

Cultural Equity and Belonging Actions for 2020-2021

Updated December 10, 2020

- Support NEC’s Black Students and Black Student Union (BSU):** NEC has focused primarily on listening more intently to the needs, ideas, and voices of the Black members of our community. The [June 2nd Open Letter from the Black Student Union](#) expressed their pain, mourning, and exhaustion with the challenges they have faced at NEC and throughout society. They have exercised courage and commitment to overcome systems of oppression that are centuries old and daily perpetuated; they have modeled leadership, inclusion, and love; and, even in their grief, they have extended themselves to help us understand what we can do to support them.

Priority Action Area	Action / Project	Lead Team	Status
Provide the required resources to fully support the three demands outlined in the BSU’s June 2nd Open Letter	Provide mental wellness resources and hire a professional on the NEC Staff with expertise in serving diverse populations to provide ongoing support throughout the academic year.	Squire Paige (Health & Counseling)	Hired a psychotherapist to address mental health needs while providing outreach, consultation, and training to the entirety of the NEC community on mental health and wellness issues specific to diverse and underrepresented student populations.
	Recognize Black culture and music through creating virtual programming and future programming that fortifies and highlights Black artist’s contributions to our field.	Stanford Thompson (Special Advisor to the President)	The NEC Perspectives Forum was launched in July 2020 with a five-part series on the Black experience at NEC spanning a 50-year period and encompassing classical, jazz, opera, and contemporary music. It remains online for the NEC and broader community.
		Claudia Robaina Winston (Artistic Administration); Annie Phillips (Entrepreneurial Musicianship)	A documentary series led by the BSU is in production and planning for a Black History Festival in February 2021 is underway.
	Increase support for Black students.	Andrea Kalyn (President’s Office); Thomas Novak (Provost’s Office); Kathleen Kelly (Advancement, Engagement, and Partnerships); Jacqueline Martocchio (Alumni Engagement)	In collaboration with the BSU, create a Black alumni affinity group to facilitate opportunities for support for current students.
			Assistance provided through NEC’s financial aid department, special assignments, and emergency funds.
			Assign key faculty and staff members who can provide assistance, mentorship, and support to various academic and performance needs that arise.

Not Started	In Progress / Ongoing	Completed
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2. **Launch the NEC Center for Cultural Equity and Belonging (CEB) and Advisory Bodies:** creating a two-way line of communication between members of the NEC community and NEC’s President to exchange ideas through discussion, exploration, and ideation towards greater collaborative problem-solving.

Priority Action Area	Action / Project	Lead Team	Status
Restructure the Student Leadership Council	Create Summer SGA working group to devise a new framework for NEC’s first new student-elected government to increase communication between the student body and the administration and to provide new opportunities to be engaged with its community.	Nick Tatar (Dean of Students)	The new Student Government Association (SGA) Executive Panel has been launched after a nomination and voting process.
			Nomination and voting for general members will take place in the start of the spring semester.
Establish a CEB Steering Committee	Create a steering committee to support the President and Special Advisor to the President in designing the NEC Center for CEB.	Andrea Kalyn (President’s Office)	The steering committee has been formed and its work will begin immediately.
Recruit and hire a Director of CEB	In collaboration with the Office of Human Resources and led by the President’s Office, develop a job profile and launch a national search for a Director of CEB.	Andrea Kalyn (President’s Office); CEB Steering Committee; Nick Macke (Human Resources)	Job profile to be finalized in January 2021 and search to begin immediately thereafter.
Establish the Center for CEB	Determine which administrative offices on campus will work collaboratively with the Director of CEB and dissolve the position of Special Advisor to the President.	Andrea Kalyn (President’s Office)	Recommendations for key stakeholders made in January 2021 and Center for CEB is established upon successful hire of a Director of CEB.

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Promote, recruit, and install the new CEB Advisory Council	Announce and promote the CEB Advisory Council to each major stakeholder group of NEC Community (students, alumni, faculty, students, staff, and Board of Trustees).	Michael Sarra (Marketing and Communications)	Announcement made in early January 2021.
	Hold information sessions and recruit members from the NEC Community for nomination via an application process.	Thomas Novak (Provost)	Applications open in late January 2021 and close on the final day of February 2021.
	Conduct an orientation meeting, finalize initial goals for the Council and establish a meeting schedule for the 2021-22 academic year.	Andrea Kalyn (President's Office)	Orientation meeting held in April 2021 at which initial goals and 2021-22 calendar are presented.
Provide CEB Orientation to all stakeholders	Partner with leading local and/or national professionals to provide customized anti-racism and implicit bias orientation and training for all NEC stakeholders.	Director of CEB (Center for CEB)	Local and national consulting firms are being identified, vetted, and interviewed. Several proposals are under consideration.

3. **Adjust NEC's Curriculum, Courses, and Supplemental Educational Activities:** In collaboration with department heads of the College, Preparatory School, and Continuing Education, review NEC's curricular activities and bring them into alignment with culturally responsive standards.

Priority Action Area	Action / Project	Lead Team	Status
Develop a Curriculum Exploratory Working Team	Assemble a team of faculty members who can collect and analyze peer feedback and make suggestions for change to be reviewed by the curriculum committees.	Stanford Thompson (Special Advisor to the President)	The Curriculum Exploratory Working Team (Felicia Sandler, Eden MacAdam-Somer, and Thomas Handel) was created and work is underway.

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	Collect existing, past, and proposed curricular activities that focus on culturally diverse and inclusive topics.	Curriculum Exploratory Working Team	Over two dozen faculty members submitted feedback and ideas.
	Share feedback and ideas with the curriculum committees for their consideration.	Curriculum Exploratory Working Team	The feedback and initial ideas are under review to be presented to the curriculum committees in the spring of 2021.
	Identify and recommend internal curriculum-related processes that improve communication, transparency and action amongst NEC's faculty and staff.	Curriculum Exploratory Working Team	Preliminary ideas have been shared with, and discussed amongst, the Curriculum Exploratory Working Team. Feedback and ideas will be presented to the curriculum committees in the spring of 2021.
	Conduct a formal audit in partnership with the curriculum committees and senior leadership for ongoing changes to be implemented in the 21-22 academic year.	Thomas Novak (Provost)	The process will begin shortly after feedback and recommendations from the Curriculum Exploratory Working Team are presented to the curriculum committees.
Amplify diverse perspectives and voices	Approve and fund workshops that closely align with NEC's CEB goals.	Andrea Kalyn (President's Office)	A series of workshops has been funded across the campus that engages diverse professionals, musicians, and advocates of cultural equity and belonging.
	Approve the immediate implementation of CEB-related curriculum adjustments.	Thomas Novak (Provost)	Several faculty and departments have been encouraged, and approved as needed, to implement curricular adjustments in the current (2020-21) academic year.
	Continue to implement the NEC Perspectives Forum and expand topics of discussions beyond the experiences of Black members of the NEC community.	Stanford Thompson (Special Advisor to the President)	Activities began in summer 2020 and will continue through a nomination process for topics, leaders, and speakers.

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4. **Miscellaneous CEB Activities and Capacity-Building Processes:** Ideate, design, and implement several CEB activities and internal capacity-building processes that help establish a firm foundation for future growth and exploration.

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Review and adjust key institutional systems and processes	Improve CEB-related data collection by building baseline measurements and identify achievable goals in the short, mid, and long terms.	Stanford Thompson (Special Advisor to the President)	The areas of growth are being identified and opportunities of growth becoming clearer in order to establish data collection criteria and mechanisms.
	Clarify systems to create greater trust, clarity, and transparency reporting Title IX and cultural equity concerns and incidents.	Jody Shipper (Title IX Consultant); Elizabeth Dionne (Finance and Administration); Nick Macke (Human Resources)	A new Title IX coordinator has been hired and a process has begun to clarify and improve these systems (e.g. implementation of Maxient system)
	Ensure equitable processes in recruiting, inviting, hiring, and contracting diverse staff, faculty, and guest artists/presenters.	Thomas Novak (Provost); Nick Macke (Human Resources)	Search processes for faculty positions were formalized in summer 2020. A thorough review of processes will be completed prior to Provost Novak's retirement to make recommendations to the incoming Provost to implement in the 2021-2022 academic year.
Develop a global profile as a leader of CEB in the field	Highlight and leverage NEC's leadership of Boston BEAM.	Rebecca Bogers (Preparatory School); Michael Sarra (Marketing and Communications)	Consistently communicate Boston BEAM's program success to and beyond the NEC community, NEC's collaborative support of the initiative, and partnership with members of Boston BEAM's Community Advisory Council.
	Convene peer institutions to share their strategies, experiences and best practices for cultural equity and belonging.	Andrea Kalyn (President's Office)	Encourage NEC's peer conservatories and post-secondary music schools to frequently share best practices and resources to improve outcomes on campus.

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	Partner with reputable national and international organizations aligned with NEC's mission and CEB goals.	Andrea Kalyn (President's Office); Thomas Novak (Provost)	Discussions are ongoing with several local, national, and global organizations that can provide new opportunities to NEC's culturally diverse students, alumni, and faculty.
Align NEC's local and global community initiatives with new CEB goals	Review NEC's current community initiatives and programs with leaders across the campus to suggest ways to increase NEC's impact throughout the broader community.	Tanya Maggi (Community Engagement and Professional Studies)	A review is underway and new initiatives are being planned for implementation by the end of the academic year.

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