The Crowell Committee

Executive Summary

September 11, 2020
Remembering
DEAN
GEORGE CROWELL
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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MEMORANDUM

To: Dean Eliot A. Cohen
From: The Crowell Committee
Date: September 11, 2020
Re: Final Report: Executive Summary and Detailed Recommendations

The Crowell Committee first wishes to acknowledge the opportunity afforded by Dean Eliot Cohen to examine SAIS’ diversity efforts in a select set of core focus areas, and make suggestions for ways to invite and engage the active participation of faculty, staff, students, alumni and the broader university and community.

In accepting this opportunity, the Committee collectively acknowledges the foundational and pivotal moment in time that we all find ourselves in, where conversations on race and racial justice, diversity, equity and inclusion have yet again taken center stage in our nation’s social and political discourse, and across communities and industries, including academia. There is an urgency that is rooted, certainly, in a long history of systemic injustice but further fueled in the present moment by the egregious and insidious acts of violence we have all witnessed against people of color in recent years and months.

The global protest movement that has ensued has challenged many of us, both individually and collectively, to initiate a critical examination of our own practices and policies that have contributed to this moment – either directly or indirectly – and to consider how we might create lasting change. This moment in history has also inspired a very conscientious group of SAIS students, faculty, staff and alumni – many of whom are a part of the Crowell Committee, to begin to examine with greater intention, the norms and practices that have been part of the culture at the school for many years which, too, however unintentional, have contributed to the moment we find ourselves in. The formation and recommendations of this Committee are an acknowledgement that in the areas of diversity and inclusion, SAIS can – and must – do better.

The Committee firmly believes that a holistic approach to diversity includes a commitment to positively changing the culture in such a manner that leads to organizational transformation through the inclusion of all persons, irrespective of race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, ideas, backgrounds, and experiences. This commitment to diversity is a trait that should be woven into every aspect of SAIS’ organizational and operational culture.

We accept that for the purpose of this effort, however, we were tasked with a particular mandate to renew and restore SAIS’ commitment to supporting and creating opportunities for persons from underrepresented minority communities, particularly African-Americans and Black persons within our school community. This is our immediate concern and the recommendations contained in this report are focused there.

The variety of voices contributing to this report represent a microcosm of the constituent groups who will be tasked, in the coming months and years, with helping to move the SAIS diversity, equity and inclusion agenda forward. These perspectives will bring valuable insight into the challenges SAIS seeks to address and will also offer viable solutions to help chart a path forward. There are a host of well-documented resources and data points that articulate the current state of staff, faculty and student diversity at SAIS – we will not attempt to summarize them here but will mention that we examined a number of them as we formulated our recommendations.

The work of the Crowell Committee was not intended to replace the ongoing work of the SAIS Diversity Council, SAIS Student Diversity Coalition, Black Student Union, Student Government Association or any related student and faculty led organizations that are making similar efforts but rather to join with them and respond, at this moment in time, by making actionable short-term and long-term recommendations to SAIS leadership, for continuous improvement.
The Committee is pleased to put forth the following concrete, actionable recommendations that will engage the active participation of SAIS administration, faculty, students, staff, alumni, donors, and the broader university, and yield tangible results.

We certainly acknowledge that while some of the recommendations can be easily implemented in the near term, others will require additional development, adjustments to programmatic and staff structures, and budgetary support. Where applicable, we have noted where additional resources are needed, and how those might be obtained. **This is not intended to be an exhaustive list.** All the recommendations are simply intended to provide a starting point from which to develop a longer-term diversity strategy, should SAIS opt for that.

We also want to acknowledge where there are deficits in the existing SAIS organizational structure that may render the execution of some of these recommendations a bit more challenging than others. For example, while our recommendations to create a more formalized minority student advising and mentoring effort would be a unique opportunity to effectively engage faculty and alumni in the student recruitment and retention processes, we realize that the school’s current organizational structure does not have a designated point person at staff level who is tasked with coordinating such an effort.

Finally, with respect to all of the detailed recommendations set forth in this report, the Crowell Committee collectively recommends that SAIS consider creating at least one full-time, senior staff position to manage diversity efforts, as a demonstration of the school’s commitment to this effort. It is our hope that SAIS will begin to develop a long-term diversity strategy that ensures the effective implementation of these recommendations; form a DEI Advisory Council to further expand the work of the Crowell Committee; and implement a baseline of guidelines and metrics to measure, evaluate, and fund programming that progresses towards these goals.

Respectfully submitted,

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This subcommittee seeks to add value not only to the existing SAIS community, but also to talented underrepresented minority (URM) students who may not otherwise have access to high quality graduate education. We believe these dual objectives can best be accomplished by shifting SAIS’ existing recruitment strategy from competing against its peers for a limited pool of ‘traditionally’ qualified applicants and instead targeting recruitment efforts towards individuals who would not be always be offered a place at SAIS in the current system, but have the talents and abilities to succeed at the same level if admitted.

Our core recommendation, then, is to Zig Where Others Zag – to focus on recruitment strategies that are not predicated on the same logic as our peers. This means recruitment strategies that do not seek primarily to attract the limited number of black and African-American students who have, by the combination of luck and effort, overcome the deeply unequal and more obvious societal and institutional barriers before them, but instead seek to actively identify and recruit those students who are also “excellent” by less apparent - but equally significant - qualities.

We also advocate for a “seed and soil” strategy to address elements of the SAIS culture that may hinder the long term commitment to building and sustaining diversity, equity and inclusion. SAIS must make clear that efforts to recruit a diverse student body and faculty are authentic and that the institution cares deeply about diversity rather than merely trying to improve its numbers.

**Student Recruitment Strategies:**

**Promote what already exists:** SAIS should market itself as a school that will allow applicants to fully explain their circumstances and holistic self. This means making pro-diversity mechanisms more prominent in the application process.

**Conduct HBCU outreach and establish a URM pipeline:** Engage in regular outreach to HBCUs to increase visibility and initiate summer programs for black and African-American undergrads, to begin building relationships and an affinity for SAIS; summer programs can leverage SAIS’ existing strengths in online learning. Direct admission and joint BA/MA programs for black and African-American students from HBCUs could also be considered.
Support Non-Traditionally Excellent Students in New Ways: SAIS should pursue partnerships with foundations or international organizations that might be interested in sponsoring non-traditionally excellent (“extensive margin”) students; consider creating fully funded slots for some non-traditional populations of exceptional promise (e.g. homeless applicants); and dedicate support to helping non-traditionally excellent students transition to SAIS.

Revise Financial Aid Strategies for Excellent Students: We believe non-traditionally excellent student financial aid must be awarded on need, not (traditionally assessed) merit. In addition, financial aid awards should be expanded for this population to cover the full cost of attendance, not just tuition. This aid strategy should be supported through fundraising efforts and institutional dollars.

Recruit Excellent Students through Alternative Application Pathways: SAIS should consider establishing an alternative application pathway for non-traditionally excellent black and African American who wish to be considered under it. This alternative pathway would involve interview or other types of assessments that would help identify excellent students. The bigger/bolder the new pathways, the more it will help to alter SAIS’ brand/perceptions of inclusiveness at the school/increase applications from a broad range of kinds of applicants.

Student Recruitment Action Steps: Designate dedicated institutional resources towards 10% of total aid in support of new recruitment efforts aimed URM students. If SAIS pursues an alternative application pathway, we believe that support will be needed to manage a more intensive (and possibly interview-focused) application review and support for non-traditionally excellent students after admission. In addition, we recommend a shift in aid policy towards need-based assessments and supporting the full cost of attendance for non-traditionally excellent students.

Faculty Recruitment Strategies: We fully support and endorse the recommendations of the Faculty Diversity Committee led by Professor Finkel in AY 19-20, which we believe should be incorporated into the Crowell Committee’s recommendations; in particular, the idea of providing scholarships to URM SAIS alums pursuing PhD’s in relevant fields in exchange for spending time at SAIS as post-docs or visiting assistant professors immediately after graduation. In addition, we offer the following recommendations:

Leverage Existing JHU Resources: Make greater use of existing JHU mechanisms under the JHU-wide Faculty Diversity Initiative. Encourage faculty, for example, to apply to sponsor post-docs under the Postdoctoral Fellow Program. Take advantage of the next round of Bloomberg Distinguished Professors (BDP) to proactively identify senior scholars with URM backgrounds.

Engage in targeted short-term strategies: Create faculty positions for HBCU professors transitioning from practitioner in international affairs to scholar, ‘lecturing senior Ph.D. students’ who both study and teach. Conduct a targeted term faculty search focused on mid-career professionals. Multiple tenured-and tenure-track black and African-American faculty (not just a single individual) should be pursued as soon as circumstances allow.

Changing Institutional Culture as a Recruitment Strategy: Consider mentorship programs that help faculty of color adapt to the institutional culture. As an institution with minimal African-American faculty, retention could be a major problem. Recruitment efforts are essential, but retention efforts are equally important.
Faculty Recruitment Action Steps: We recommend that a staff position in Faculty Affairs be designated to identify potential opportunities for faculty and school leadership, with the aim of encouraging/coordinating applications for JHU-level resources for faculty recruitment and dedicated funds be set aside for possible for cost-sharing (for e.g. post-doc fellowship applications).

Advising and Mentoring

Submitted by: Jason Fichtner, Jean-Amiel Jourdan, Stephen Sears, Kendall Simmonds

The Advising and Mentoring Subcommittee has identified three key areas of focus to provide additional support and guidance for Under Represented Minority students at SAIS. Particularly, self-identification has historically been a challenge for administrators to assess the URM population.

The Committee encourages self-identification to improve the collection of data, to allow us to focus on the URM population. Second, by leveraging the SGA and directly engaging existing affinity groups, we can aggregate a broader base of students to increase participation. Finally, the Committee recommends formalizing the School’s commitment to supporting diverse student populations via these concrete, actionable recommendations:

Mentoring Diversity Day: Global Careers organizes a Mentoring Diversity Day in October via the [OneHop mentoring platform](#) for all SAIS campuses. Mentors can be any ethnicity, with a desire to mentor specific populations. Matching occurs at the event in a real time “marketplace.” It is important to note that the program itself is not separate – it is the targeted outreach to diverse groups that we need to enhance and formalize. For this event, we recommend an invitation from the Dean’s to all students, but with a targeted invitation to students of color, LGBTQ, etc.

Promotion of Mentoring Program: SAIS leadership/faculty promote mentoring program when they are meeting alumni abroad or domestically. Future emphasis is needed for the OneHop mentoring program, clarifying the commitment to three hours total for mentoring. Give SAIS leadership/faculty necessary information so they can emphasize our efforts to increase mentoring opportunities for diverse students.

Points of Contact for all Affinity Clubs in Global Careers: Global Careers has a point of contact for each career club, but this was not previously the case for affinity clubs. This year, for the first time, Global Careers will have a point of contact (e.g. The BSU should know who their contact is).

Dedicated Events for all Student-facing Services: Student-facing services (Student Life, Registrar, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, Global Careers, etc.) should have dedicated events for underrepresented students. There is a deficit of existing initiatives. We recommend encouraging these offices to offer, within a specific timeframe, something geared to diversity. We recommend exploring this with affinity groups to understand what is actually needed and desired.
Programming and Community Engagement

Submitted by: Lora Berg, Min Chang, Sabrina Newton, Susannah Tillson, Alex Wright

The Subcommittee on Programming and Community Engagement envisions SAIS taking the lead among IR schools in its commitment to advancing DEI in International Relations. The SAIS community of students, faculty, alumni and stakeholders will offer an increasingly rich diversity of talent, ideas, and experiences, in order to develop leaders who are inclusive in their approach. Toward this goal, we recommend:

Engaging the Wider Community: Each campus (Washington, Bologna, Nanjing) will connect with at least 3 organizations beyond SAIS that are addressing DEI needs in the wider community; establish partnerships with these or similar organizations; initiate both a Day of Service during the main academic year and Juneteenth celebrations across all campuses as core elements of the SAIS experience.

Affiliating with Organizations that Advance Diversity in IR: Develop working relationships with professional organizations that advance diversity in International Relations such as the International Career Advancement Program (ICAP) and the University Leadership Council on Diversity and Inclusion in International Affairs (ULC) to further improve our practice and broaden SAIS’ social capital. Consider hosting ICAP’s Washington week, a unique opportunity to rapidly expand and deepen our connection to IR leaders of color.

Highlighting Diverse and Inclusive Speakers: Widen the circle of speakers at SAIS through series such as “Diverse Voices in Foreign Policy” as well as ensure diversity of speakers across topics addressed at SAIS. Set a target metric of 25% DEI/UR speakers across the school by 2022; commit to the no “manel” pledge. Convene a “Scholars of Color in IR” to focus on broadening social capital, gaining insights into scholars’ experiences in IR, and learning about the changes they are working to make in the field.

Offering Tailored Workshops and Certificate Courses: Develop tailored DEI content for faculty, students, and alumni. A first faculty workshop, for example, could explore the history, research and perspectives of IR scholars of color. For students and alumni, two certificate courses could be launched: “Diversity, Inclusion and Foreign Policy”; and “Global Engagement for Local Leaders”. SAIS Bologna has already initiated a timely and valuable scholarly literature review regarding diversity of voices and scholarship in international affairs. We recommend this review be broadened to include all of SAIS.

These initial steps will accelerate SAIS’ advancement as an IR institution leading in its commitment to DEI in international affairs. Details are available in the long form report.
Development and Fundraising

Submitted by: Eugene Finkel, Carla Freeman, Mark Fung, Khadija Hill

In order to create a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community for students, staff, faculty, and alumni, the Development and Fundraising subcommittee recommends SAIS develop a strategy for cultivating potential partners, including alumni and unaffiliated constituents. We encourage SAIS Development and Alumni Relations (DAR) to develop and launch the Propel Campaign to sustain the institutional financial infrastructure that effectively supports diversity efforts in the following areas:

**Widening our recruiting base** by investing in pipeline programs such as the young scholars' symposium and the summer academy to increase interest in the field of international relations. Develop long term opportunities to partner with the Center for Talented Youth.

**Investing in full-tuition financial aid** to grant access and supply financial stability for students pursuing a BA/MA, MA, or Ph.D. while committing to developing a structure that provides need-based awards – including personnel, systems, and Johns Hopkins admissions procedures.

**Providing support and an inclusive environment through mentorship and experiential learning opportunities** that promote pipeline and leadership skill-building for students and faculty. This also includes prioritizing experiences such as Post-Doctoral Fellowships, alumni and faculty mentoring, and elevating capstones such as PeaceKidz.

**Forming strategic partnerships and sponsorships with local, domestic, and international entities** by developing a policy engagement program to create a series of connections to diverse voices within the community surrounding each campus and, particularly, leveraging SAIS’ future home at 555 Pennsylvania Avenue as the closest IR school to Capitol Hill.

**Committing to fostering a diverse volunteer leadership pipeline and pathways** by diversifying the student recruitment committee, decreasing barriers to entry, and widening the candidate pool.