



# Samford University<sup>®</sup>

Diversity Action Plan  
2022



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### Abbreviations Used

VP-AA	Vice President Academic Affairs/Provost
VP-ADV	Vice President of Advancement
VP-BUS	Vice President of Business Affairs
VP-MAC	Vice President of Marketing and Communications
VP-SAEM	Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

## Written and Graphical Summary of Action Plan

**“FOR GOD. FOR LEARNING. FOREVER.”**

This Diversity Action Plan builds on the final report of Samford University’s Task Force on Racial Justice, presented to the Board of Trustees on April 27, 2021. The report sought to advance Samford’s commitment to promote and support racial diversity across campus. This plan seeks to create a “more durable and accountable process” to implement the report’s recommendations. Like the report, this plan aspires to reflect God’s reconciling and healing nature. And echoing President Taylor’s call to the Samford community, it aspires to set the university on the path towards achieving racial justice in a way that is “rooted and grounded in love.” Ephesians 3:16-17 (ESV).

The Task Force’s report made findings and recommendations across multiple areas, which this plan has condensed into the following statement: A **commitment** that is rooted in love and centered on Christ to cultivate and nourish our **community**, through intentional **curriculum** and thoughtful **communication**, in the pursuit of equity and justice for all of God’s people.

These “Cs,” defined below, are a blueprint for building a better Samford community.

- **Commitment.** A promise to allocate resources – financial, intellectual, and relational – to achieve and sustain change and hold one another accountable in a way that reflects God’s love for all people.

*“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.” Hebrews 10:24 (NLT)*

- **Community.** A place where all God’s people love and seek the best for one another and foster an inclusive climate that reflects the fullness of God and represents people of diverse backgrounds.

*“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.” 1 John 4:7 (ESV)*

- **Communication.** A way of listening, speaking, and living that embodies and encourages humility, respect, fairness, and the equitable treatment of all members of our campus and community.

*“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” Ephesians 4:2 (NIV)*

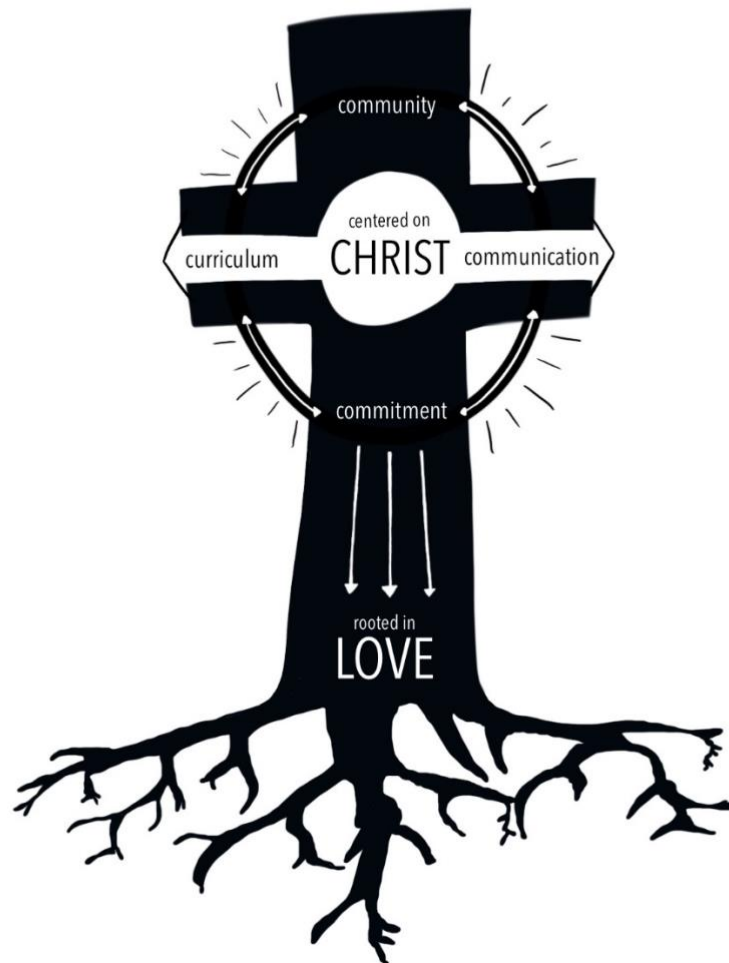
- **Curriculum.** A framework for learning and practice that intentionally infuses aspects of racial justice and promotes harmony for all of God’s diverse creations.

*“Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.” Isaiah 1:17 (ESV)*

This plan commits the Samford community to specific action items that build on and overlap with those set out in the report. These action items span multiple aspects of life at Samford: athletics, culture and personal responsibility, curriculum, diversity education, financial aid, hiring, and spiritual formation. They also seek to study Samford’s history and better understand and define justice.

To ensure a more “durable and accountable process,” this plan establishes a procedure for measuring and assessing progress on these action items, by identifying responsible facilitators and setting timelines, creating metrics to assess progress, and proposing the resources needed to achieve this plan’s goals. *Importantly*, to ensure that the university’s diversity goals advance, this plan also recommends an oversight mechanism—a committee that comprises of the leaders of each Samford administrative office as well as the leaders of each school and their diversity liaisons -that reports to the president on a quarterly basis. Given the nature of its work, this plan also recognizes that the process it describes may evolve to meet challenges or celebrate progress.

“Courage in the face of adversity is no small feat.” We hope that these words from the report will guide the Samford community as it takes on the important task of moving Samford forward on the path toward a racially diverse and harmonious community rooted and grounded in Christ’s love. We hope that through its success, this plan will create the template for future work to address inequities and injustices in other domains.



## Diversity Action Plan Committee Members

<b>Gregory, Denise</b>	Diversity Action Planning Committee Chair Associate Provost for Student Success and Diversity and Inclusion Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry Howard College of Arts and Sciences
<b>Amamoo, M. Ahinee</b>	Professor School of Public Health Department of Public Health
<b>Armstead, JeNorri</b>	Director of Diversity & Intercultural Initiatives for Athletics Athletics
<b>Atkins, Garry</b>	Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
<b>Black, Jessica</b>	Executive Director of University Marketing Marketing and Communication
<b>Chatman, Emerald</b>	Doctor of Nursing Practice Candidate Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing
<b>DeFore, Matt</b>	Director of Budget and Financial Planning Decision Support and Financial Strategy
<b>Dike-Minor, Chinelo</b>	Assistant Professor of Law Cumberland School of Law
<b>Evans, Lauren</b>	Assistant Professor of Art School of the Arts Department of Art & Design
<b>Fosu, Ignatius</b>	Professor and Chair Howard College of Arts and Sciences Communication and Media
<b>Harris, Reggie</b>	Assistant Professor of Management Brock School of Business Department of Entrepreneurship Management and Marketing
<b>Hughes, P.J.</b>	Professor and Assistant Provost for Faculty Success McWhorter School of Pharmacy Department of Pharmacy Practice
<b>Hyde, Becky</b>	Assistant Librarian and Processing Archivist and Special Collection Librarian University Library
<b>Imbragulio, Lisa</b>	Senior Associate Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs Business and Financial Affairs

<b>Johns, Marci</b>	Senior Associate Provost, SACSCOC Liaison Academic Affairs
<b>Johnson, Margaret</b>	Professor and Chair School of Health Professions Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders
<b>Kendall, Tyler</b>	Student Government Association President Senior Communication Studies
<b>Kennedy, Brian</b>	Director of Recruitment Admission
<b>Lewis, Breuna</b>	Black Student Union President Junior Accounting and Finance Major
<b>Overton, Anthony</b>	Professor and Chair Howard College of Arts and Sciences Biological and Environmental Sciences
<b>Ramey, Casey</b>	Director of Alumni Programs University Advancement
<b>Robinson, April</b>	Assistant Vice President for Student Development and Support Student Affairs and Enrollment Management
<b>Spencer, Jenee</b>	Director of Diversity Education and Development Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives
<b>Sterling, Ron</b>	Lecturer in Pastoral Studies, Director of Student Services Beeson Divinity School
<b>Taylor, Tommy</b>	Director of Public Safety and Deputy Emergency Manager
<b>Thomas, Cameron</b>	Director of Diversity Enrichment and Relations Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives
<b>Uhomba, Laurel</b>	Doctor of Pharmacy/Master of Public Health Candidate McWhorter School of Pharmacy
<b>Waldvogel, Dieter</b>	Assistant Professor Howard College of Arts and Sciences World Languages and Cultures
<b>Wilson, Doug</b>	Assistant Vice President for University Advancement University Advancement
<b>Windham, Joel</b>	Assistant Vice President and Director of Human Resources Human Resources
<b>Witherspoon, Monique</b>	Associate Professor and Associate Dean Orlean Beeson School of Education Educational Leadership

## Diversity Planning Action Items\*

### Athletics

*We commit to creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive environment for our student-athletes and staff.*

- Revisit the goals and initiatives of the diversity and inclusion subcommittee within the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (VP-BUS)
- Ensure that the Student Athlete Advisory Committee is diverse, to better position it to provide input from Samford's underrepresented student populations (VP-BUS/SAEM)
- Facilitate regular assessment of diversity initiatives and diversity training within Samford Athletic units (VP-BUS)
- Establish a professional development and mentoring programming for student-athletes at Samford (VP-BUS)
- Provide support to underrepresented student athletes who have a desire to participate in the National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations (VP-BUS)
- Provide educational opportunities for student athletes to explore and experience the historical context of racial justice (VP-BUS)

### History and Culture

*We commit to confronting Samford's history, related to racial issues, and assess that which has shaped and formed it, both internally and externally.*

- Establish a Commission on the history of race at Samford University (VP-AA)
- Establish an interdisciplinary research workgroup on race and societal inequities (VP-AA)
- Hold a public Reconciliation Memorial Ceremony for the dedication of the obelisk (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Develop and implement a marketing campaign that emphasizes diversity messaging (VP-MAC)

### Curriculum

*We commit to the continued integration of concepts of race, equity, and racial justice throughout Samford's curricula, to promote Samford's core values of "integrity, honesty, and justice," and "appreciation for diverse cultures and conviction."*

- Incorporate elements of racial justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion content into the core curriculum at Samford (VP-AA)
- Recognize and celebrate faculty who are awarded internal grants that support innovative curriculum projects that address topics of diversity, inclusion, and racial justice (VP-AA)
- Seek funding to support a study that assesses the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of students, faculty, and staff regarding racial justice integration into the university's core curriculum (VP-AA)
- Examine the perspectives of faculty and staff who participate in cocurricular activities that address topics of racial justice (VP-AA)
- Seek opportunities to disseminate study findings and feature the work of Samford faculty; staff; and students in addressing matters of diversity, inclusion, and /or racial justice (VP-AA/SAEM)
- Develop internal certificates or credentials to identify campus ambassadors for racial justice (VP-AA/BUS)
- Create interprofessional education experiences for addressing topics of racial justice (VP-AA)
- Provide incentives for students of color and underrepresented students (i.e., first generation) students to study abroad (VP-AA/BUS)



## Diversity Education

*We commit to identify and promote the following tools that align with the spiritual moral imperative of honoring differences and diverse cultures and to affect social and cultural change on Samford University's campus.*

- Develop diversity education resources associated with cultural competency and implicit bias for students and employees (VP-AA/BUS)
- Establish student programming focused on cultural diversity (VP-SAEM)
- Track required cultural competency education and training for all Samford students, employees, and leadership (VP-AA/BUS/SAEM)
- Create a resource group that shares best practices on diversity and inclusive teaching practices (VP-AA)
- Facilitate regular assessment of diversity and diversity training for the entire Samford community (VP-AA/BUS)
- Provide campuswide activities including guest speakers that are relevant to diversity, equity, and inclusion work/goals that are aligned with the Racial Justice Task Force and the Diversity Action Plan recommendations (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Support cultural organizations (including with funding) in organizing events (festivals, speakers, food, dance, performances, etc.) (VP-BUS/SAEM)

## Hiring and Promotion

*We commit to increasing faculty and staff representation of color and to establish equity and transparency in the employee hiring process.*

- Establish a hiring process that is transparent and affords equal access to Samford and non-Samford applicants using diverse search and hiring committees (VP-BUS)
- Track number of diverse applicants, offers and new hires to evaluate the impact of diversity action goals and recommendations (VP-BUS)
- Update the training of all new and internal hires to include diversity/inclusion training (VP-BUS)
- Align implicit bias training with biblical principles of honoring differences and diverse cultures to be used to train Samford leadership. Hiring managers and all search committee members (VP-AA/BUS)
- Require each search and hiring committee member to participate in a training session co-facilitated by the Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives and the Office of Human Resources to review hiring policies every 2 years (VP-AA/BUS)
- Develop networking opportunities for collaborative efforts with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other minority serving institutions to establish a pipeline for potential applicants (VP-AA/SAEM)
- Conduct timely exit interviews for all faculty and staff by a third-party firm to inform any adjustments that need to be made (VP-BUS)
- Incorporate recognition for faculty's work in diversity and inclusion as a part of promotion and tenure evaluation (VP-AA)
- Hire a staff member to assist with international hiring (VP-AA/BUS)

## Personal Responsibility and Honor Code

*We commit to increase student awareness of racial justice issues on campus and encourage them to focus on inclusion and diversity.*

- Review the content of the already utilized National Survey of Student Engagement for evaluation of racial justice concepts and add additional questions to the senior exit survey as deemed needed (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Host student-led and focused roundtable discussions and forums that facilitate discussions regarding cultural awareness and sensitivity (VP-AA/SAEM)
- Encourage all student organizations including the Student Government Association, to conduct inclusion and diversity activities and service projects focused on marginalized communities each year (VP-SAEM)

## Enrollment and Retention

*We commit to allocate the appropriate resources to advance efforts to diversify Samford through student recruitment, scholarships, and alumni development.*

- Increase the diversity of the undergraduate and graduate student population (with priority at the undergraduate level) (VP-SAEM)
- Determine and increase scholarship funds for students of color (VP-BUS/SAEM/ADV)
- Increase diversity of the students who hold leadership roles on campus (ambassadors, RAs, tour guides and connection leaders) (VP-SAEM/ADV)
- Establish a wide array of professional development and mentoring programming for underrepresented students (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Engage and keep alumni of color connected to Samford through recruitment efforts and sharing their Samford experience through mentoring, university events, outreach, and fundraising (VP-ADV)
- Examine the benchmarks of parent engagement for students of color (VP-SAEM)
- Provide funding for mental health support for students of color (VP-BUS/SAEM)
- Allocate funds to sufficiently staff support offices to meet the needs of Disability Resources; Academic Success Center; CARE Team; Counseling and Wellness; Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives (VP-AA/BUS)

## Spiritual Formation

*We commit to foster a diverse spiritual culture that promotes unity, compassion, justice, and mercy that looks to Christ's example for inspiration and instruction that we might be a more loving community regardless of our differences.*

- Benchmark and incorporate more diverse campus ministry worship experiences to reflect students of color's expressions of faith, through diverse speakers, choirs, and worship team leaders (VP-SAEM)
- Prioritize the hiring of a full-time campus minister of color in the Office of Spiritual Life (VP-SAEM)
- Form an advisory board of pastors of color who align with the Samford mission, values, and orthodox theology to provide resources for college ministries (VP-AA/SAEM)
- Invite representatives from local diverse churches to participate in the annual Church Connections (VP-SAEM)
- Pursue enhanced cadre and convocation offerings that center on diverse literature and racial justice themes (VP-SAEM)

## Accountability

*We commit to establishing policies and procedures that will implement this committee's goals and objectives, by providing reports and assessments of the work completed and publicly committing Samford to this work.*

- Budget for and commit financial resources that support diversity, equity, and inclusion work. This includes creating the position of a diversity, equity, and inclusion liaison in each of the schools and units (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Establish a regular system of accountability and assessment of campuswide diversity initiatives and activities as recommended (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Publicize efforts related to diversity, inclusion, and Diversity Action Planning Committee plan utilizing Samford platforms (VP-MAC)
- Incorporate new language into Samford's core values, mission, and vision emphasizing its support for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Intentionally collaborate with the local Birmingham community to reshape the image and perception of Samford, with particular emphasis on marginalized communities (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Establish a bias incident reporting system and review process (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Have the president and executive leadership team communicate that diversity, equity and inclusion issues and increasing diversity are a priority at Samford (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Create a university-wide diversity award (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Facilitate regular assessment of diversity initiatives and diversity training within Samford operational units (VP-BUS)
- Benchmark and increase requests for proposals from underrepresented companies for large contracts (VP-BUS)

*\*The Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives will work in concert with the University's general counsel and Human Resources departments to assure compliance with all local, state, and federal laws and to maintain consistency across, and where appropriate in subordination to, University approved policies and plans.*

## Methodology of Prioritization

To ensure Samford's Diversity Action Plan aligns with priorities of our broader university community, we surveyed three leadership groups across campus: the diversity action planning committee, the university council, and the executive leadership team. The diversity action planning committee is comprised of 31 faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students. Fifty-one faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students comprise the university council, of which ten are also a part of the diversity action planning committee. Lastly, the executive leadership is comprised of nine senior level executives with one that is also part of the diversity action planning committee.

These groups were asked to assess the extent to which they perceived the urgency, importance, complexity, benefit, cost, and mission fit of each action plan item. Urgency was defined as how quickly the respondent perceived the recommendation needed to be addressed. As a measure of magnitude, importance indicated how much of an impact the recommendation would have. Complexity was assessed as the perceived difficulty associated with realizing each item. Benefit was assessed as the gain to which the Samford community would realize with each item. The cost for each item was also assessed and lastly how the action items would serve and advance the mission of Samford University.

Of those surveyed, 21 members of the diversity action planning committee (67.7%), 46 members of the university council (90.1%) and nine members of the executive leadership team (100%) completed the survey. A composite priority score was developed for each action item. This score was based upon the average response given for urgency, importance, benefit, and mission fit combined. The action items were then ranked based on the highest to lowest priority composite score. Results from the priority ranking are provided in the table below.

In addition to priority ranking, proposed timelines will be developed based upon the cost and complexity scores.

# Diversity Plan Action Items Prioritized

## Ongoing/Completed Action Items

- Provide campuswide activities including guest speakers that are relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion work/ goals that are aligned with the Racial Justice Task Force and the Diversity Action Plan recommendations (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Hold a public Reconciliation Memorial Ceremony for the dedication of the obelisk (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Increase diversity of the students who hold leadership roles on campus (ambassadors, RAs, tour guides and connection leaders) (VP-SAEM/ ADV)
- Provide funding for mental health support for students of color (VP-BUS/SAEM)
- Incorporate elements of racial justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion content into the core curriculum at Samford (VP-AA)
- Support cultural organizations (including with funding) in organizing events (festivals, speakers, food, dance, performances, etc.) (VP-BUS/SAEM)

## Top 20 Priority Action Items

- Engage and keep alumni of color connected to Samford through recruitment efforts and sharing their Samford experience through mentoring, university events, outreach, and fundraising (VP-ADV)
- Have the president and executive leadership team communicate that diversity, equity and inclusion issues and increasing diversity are a priority at Samford (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Determine and increase scholarship funds for students of color (VP-BUS/SAEM/ ADV)
- Increase the diversity of the undergraduate and graduate student population (with priority at the undergraduate level) (VP-SAEM)
- Allocate funds to sufficiently staff support offices to meet the needs of Disability Resources; Academic Success Center; CARE Team; Counseling and Wellness; Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives (VP-AA/BUS)
- Establish a hiring process that is transparent and affords equal access to Samford and non-Samford applicants using diverse search and hiring committees (VP-BUS)
- Budget for and commit financial resources that support diversity, equity, and inclusion work. This includes creating the position of a diversity equity and inclusion liaison in each of the schools and units (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Reflect more diverse campus ministry worship experiences for students of color expressions of faith, through diverse speakers, choirs, and worship team leaders (VP-SAEM)
- Intentionally collaborate with the local Birmingham community to reshape the image and perception of Samford, with particular emphasis on marginalized communities (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Provide incentives for students of color and underrepresented students (i.e., first generation) students to study abroad (VP-AA/BUS)
- Invite representatives from local diverse churches to participate in the annual Church Connections (VP-SAEM)
- Establish a wide array of professional development and mentoring programming for underrepresented students (VP-ALL UNITS)

- Align implicit bias training with biblical principles of honoring differences and diverse cultures to be used to train Samford leadership, hiring managers and all search committee members (VP-AA/BUS)
- Encourage all student organizations including the Student Government Association, to conduct inclusion and diversity activities and service projects focused on marginalized communities each year (VP-SAEM)
- Establish a professional development and mentoring programming for student athletes at Samford (VP-BUS)
- Create a resource group that shares best practices on diversity and inclusive teaching practices (VP-AA)
- Track number of diverse applicants; offers and new hires to evaluate the impact of diversity action goals and recommendations (VP-BUS)
- Develop and implement a marketing campaign that emphasizes diversity messaging (VP-MAC)
- Establish a bias incident reporting system and review process (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Develop networking opportunities for collaborative efforts with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other minority serving institutions

### Middle 20 Action Items

- Examine the benchmarks of parent engagement for students of color (VP-SAEM)
- Pursue enhanced cadre and convocation offerings that center on diverse literature and racial justice themes (VP-SAEM)
- Host student-led and focused roundtable discussions and forums that facilitate discussions regarding cultural awareness and sensitivity (VP-AA/SAEM)
- Facilitate regular assessment of diversity and diversity training for the entire Samford community (VP-AA/BUS)
- Publicize efforts related to diversity, inclusion, and Diversity Action Planning Committee plan utilizing Samford platforms (VP-MAC)
- Facilitate regular assessment of diversity initiatives and diversity training within Samford Athletic units (VP-BUS)
- Update trainings of all new and internal hires to include diversity/inclusion trainings (VP-BUS)
- Develop diversity education resources associated with cultural competency and implicit bias for students and employees (VP-AA/BUS)
- Establish University student programming focused on cultural diversity (VP-SAEM)
- Form an advisory board of pastors of color who align with the Samford mission, values, and orthodox theology to provide resources for college ministries (VP-AA/SAEM)
- Prioritize the hiring of a full-time campus minister of color in the Office of Spiritual Life (VP-SAEM)
- Require each search and hiring committee member to participate in a training session co-facilitated by the Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives and the Office of Human Resources to review hiring policies every two years (VP-AA/BUS)
- Establish a regular system of accountability and assessment of campuswide diversity initiatives and activities as recommended (VP-ALL UNITS).
- Ensure that the Student Athlete Advisory Committee is diverse, to better position it to provide input from Samford's underrepresented student populations (VP-BUS/SAEM)
- Conduct timely exit interviews for all faculty and staff by a third-party firm (VP-BUS)
- Create interprofessional education experiences for addressing topics of racial justice (VP-AA)

- Facilitate regular assessment of diversity initiatives and diversity training within Samford operational units (VP-BUS)
- Seek funding to support a study that assesses the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of students, faculty, and staff regarding racial justice integration into the university's core curriculum (VP-AA)
- Recognize and celebrate faculty who are awarded internal grants that support innovative curriculum projects that address topics of diversity, inclusion, and racial justice (VP-AA)
- Seek opportunities to disseminate study findings and feature the work of Samford faculty; staff; and students in addressing matters of diversity, inclusion, and /or racial justice (VP-AA/SAEM)

### Bottom Action Items

- Incorporate new language into Samford's core values, mission and vision emphasizing its support for diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Provide educational opportunities for student athletes to explore and experience the historical context of racial justice (VP-BUS)
- Review the content of the already utilized National Survey of Student Engagement for evaluation of racial justice concepts and add additional questions to the senior exit survey as deemed needed. (VP-ALL UNITS)
- Revisit the goals and initiatives of the diversity and inclusion subcommittee within the Student Athlete Advisory Committee. (VP-BUS)
- Establish an interdisciplinary research workgroup on race and societal inequities (VP-AA)
- Examine the perspectives of faculty and staff who participate in cocurricular activities that address topics of racial justice (VP-AA)
- Track required cultural competency education and training for all Samford students, employees, and leadership (VP-AA/BUS/SAEM)
- Provide support to underrepresented student athletes who have a desire to participate in the National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations (VP-BUS)
- Benchmark and increase requests for proposals from underrepresented companies for large contracts (VP-BUS)
- Establish a Commission on the History of Race at Samford University (VP-AA)
- Incorporate recognition for faculty's work in Diversity and Inclusion as a part of Promotion & Tenure evaluation (VP-AA)
- Develop internal certificates or credentials to identify campus ambassadors for racial justice (VP-AA/BUS)
- Hire someone to assist with international hiring (VP-AA/BUS)
- Create a university wide diversity award (VP-ALL UNITS)



**Samford  
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