

President's Commission on RACIAL EQUITY

OVERVIEW

Amid an extraordinary period of unrest in our country, it had become clear that Marquette must be part of the solution in the long fight for racial justice. We knew it would be a challenging, uncomfortable endeavor, but our Catholic, Jesuit tradition calls on us to address injustices head on.

To that end, President Michael R. Lovell organized a President's Commission on Racial Equity (CORE) to explore how the university might develop a path forward that focuses on Black student success through a collaborative, research-based, campuswide initiative with visibility at the highest levels of Marquette leadership.

The groundwork

Led by co-chairs Distinguished Professor Emeritus Dr. Howard Fuller and Trustee Emerita Kris Rappé, the commission focused first on understanding the historical context of racial injustice at Marquette and in the surrounding community.



Dr. Howard Fuller



Kris Rappé

To ensure impact and sustainability, an Assessment Team — which included leaders from diversity and inclusion, institutional research, law, psychology and the Educational Opportunity Program — dug into 15 years of data to map desired changes to persistent problems.

Accelerating progress

Parallel to CORE's exploratory work, Marquette leaders began working closely with Marquette's Black Student Union, accelerating the university's progress toward better serving its Black students. Several powerful discussions between Marquette leaders and the Black Student Union led to the university making important commitments to its Black students:

- Increasing scholarship support for Black students from Milwaukee County
- Changing the curriculum to provide more focus on racism and injustice
- Establishing mandatory race and equity training for faculty, staff and students
- Hiring counselors to meet the health and wellness needs of our Black students



Recruit. Retain. Graduate.

Through CORE's assessment, it became clear that CORE and the university's broader Student Success Initiative — led by Dr. Sarah Feldner, dean of the Diederich College of Communication; Dr. Karen Robinson, associate professor in the College of Nursing; Dr. John Su, vice provost for academic affairs; and Darren Jackson, trustee emeritus — have shared goals: recruit, retain and graduate first-generation, Black and Pell Grant students. Considering the evident synergies between the two groups, Marquette leaders seized the opportunity to maximize the initiatives' success by bringing them together.

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The path forward

With CORE's vision merged into the Student Success Initiative, the important work of ensuring Black student success at Marquette can move forward more quickly and effectively. The following structural changes will help facilitate that work and maximize its effectiveness:

Executive-in-residence: Darren Jackson will serve as executive-in-residence, reporting to Provost Kimo Ah Yun to help ensure the success of this university-led, trustee-supported priority.

Advisers: Kris Rappé and Dr. Howard Fuller will continue as advisers to the broader Student Success Initiative with a particular focus on the recruitment, retention and graduation of Black students.

Governance: Most importantly, the Board of Trustees will ensure the Student Success Initiative is accountable and sustainable because the investment in Black student success must come through the highest levels of Marquette leadership.

This alignment will make a greater impact at Marquette, create accountability supported by the board and build a culture of support for our students that is rooted in racial equity.