiring manager + 4 other staff members from Pitt or Pitt Business

### **Search Committee Composition**

In order to effectively and sustainably compose search committees, we need to be intentional about the selection of staff to participate. Not only will we want to have diversity across units, but we will also search for harmony between staff members to positively impact the psychological dimension of the Hurtado (2008) framework.

In order to select and participate in a search committee, the Associate Deans, Director of Business Administration, and HR administrator will consider the following aspects of one's role within Pitt Business:

1. Level of one's role within Pitt Business
2. Capacity to participate (based on workload, other vacancies, and time of the year)
3. Relationship to the vacant position (team member, peer, or staff from another team)
4. How the staff members historically interact with each other

For the roles that require a search committee, the following composition requirements will be proposed for all searches:

1. Mid-Level roles (3 search committee members)

- a. Hiring Manager
- b. One individual contributor from the immediate team or another team
- c. One supervisor or individual contributor from another team

Note: One of the three must be a designated EDI representative from within the school (more information below)

2. Leadership roles (5 search committee members)

- a. Hiring manager
- b. HR administrator
- c. One supervisor from a team that works closely with the role
- d. One supervisor that does not work directly with the role
- e. One individual contributor from a peer team

Note: One of the five must be a designated EDI representative from within the school (more information below)

Peer teams (as used in search committee composition) are defined as teams that work directly with the role, but do not fall within the same immediate reporting structure. Before confirming the selection of the staff member from another team, we must confirm with their current supervisor before asking them to serve on the search committee.

The EDI representative will be a designated person from a defined group of individuals from within Pitt Business that sit on one of the three active EDI task forces and/or who voices interest in being involved in the equitable hiring initiative in the future. All EDI representatives will meet with the Director of Business Administration and HR Administrator bi-annually to discuss progress and suggest changes for future searches. Each EDI representative will be provided

resources from Pitt OEDI on their role as the EDI representative and will be required to ensure quality control for all staff searches. The EDI representatives will also be provided with all survey data from future searches to learn at the same rate as administration to engage in shared governance and decision making. The success of the equitable hiring initiative will be driven by transparency, accountability, and collaboration. The EDI representatives will play a critical role in working towards a culture at Pitt Business that is focused on and receptive to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

In conclusion, the next PDSA cycle will be four staff searches following the same guidelines to get richer data and learn more about the impact of the intervention. In addition, we will be more intentional about the search committee composition and look to better understand how the type of role may impact our ability to effectively recruit People of Color to apply for the position. By studying and analyzing the data of four different roles posted around the same time, we should be able to better understand opportunities to improve any weaknesses that exist within our processes or structure.

### **5.5 The Effectiveness of the Campus Racial Climate Framework**

The Hurtado (2008) campus racial climate model was used as a framework for this study due to its structure and the promotion of multiple dimensions that play a role in a campus climate. The Hurtado framework works well with this particular study for many reasons, including how it relates directly to higher education and outlines the dimensions of a school, college, or university that need to be impacted to generate change. The framework outlines the five dimensions that contribute to today's climate in a given school or university and helps to elaborate and bring



meaning to the current racial climate. The use of the dimensions allows the reader to better understand the model through a step-by-step process, but not necessarily the order in which dimensions can and should be impacted.

One of the challenges of the Hurtado (2008) framework is understanding the most optimal way to implement change. The framework leaves the administrator or change agent to work through the model to find the most effective and efficient way to enact change. Higher education is inherently slow to change, and change is generally difficult within academia. Without a roadmap on which dimensions should be impacted first or which is the most critical, it will be hard for leaders to implement change without having a deep understanding of the framework. My recommendation would be for leaders to be equipped with an overall understanding of each dimension and then align that understanding with their current knowledge of the culture within the school. By associating the current culture with the dimensions of the model, leaders will be able to better understand the drivers behind their climate or culture issues, and then effectively address any disconnects between the culture and the model.

When the model is simplified at the highest level into representation, organizational structure, work dynamics and relationships, and overall historical context, many leaders may believe they can quickly digest and understand the model. Although, as we saw from one staff search, the implementation of a framework and model to shape a hiring process is incredibly complex and it only confirmed how difficult and time consuming it is to positively impact a culture and campus climate. Culture change is difficult, and higher education is an industry unlike many others. By better understanding the complexity of culture change through the Hurtado model, administrators can look at all aspects of a culture and understand the exact areas that need to be addressed.

## **5.6 Future Considerations and Questions**

Throughout the intervention and data analysis, I found myself wanting to learn more about specific areas related to culture change and implementation which I discuss below. In addition, I was thinking about other activities within the school that can be affected and changed along with the staff hiring process.

The first area I would like to know about but I do not have the answers is how to create a culture of sustainability; one that has processes that continue even when critical members of the process may leave, and that role is vacant or replaced. So often in higher education or any other industry, when leadership turns over or critical individuals are lost, any positive momentum and progress leaves with them. As of the date of this writing, Pitt Business is searching for a new dean, which could impact the sustainability of the process and our overall progress. I will be curious to see how we can create a culture around making these processes the new norm so that we do not risk losing progress or momentum related to staff hiring and EDI.

Secondly, I would be interested in pursuing grant dollars and am curious whether or not grant dollars would lead to better effectiveness. As I said prior, successful implementation and sustainability requires both financial and human resources. If we can secure grant dollars and/or programs to support equitable hiring processes or EDI initiatives, that will help to create energy, resources, and sustainability around the process.

In conclusion, a large component of developing a culture around EDI that has not yet been discussed is the retention and development of staff once they are hired. Due to the scope of this study and intervention, I was unable to drill into the complexities of retention and support for staff, especially diverse staff. If I was going to complete another EdD, I would focus on the next step of the process which would be retention and development, pending successful implementation of an

equitable staff hiring process. The retention and support for staff would be an appropriate next step in building a better culture, one that supports and advances equity, diversity, and inclusion in higher education.

## Appendix A – Survey Results

Rank	Survey Question	Mean	Max	Min	St. Dev	COUNT	
						Agree	Disagree
1	The established criteria and characteristics were helpful when selecting candidates to advance and eventually offer.	5.0	6.0	4.0	0.707	5	
1	I agreed with the established criteria and characteristics that were chosen by the search committee.	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.000	5	
1	The search committee stuck to the established criteria and characteristics when evaluating candidates.	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.000	5	
4	The redacted resumes and cover letters helped me to review candidates objectively.	4.8	6.0	3.0	1.095	4	1
4	The implicit bias training with OEDI was helpful to better understand your own implicit attitudes.	4.8	6.0	4.0	0.837	5	
4	The implicit bias training with OEDI was helpful to better understand stereotypes.	4.8	6.0	4.0	0.837	5	
4	The redacted resumes helped me to choose candidates based on experience and established criteria.	4.8	6.0	4.0	0.837	5	
8	The implicit bias training helped to limit bias within the search for you individually.	4.6	6.0	4.0	0.894	5	
9	The implicit bias training impacted your behaviors in search committee meetings and when reviewing resumes and cover letters.	4.4	5.0	4.0	0.548	5	
9	The implicit bias training helped to limit bias within the search for the search committee members.	4.4	5.0	4.0	0.548	5	
9	Redacted resumes and cover letters will lead to a change in how people review resumes and cover letters.	4.4	5.0	4.0	0.548	5	
10	You learned something new about yourself.	3.8	5.0	3.0	0.837	3	2
11	The pool of top candidates was different than it would have been if the resumes and cover letters were not redacted.	3.2	4.0	3.0	0.447	1	4

Figure 5 Appendix - Survey Results

## Appendix B – IRB

**From:** Ries, John William <jwr22@pitt.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 18, 2021 1:07 PM  
**To:** Strauss, Robert <rjstrauss@katz.pitt.edu>  
**Subject:** Study 21100211 Update

Good afternoon,

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I apologize for the gap in our communication, as I was out sick towards the end of last week. I hope this week has been a good one for you so far. I've consulted with a number of other IRB team members about your project and how initially I thought it was a QA/QI project, then how I thought I could fit your project into exempt category 2. The consensus is that your project does not meet the regulatory definitions to require IRB review.

Please understand that the IRB only has jurisdiction over projects that meet the regulatory definition of human subjects research. Many dissertations and other projects fall outside of these definitions. There would be no reason why you could not publish your dissertation if it did not need IRB review.

For your convenience, please see this link to our guidance on human subject research definitions and the authority and jurisdiction of the IRB <https://www.irb.pitt.edu/policies-and-procedures/chapter-3-human-subject-research-and-authority-and-jurisdiction-university>. Specifically the content under the heading "Authorities Granted to the IRB by Federal Regulation". Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. In the meantime, I will return the study to you.

Thanks,  
John

**John W Ries, MPH**  
Research Review Analyst - Exempt, Expedited  
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Figure 6 Appendix - IRB

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