



Dallas College
Faculty Association

Briefing Paper

May 2022

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Institutional Culture: Toxic Stress and Organizational Change

Dallas College must become a trauma-informed institution

At Dallas College, the level of dysfunction, chaos, and toxicity continues to grow and impact all employees – especially our most vulnerable and marginalized colleagues, as they are disproportionately impacted by both systemic and individualized discrimination and biases. Dallas College, as an institution, has failed to develop and nurture a positive, supportive, synergetic culture. There remains glaring policy and procedural gaps that have emboldened powerful leaders to continue non-compliant practices in defiance of institutional policies and procedures, and state and federal law. This continues to create serious financial and legal liabilities. To improve the institutional culture and protect Dallas College from multiple legal and ethical liabilities, the following steps are recommended:

- **Trauma-Informed Professional Development**
 - *Trauma-Informed Professional Development* must be provided for all levels of the institution to mitigate the toxic stress and trauma inflicted on the institution by the combined effects of a global pandemic, ongoing societal upheavals, and the reorganization of Dallas College.
- **Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance Training**
 - *Texas Labor Code 21.010* requires that all State employees receive mandatory Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training within 30 days of employment, and further requires that each employee must complete supplemental EEO training every two years. This includes all employees, student employees, part-time employees, and seasonal or temporary workers.
- **Updated Compliance Training Program**
 - *The UT System* and the *Texas A&M System* both provide general compliance training for all new employees. These programs are intended to help employees gain an understanding of the laws, rules, regulations and policies that govern employees when they carry out official duties.
- **Dual Credit Professional Development**
 - *Because of our large Dual Credit and Early College High School population* Dallas College should provide consistent professional development training to bring us closer in line to TEA requirements.

Dallas College Faculty Association

The mission of the DCFA is to represent and advocate on behalf of faculty in all areas that position faculty better to serve students and improve student outcomes, and to partner with the Chancellor, the Board of Trustees, administrators, students, staff, and all other interested stakeholders to work for an ethical, diverse, inclusive, and equitable culture in Dallas College.

DCFA Briefing Papers present information, analysis and recommendations on key policy and shared governance issues.



Dallas College is Toxic

The coronavirus pandemic has wrought chaos on the entire world. Over the last two years, we have all experienced a **collective trauma** in the coronavirus pandemic. The levels of pain and stress brought to individuals and families by the illness, unexpected deaths, shutdowns, employment uncertainty, financial distress, and virtual home-schooling have reached toxic levels. Low-income and marginalized communities have been **disproportionately** impacted as a result of chronic trauma, poverty, and historic and systemic racism. And compounding the disproportionate levels of **toxic stress** created by the pandemic for minoritized communities, are the ongoing incidences of racialized violence that effectively **retraumatize communities of color** with every violent police encounter and their viral playback across the World Wide Web, and a national election that stoked racial fear and discrimination into a frenzied, fever pitch across the nation.

In the midst of this global pandemic and collective trauma, Dallas College instituted a massive reorganization that saw the lay-offs and firings of hundreds of employees, and a restructuring of the entire institution. The **levels of trauma and toxic stress** caused by the reorganization of Dallas College in the midst of a global pandemic are only now beginning to be understood. It will take years for the institution to recover from not only the loss of talent and institutional knowledge, but also from the carnage and **trauma** left in the wake of the damage

inflicted by a poorly timed, designed, and executed reorganization.

Currently, the levels of dysfunction, chaos, and toxicity continue to grow and impact all employees at Dallas College – especially our most vulnerable and marginalized colleagues, as they are disproportionately impacted by both systemic and individualized discrimination and biases. In the wake of the reorganization, Dallas College failed as an institution to develop and nurture a positive, supportive, synergetic culture. Instead, we find ourselves in an organization that barely functions, rife with documented instances of openly hostile work environments, overt and covert racism, sexism, disparate treatment, pregnancy discrimination, heterosexism, EEOC violations, ADA violations, harassment, and retaliation. In short, Dallas College has become a toxic institution.

In the face of glaring policy and procedural gaps left behind by the reorganization of Dallas College, many powerful leaders in the institution have been emboldened to remain non-compliant with state and federal laws, creating fiefdoms in their respective corners of the institution where they believe they can create their own policies and practices for themselves and their direct reports. This creates serious financial and legal liabilities for Dallas College. Employees, out of fear of retaliation and firing, are reluctant to refuse the directives of their supervisors — even if the directives violate state or federal law. The liabilities created by these unethical activities have

DISCRIMINATION IS TOXIC TO PROFIT MARGINS

As outlined by the [Center for American Progress](#), businesses that discriminate based on a host of job-irrelevant characteristics, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity put themselves at a competitive disadvantage compared to businesses that evaluate individuals based solely on their qualifications and capacity to contribute.

Discrimination against employees negatively impacts the economic performance of businesses in the following ways:

- Recruitment:** Discriminatory businesses put themselves at a competitive disadvantage compared to businesses that value equal opportunity and inclusion in the workplace. This is because discrimination excludes qualified employees who can contribute to their bottom line. To attract an optimal workforce, employers must ensure they are hiring from the largest possible pool of qualified labor in their industry. Discrimination, however, will unnecessarily limit the pool of potential candidates for employment by excluding some candidates based on job-irrelevant factors such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. When this happens businesses unnecessarily preclude themselves from finding the best and brightest employees and diminishes their ability to generate healthy profits.
- Retention:** Retaining employees is equally important to a company's financial strength. Discrimination, however, forces otherwise qualified employees out of a job and into the ranks of the unemployed. This introduces numerous **turnover-related costs** as employers must then find, hire, and retrain employees to replace those who have left due to workplace discrimination. This takes significant amounts of time, money, and resources that could have instead been spent on primary business operations. According to a recent study, the cost to replace a departing employee is somewhere between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for an hourly worker, and between \$75,000 and \$211,000 for an executive making \$100,000 a year.
- Job Performance and Productivity:** Discrimination in the workplace needlessly compromises maximum labor productivity and workforce output. Discrimination and hostility in the workplace prevent employees from performing their core functions on the job. Moreover, it introduces **unnecessary costs** by increasing absenteeism, lowering productivity, and fostering a less motivated, less entrepreneurial, and less committed workforce.
- Marketing to Students:** Discrimination can be costly not only in terms of labor supply but also in terms of **consumer demand**. When companies discriminate and allow unfairness to go unchecked in the workplace, consumers increasingly react by actively choosing to do business elsewhere. This is certainly true of marginalized students who are especially responsive to social justice and responsibility. Companies simply cannot afford to lose a share of the market that wields a cumulative spending power of nearly \$2 trillion.
- Litigation:** Workplace discrimination exposes businesses to potentially costly lawsuits.

See Fig. 1 Frequency of Claims Included in Charges Filed with the EEOC

Fig. 1

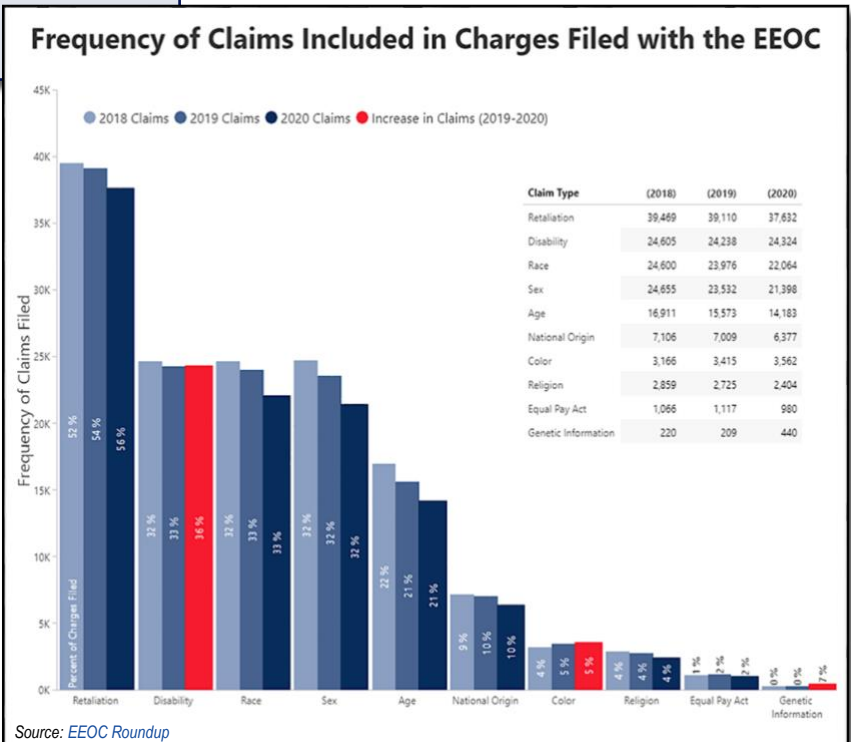
IN TODAY'S ECONOMY
DISCRIMINATION
 IN THE WORKPLACE IS MORE
 THAN A
DISTRACTION
 IT IS
COSTLY

created a pervasive toxicity that permeates every level of our institutional operations. More alarming still, are the behaviors seen throughout the leadership ranks that consistently take advantage of Dallas College's compliance gaps. This malicious behavior systematically silences and marginalizes individuals – and entire workgroups – by normalizing and institutionalizing discriminatory and repressive policies and practices.

Dallas College Must Change Course

Systemic training in **trauma-informed organizational culture** and practice, and consistent, intentional, professional development must be deployed to remediate the discrimination and toxicity at all levels of the institution, and to address the trauma and toxic stress felt by its employees. **Toxic stress** and trauma are now so prevalent that employers and workforce development organizations need to understand their effects—they may be at the root of why employees and clients (students) appear to be more angry, anxious, withdrawn, disengaged, distracted, or unproductive." In short, unaddressed trauma and toxic stress can **destroy organizations**. From high employee turnover and burn out, to reduced productivity, poor customer (student) interactions, hostile work environments, and blatant discrimination, the costs of trauma and toxic stress are **astronomical**. And the **insidious effects** of trauma and toxic stress go far beyond poor job performance. It is now well documented toxic stress **causes physical and neurological changes** that damage blood vessels, causes heart disease, increases blood pressure and stroke risk, damages internal organs and shortens life expectancy by years. To address these problems, Dallas College must refocus its efforts on creating and nurturing a safe, transparent, and **trauma-informed organization**, built on collaboration and peer support, that places authentic **student success** as its North Star.

In addition to trauma-informed trainings for all employees, Dallas College must revisit its compliance training requirements. And, as required by [Texas Labor Code 21.010](#), all State employees must receive mandatory Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training within 30 days of employment. The code further requires that each employee must complete supplemental EEO training **every two years**. This includes all employees, student employees, part-time employees, and seasonal or temporary workers.



Source: EEOC Roundup



Proposed Changes Institutional Culture and Onboarding:

There are many pressing issues that desperately need attention throughout Dallas College. Many of which have legal, ethical, and accreditation ramifications. To address the problems outlined in this brief, an up-to-date compliance and professional development program is needed to address the legal and ethical liabilities created as a result of our outdated compliance training, and to align our practices with current Dallas College rhetoric of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Please see the areas of opportunity outlined below to address our institutional culture and missing compliance training:

- **Trauma-Informed Professional Development**
 - [Trauma-Informed Professional Development](#) must be provided for all levels of the institution
 - [Benefits](#) of Trauma-Informed Professional Development:
 - [Improved](#) job satisfaction, higher productivity, decreased employee turnover
 - [Improved](#) [student success](#), retention, and resilience
- **Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance Training**
 - [Texas Labor Code 21.010](#) [requires](#) that [all State employees](#) receive mandatory Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training within 30 days of employment.
 - The Code further requires that [each employee must complete supplemental EEO training every two years](#). This includes all employees, student employees, part-time employees, and seasonal or temporary workers.
 - [Benefits](#) of EEO Training:
 - [Can reduce complaints and associated costs](#)
 - [May improve the working environment](#)
 - [Improves management decision making](#)
- **Updated Compliance Training Program**
 - The [UT System](#) and the [Texas A&M System](#) both provide general compliance training for all new employees. These programs are intended to help employees gain an understanding of the laws, rules, regulations and [policies](#) that govern employees when they carry out official duties.
 - New employee training modules at Dallas College should cover topics such as:
 - [Information Resources Compliance](#)
 - [ADA Accommodations](#)
 - [Equal Employment Opportunity](#)
 - [Harassment Prevention](#)
 - [Drug-Free and Weapon-Limited Training](#)
 - [Ethics](#)
 - [Workplace Health and Safety](#)
 - [Fraud Awareness](#)
 - [Texas Public Information Act](#)
 - [Hiring Committee Training – ADA, EEOC, Information Resources Compliance](#)
 - Refresher training should also be provided to [current](#) employees at least every two years.
- **Dual Credit Professional Development**
 - Because of our large Dual Credit and Early College High School population, Dallas College should provide consistent training for all [student-facing](#) employees in the following areas to bring us closer in line to TEA requirements:
 - [Emergency Response Training](#)
 - [Suicide Prevention](#)
 - [Positive Behavior Preventions](#)
 - [Digital Learning](#)
 - [Mental Health and Substance Abuse](#)
 - [Trauma-Informed Care](#)
 - How grief and trauma affect student learning and behavior and how evidence-based, grief-informed, and trauma-informed strategies support the academic success of students affected by grief and trauma; and
 - [Bullying Prevention](#)
 - Preventing, identifying, responding to and reporting incidents of bullying.
 - [Sexual Abuse and Trafficking](#)



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| What is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder? | TAMU Compliance Training | UW Tools for Evaluating Applicants |
| CDC – Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences | UTMB New Compliance Training | Brown University Guide to Diversifying Faculty Searches |
| CDC – About the CDC-Kaiser ACE Study | UT System Compliance Training | Oprah Winfrey – Treating Childhood Trauma - CBS |
| How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime | Texas State Required Training | |

DISCRIMINATION AND DOLLARS



Employment discrimination imposes significant financial harm on businesses, introducing inefficiencies and costs that cut into profits and undermine businesses' bottom lines.

ECONOMIC COSTS OF DISCRIMINATION

VS

FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF FAIRNESS



Recruitment

When employers hire individuals based on job-irrelevant characteristics, businesses are left with a substandard workforce that diminishes their ability to generate healthy profits.



Retention

Discrimination needlessly forces out otherwise qualified individuals from employment, introducing significant turnover related costs to replace the departing employee — costs that could have instead been spent on primary business operations.



Job Performance And Productivity

Discrimination and hostility toward minoritized workers represents an unnecessary distraction that prevents them from performing their core functions on the job.



Marketing to Students

When companies discriminate and allow unfairness to go unchecked in the workplace, they risk alienating the minoritized consumer markets, a market that wields a cumulative spending power of nearly \$2 trillion.



Litigation

Workplace discrimination exposes business to potentially costly lawsuits.

There's a price
to be paid for
workplace discrimination –
\$64 Billion

That amount represents the ANNUAL estimated cost of losing and replacing more than 2 million American workers who leave their jobs each year due to unfairness and discrimination.

DISCRIMINATION STIFLES JOB PERFORMANCE



RETENTION COSTS



ONE IN FOUR INDIVIDUALS

who experienced unfairness on the job say their experience strongly discourages them from recommending their employer to other potential employees.

TURNOVER COSTS



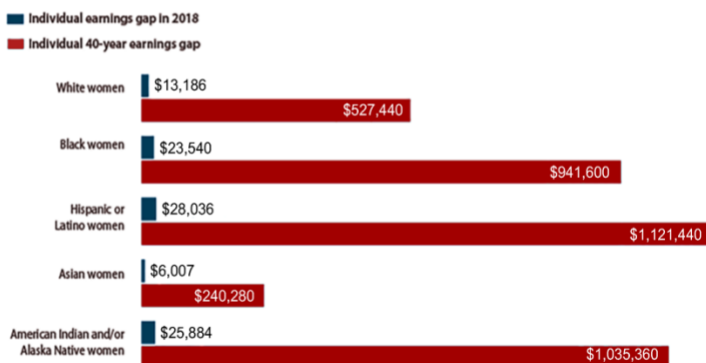
HOURLY WORKER:
Costs between \$5,000 and \$10,000 to replace a departing worker.



EXECUTIVE MAKING \$100,000 SALARY:
Costs between \$75,000 and \$211,000 to replace a departing worker.

LIFETIME CONSEQUENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

The average 2018 earnings gap for a woman balloons over the course of 40 years
Examining the gaps between 2018 median earnings for women and men working full time, year round, and extending the gaps over 40 years



FAIR POLICIES PROMOTE JOB PERFORMANCE



WHEN MARGINALIZED PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME ON THE JOB, they are more productive, trusting, loyal, entrepreneurial, and satisfied with their career. They are also physically and mentally healthier.