



## **Subcommittee—Recruitment and Retention of African American Students**

**Subcommittee Members:** Joffery Gaymon, Katrina Akande, Madison Birckhead, Royrickers Cook, Kevin Coonrod, Vini Nathan, Lastella Paradise, Mya Strickland, Ja’Lia Taylor and Bill Hardgrave.

### **Objectives:**

- Increase Black student enrollment
- Increase aid allocated to Black students
- Improve the racial climate
- Improve retention and graduation rates of Black students

### **Completed:**

#### **To increase Black student enrollment**

- Pilot a flexible admissions model—deployed a test flexible model based on a holistic review.
- Deployed non-cognitive based short essay prompts. All applicants reflect and respond to a situation where they experienced or witnessed unfairness. Applicants have an opportunity to reflect on an experience, demonstrate understanding, learning and growth.
- Alabama's valedictorian and salutation are guaranteed admission to the university and the Honors College. The top two students will also receive priority consideration for scholarships.
- Launched the Common Application

#### **To increase aid allocated to Black students**

- Shifted at least 10% of scholarship funds towards need/non-merit aid and reduced the cost of attendance for students with unmet-need. Award more scholarships to transfer students.
- Shifted oversight of PLUS Scholarship to Enrollment Management to ensure strategic deployment of funds. Increase annual awards. New awards will range from \$5,000-\$8,000. Shift the oversight of President’s Graduate Opportunities Program (PGOP) funds to the Graduate School.

#### **To improve the racial climate**

- Document and celebrate the history of diversity at Auburn. Student Center renaming and updated campus tour script.

- Develop an “Inclusive Language Guide” and toolkit. Hometown news, student showcase—clear messaging on *Affordability, Ability and Fit*.

#### **To improve retention and graduation rates of Black students**

- Held follow-up meetings with provost and Sr. VP for Academic Affairs and Sr. VP for Student Affairs to discuss the next steps.

#### **Immediate Next Steps:**

##### **To increase Black student enrollment**

- Establish full benchmarks with SEC, SREB and top-performing institutions for Black students
- Leverage partnerships with GearUp Alabama and Black Belt Community Foundation
- Increase enrollment of students participating in DiCE
- Annually track and report on funds allocated towards diversity scholarships

##### **To increase aid allocated to Black students**

- Identify new funds to increase need-based aid
- Ensure students with the greatest need can experience the *FULL* Auburn experience
- Increase the number of diversity scholarships

##### **To improve the racial climate**

- Conduct a climate survey in spring 2021
- Continue to document and celebrate the history of diversity at Auburn
- Continue to develop an “Inclusive Language Guide” and toolkit
- Improve retention and graduation rates of Black students
- Select champions responsible for equitable student success and a process for continuous improvement
- Survey non-returning students

#### **Future Planning Required:**

##### **To increase Black student enrollment**

- Evaluate the test-optional model
- Reimagine the centralized and decentralized recruitment mode

##### **Increase aid allocated to Black students**

- Revisit the fundraising campaign and develop a plan to focus on affordability and access

##### **To improve the racial climate**

- Develop an African American studies and Women's and Gender Studies major, potentially name it “John Lewis Department of Civil Rights, Equity and Inclusion.”

##### **To improve retention and graduation rates of Black students**

- Change metrics for student organization incentives. Evaluate funding for student organizations, block seating, etc. Reward organizations based on diversity and inclusion.