



**Deeper Dive Into  
Recent but Related Histories**

**Year 4 Survey Report**

## **Introduction**

In Year 4 of the Race & Reconciliation Initiative (RRI), we focused on TCU's recent history from 1998 to 2020 as it pertains to acknowledging and addressing the relationship to slavery, racism, and the Confederacy. As we embarked upon our study, TCU marked the sesquicentennial of its founding in 1873. Therefore, we begin this survey report by acknowledging and honoring TCU's first one hundred and fifty years while engaged in a deeper dive into its recent history of race and racism. We also honor the land that the TCU campus is located as the ancestral and historical homeland of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. Engagement in this work required that we be intentional and genuine in our approach. We come to this work with community driven practices, compassion, and care. Community allows us to be mindful of the space we hold rooted in safety, sympathy, and security with individuals from historically marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds whose narratives are centered in our work. These populations include Indigenous, Black, Hispanic and Latinx, Asian Pacific American, and many other identities. Compassion reminds us to allow those whose narratives are being shared to be the tellers of their own stories from their perspectives and provide them with the autonomy to shape the future for TCU. Care takes into consideration the open way we acknowledge and reconcile TCU's history while honoring the present to build and sustain a brighter future.

We also acknowledge the numerous events that deeply impacted the work of race and reconciliation during the years 1998 to 2020. Chief among them is the global outbreak of coronavirus – an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome. The

pandemic had a deadly and devastating worldwide effect.<sup>1</sup> We address the ways in which coronavirus, racism, white supremacy, and other national events impacted the experiences of TCU community members from 1998 to 2020. Coronavirus impacted the way higher education and the world at large operates daily with a sudden shift to fully remote education at the height of the pandemic. On the other hand, pandemics such as racism and white supremacy, systems of oppression that permeate society, cause tensions between races, and favor one group over another. Members of the TCU community, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, and affiliates, whose experiences have been shaped by these pandemics, shared their narratives.

Past survey reports addressed TCU's history with individuals from historically marginalized U.S. racial and ethnic backgrounds that include Black, Asian Pacific American, Latinx, and Indigenous peoples, along with numerous other identities. These survey reports spanned from TCU's founding years to its transition to integration. In Year 4, we conduct a deeper dive of these populations and communities. We highlight the impact of ongoing pandemics with ties to race and racism given the key themes of leadership, student involvement, academics, athletics, and infrastructure at TCU. Each of these themes is interconnected as it pertains to the driving forces of students' voices and narratives in a push for change and greater inclusion among students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds. As early as 1971, Black students have made demands for structural changes to support their inclusion; as we document below. Students have repeated such demands over the last two decades, in some cases, enacting important improvements to our campus. Hence, we find it critical to address these demands as well as how they contributed to or challenged the need for progressive change

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<sup>1</sup> David M. Morens, Gregory K. Folkers, and Anthony S. Fauci, "What is a Pandemic?," *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 200, no. 7 (2009): 1018-1021.

at the university. As we explore below, TCU leadership, student involvement, academics, athletics, and infrastructure supported these changes over the last twenty years.

Year 4 starts in 1998, when Michael Ferrari began his tenure as chancellor and extends to 2020, the year in which Victor Boschini Jr., chancellor of TCU, charged Provost Teresa Abi-Nader Dahlberg, with establishing the Race & Reconciliation Initiative (RRI). RRI began in the wake of campus and nationwide reckoning about race, especially anti-Black violence, including the murder of George Floyd in May 2020.<sup>2</sup> As an initiative fully supportive of TCU’s transition to an inclusive institution, RRI, through its work, also honors the ancestral homelands, the original homelands of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes.<sup>3</sup> During 1998 to 2020, TCU underwent a significant expansion in culture, curriculum, construction, conference affiliations, and climate. We address TCU’s leadership, student involvement, academics, athletics, and infrastructure.

## Leadership

Administrative leadership is central in supporting the efforts of the university. TCU’s chancellor serves as the chief executive officer who is charged with “prioritizing and advancing TCU’s academic mission, vision, and the strategic goals set forth by the Board of Trustees in planning for the next generation of Horned Frogs.”<sup>4</sup> While many administrators, faculty, staff and students have played important roles in TCU’s race relations, the chancellor has led efforts to address and improve our campus. We also examine the role of student voices in expressing their needs and guiding leadership to make changes that aid in students’ sense of belonging and

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<sup>2</sup> Frederick Gooding, Jr., “TCU Race & Reconciliation Initiative: Telling Y(Our) TCU Story,” interview by Jenay Willis, September 20, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> Scott Langston, *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Understanding the “TCU” in TCU*, 2019. <https://addran.tcu.edu/files/DEI-Understanding-the-TCU-in-TCU-April-2019.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> “The Chancellor,” TCU Office of the Chancellor and President, accessed 11 July 2024, <https://chancellor.tcu.edu/the-chancellor/>

retention. First, we address the leadership of Michael Ferrari as the ninth chancellor and Victor Boschini, Jr. as the tenth chancellor as they pertain to TCU's history with slavery, racism, and the Confederacy, given that Ferrari and Boschini centered the voices of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds.

### **Michael “Mick” Ferrari’s Leadership (1998-2003)**

In 1998, TCU experienced a significant shift in leadership as Michael “Mick” Ferrari was appointed the first chancellor who did not have an affiliation with the Disciples of Christ Church. As addressed in the previous survey reports, the Disciples of Christ is an affiliation with a longstanding connection to TCU through the university’s founders, Randolph and Addison Clark, who were ministers for the Disciples of Christ. Ferrari’s leadership ushered in a new era at TCU with a heightened focus on inclusivity and increased diversity.

TCU’s appointment of Ferrari as the ninth chancellor coincided with the university’s 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Ferrari’s bold vision for the university included the establishment of a Council on Diversity, which was designed to support Ferrari’s push for increased campus diversity as one of ten goals he envisioned for TCU. The Council, led by Cornell Thomas, who was named a special assistant to the Chancellor for diversity and community, comprised approximately of fifteen faculty, staff, students, alumni, and campus community members. Members were nominated or selected based on recommendations made to Ferrari from deans, the affirmative action committee, and faculty and student leaders.<sup>5</sup>

The Council was charged with a plethora of responsibilities to support efforts to diversify the campus community racially and culturally. Responsibilities included establishing programs

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<sup>5</sup> “Fall 1998 Trustee Report: TCU Trustees approve academic and athletics improvement package,” *TCU This Week: Events and Information for the TCU Community*, November 23, 1998.

to support and improve diversity among campus partners; recommending policies pertaining to diversity, curriculum, student life and university governance; managing or minimizing adverse diversity issues; measuring progress and providing annual written reports to Ferrari and the university community on increased intercultural and diversity development; sponsoring programming, workshops and speakers on diversity topics; and, working in close partnership with faculty, staff, and student groups, advising on increased diversity efforts.<sup>6</sup> Some of the accomplishments by the Council on Diversity included increasing minority student enrollment (from 8 percent of the freshman class in 1998 to 13 percent in 2001, with an overall increase of the undergraduate minority students from 12 percent in 1998 to 13 percent in 2001); establishing an annual Conference on Inclusiveness for students, faculty, and staff in 1999; and, creating the Community Scholars Program in 2000. In addition to the freshman class, it is important to note the overall student population breakdown (undergraduate and graduate combined) from 1999 to 2003. Enrollment of students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds fluctuated for some and increased for others from 1999 to 2003. In 1999, Asian Pacific Americans constituted 2.1 percent of the population and in 2003, that number decreased by 0.1 percent, making up 2 percent of the student population. Indigenous students made up a total of 0.8 percent of TCU's population and in 2003, this number decreased by 0.3 percent, making up 0.5 percent of the student population. Black students made up 4.2 percent of the student population in 1999 and rose to 5.5 percent in 2003. Similarly, the Hispanic student population increased from 5.3 percent in 1999 to 6.1 percent by 2003.<sup>7</sup> Each of these accomplishments

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<sup>6</sup> "Fall 1998 Trustee Report: TCU Trustees approve academic and athletics improvement package," *TCU This Week: Events and Information for the TCU Community*, November 23, 1998

<sup>7</sup> "Texas Christian University Facts and Data," Office of Institutional Research, 2003, accessed 11 July 2024, <https://ir.tcu.edu/facts-data/archived-facts-data/>

created new challenges, which will be addressed further in the student involvement, academics, and athletics sections.

Ferrari is remembered for his tenacious leadership during a significant transition on our campus: student enrollment reached a peak of 8,000 for the first time in the university's history and minority enrollment increased. Ferrari also established an intentional partnership between the university and Fort Worth to "enrich the city's intellectual, economic, and cultural development." Finally, TCU athletic teams grew in prominence because of conference changes.<sup>8</sup>

### **Victor Boschini's Leadership (2003-2020)**

Victor Boschini was named the tenth chancellor of TCU on June 11, 2003, and remains in leadership presently. Having led TCU far longer than Ferrari, Boschini has inspired even more dynamic transformations in student involvement, academics, athletics, and infrastructure. Each of these will be addressed respectively in the sections to follow. In an interview for the RRI Oral History Project, Boschini described his vision of working towards racial reparations and healing, "I always say it like this, it's like world peace; you may never reach it, but you better damn well be working towards it every day of your life."<sup>9</sup> Boschini is credited for expanding TCU's presence nationally while ensuring that the university has thrived through a period of growth, global economic uncertainty, and an unprecedented global pandemic.<sup>10</sup>

Having led the University for a little less than two decades, Boschini has made considerable strides to address TCU's race relations tied to the history of slavery, racism, and the

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<sup>8</sup> "Remembering Former TCU chancellor Michael Ferrari," *TCU 360*, May 19, 2015, accessed 11 July 2024. <https://tcu360.com/2015/05/19/34390remembering-former-tcu-chancellor-michael-ferrari/>

<sup>9</sup> Victor J. Boschini, Jr., interview by Sylviane Greensword, TCU Race & Reconciliation Initiative: Oral History Project, March 2, 2021. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/63665>

<sup>10</sup> "Victor J. Boschini, Jr.," TCU Office of the Chancellor and President, accessed 11 July 2024. <https://chancellor.tcu.edu/the-chancellor/biography/>

Confederacy. His leadership as chancellor did not come without challenges. Since 2003, minority enrollment has both increased and fluctuated. As TCU's student enrollment grew, it also nurtured students with greater agency and involvement in addressing racial tensions and economic uncertainty. During Boschini's leadership, faculty revised its core curriculum to ensure greater exposure and skills in navigating diversity and established programs in ethnic and area studies. Outside the classroom, TCU was often in the public eye with significant shifts in athletic conference and high profile successes; sometimes, too, athletics garnered negative attention due to racial tensions faced by student athletes. Infrastructure at TCU has undergone significant change under Boschini's leadership. Because of student advocacy in cultivating and sustaining their sense of belonging, TCU has also made some important changes to its environment to cultivate racial inclusion. Over the last ten years, in particular, TCU has established new spaces and erected new monuments and portraits that represent those identifying as Indigenous, Black, Hispanic and Latinx, and Asian Pacific American.

Each of the strides made under Boschini's leadership to address race relations and create a socially just environment has not gone without challenges. Efforts to achieve a socially just campus climate to foster progressive change relies upon collective efforts, to which some members of the campus community and broader Fort Worth community must agree. It was not always the case. However, TCU under Boschini's leadership, continues to do the work necessary to repair, reconcile, rebuild, as well as forge a brighter future for our campus community.

### **Student Involvement**

Student involvement at colleges and universities is crucial for holistic development. It fosters a sense of belonging, enhances academic performance, and cultivates leadership skills. Through extracurricular activities, students hone teamwork, time management, and



communication abilities essential for their future careers. Involvement in clubs, sports, and community service promotes social integration and cultural understanding, and fosters a diverse and inclusive environment. As we address the significance of student involvement from 1998 to 2020, we examine TCU's history of student activism and student-led organizations, which contribute to the collective student voice, and play a vital role in shaping the university.

Over the last twenty years, student activism across TCU's campus has served as a catalyst for positive as well as progressive change. Historically, student movements have sparked significant societal transformations, such as the broadening of civil rights for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Pacific American, and LGBT people, or campus political protests regarding the Vietnam War. Such movements cultivate leadership skills, foster empathy, and empower future generations to confront injustice.<sup>11</sup> Through ongoing activism, students have challenged norms, demanded accountability, and advocated for change on issues ranging from civil rights to environmental sustainability.<sup>12</sup> Consistently, students from various marginalized and underrepresented backgrounds were at the forefront of TCU student activism calling for greater diversity and cultural change on campus and beyond.

A college or university's racial climate profoundly influences students, shaping their sense of belonging, academic performance, and overall well-being. Negative racial tensions can create feelings of isolation, fear, and insecurity among marginalized groups, hindering their academic and social experiences. Over the last ten years, particularly an epidemic of anti-Black, anti-Muslim, and anti-immigrant violence was evident in the U.S. During and following the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, an escalation in racist political rhetoric intensified the isolation, fear,

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<sup>11</sup> Robert A. Rhoads, "Student activism, diversity, and the struggle for a just society," *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 9, no. 3 (2016): 189-202.

<sup>12</sup> Becki Eatch and Jennifer Iannacone, "The importance of students and their use of power through student activism," *Journal of Student Affairs* no. 5 (1996): 17-29.

and insecurity felt by historically underrepresented students across the nation, who often faced bias, microaggressions, and discrimination on and off campus.<sup>13</sup> TCU was not exempt from these various issues. In response to the unjust killing of Black teenager, Trayvon Martin, in 2012, TCU students and members of the TCU National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) organized a silent march, “Walking Colors,” to raise awareness regarding anti-Black hatred and violence as well as to advocate for justice.<sup>14</sup> This was the beginning of social and political discontent at TCU as students from historically marginalized racial and ethnic groups advocated for inclusion, accountability, and equity at the institution.

Shortly after the murder of Trayvon Martin, the 2016 U.S. presidential election was marked by significant social and political unrest. Both major party candidates, Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, elicited strong reactions from the public. Trump’s controversial rhetoric, particularly regarding immigration, race, and gender, fueled protests and demonstrations across the country. Issues such as income inequality, healthcare, and foreign policy also sparked intense debate.<sup>15</sup> Social media played a pivotal role in disseminating information and shaping public opinion, often exacerbating polarization. The election outcome, with Trump winning the presidency despite losing the popular vote, further deepened divisions and led to continued activism and scrutiny of the administration's policies.<sup>16</sup> Many colleges and universities, TCU included, protested this harmful and racist rhetoric, especially as it targeted students of Latinx origin. Mayra Guardiola, a graduate student in English, organized a “Defend DACA” protest on

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<sup>13</sup> Landon D. Reid and Phanikiran Radhakrishnan, “Race matters: the relation between race and general campus climate,” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 9, no. 3 (2003): 263-75.

<sup>14</sup> “TCU NAACP to Host March for Trayvon Martin,” *TCU 360*, April 2, 2012, accessed 3 May 2024. <https://tcu360.com/2012/04/02/15001tcu-naacp-host-march-trayvon-martin/>

<sup>15</sup> Lucia Trimbur, “Taking a Knee, Making a Stand: Social Justice, Trump America, and the Politics of Sport,” *Quest* 71, no. 2 (2019): 252-265.

<sup>16</sup> Kristina Clement, “More than Free Speech: Politics, Higher Education, and the First Amendment” (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 2020). <https://doi.org/10.57709/17624685>.

campus in response to President Trump's decision to issue a deadline of six months for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Although Boschini sent a campus-wide email in response, stating the DACA decision "created a great deal of uncertainty," many campus community members were frustrated over the lack of a stronger response to support DACA.<sup>17</sup>

Building upon the DACA protest, TCU students from marginalized groups voiced their dissatisfaction to the administration by organizing a silent protest at a TCU football game and posting public letters that highlighted the struggles of students of color and the need for cultural and policy changes. During this time in 2016, Colin Kaepernick, quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, began a series of silent protests to raise awareness of racial injustice and police brutality against Black individuals across the United States. Rather than standing during the national anthem before games, Kaepernick chose to kneel silently.<sup>18</sup> This action was highly visible, drawing attention and strong, often negative reaction from some fans, media, fellow players, but students of color at TCU applauded the gesture. In fact, a group of students organized a silent protest at TCU's football game against Iowa State in September 2016 in solidarity with Colin Kaepernick. Following the silent protest during the National Anthem, a letter titled "Letter from Black Students and Allies of TCU" was sent to the administration in December 2016 with over fourteen demands listed to enhance diversity, inclusion, and accountability on campus. The students called for a zero-tolerance policy for racially insensitive speech, an increase in faculty of color, sensitivity training for all members of the TCU community, and accurate reporting on diversity progress. Additionally, demands highlighted

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<sup>17</sup> "Move to End DACA is Met with Protest," *TCU 360*, September 6, 2017, accessed 11 July 2024. <https://tcu360.com/2017/09/06/move-to-end-daca-is-met-with-protest/>

<sup>18</sup> Katelyn Foltz, "RESEARCH NOTE: The (Re)-Education of Colin Kaepernick, the social protest he led, and his quest to work in the National Football League," *Journal of Higher Education Athletics & Innovation* 1, no. 10 (2022): 58-67.

students' need for a multicultural center, housing for multicultural Greek organizations, and required cultural sensitivity training for Greek life. Further requests involved creating ethnic studies courses, hiring a chief officer of diversity and inclusion, and lowering the flag in honor of victims of racial violence. The demands stressed the importance of systemic and cultural change while ensuring protection for those involved in the process.<sup>19</sup>

While some of the 2016 demands were implemented, TCU's issues with race, ethnicity, and diversity could not be fixed overnight. In November 2017, a letter titled "Letter from Black Students to TCU Department Heads" circulated among TCU administrators and expressed student discontent with the institution.<sup>20</sup> The letter addressed the pervasive diversity problem at TCU, highlighting issues of race, culture, religion, socioeconomic status, immigration status, sexual orientation, and gender. It criticized the university's failure to address these issues despite TCU's mission that emphasized ethical leadership and responsible citizenship. The letter expressed frustration with the lack of action following discussions with university leaders in October 2016 and accused TCU of silencing student concerns. It questioned the university's commitment to inclusiveness, tolerance, and service, citing examples of discrimination and unequal resource allocation. The letter concluded by urging TCU to confront these issues and uphold its core values by fostering open dialogue and addressing systemic inequalities.

While TCU began to enact significant structural changes to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, three lawsuits brought against the university suggested problems remained. One of the lawsuits alleged that the dean of the John V. Roach Honors College engaged in mistreatment and

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<sup>19</sup> "Letter from Black Students & Allies of TCU," *TCU Race & Reconciliation Initiative*, accessed 3 May 2024. <https://www.tcu.edu/race-reconciliation-initiative/conversations/posts/black-students-allies-tcu-2016.php>

<sup>20</sup> "Letter from Black Students to TCU Department Heads," *TCU Race & Reconciliation Initiative*, accessed 3 May 2024. <https://www.tcu.edu/race-reconciliation-initiative/conversations/posts/letter-black-students-to-tcu-department-heads.php>

racial discrimination of a student during a month-long course in Washington, D.C. during the summer of 2019. In response, TCU stated that it was committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all students and would be investigating the allegations.<sup>21</sup> This lawsuit as well as the student-led Coalition for University Justice and Change (CUJE) accelerated the pace of change to address the various forms of discrimination that students from minoritized and marginalized identities faced at TCU.<sup>22</sup> The objective of the coalition was to ensure that TCU upheld its pledge to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. This list of demands included a written assurance from TCU's Board of Trustees to establish an on-campus cross-cultural center within the next three years.

### **The Importance of Student-Led Organizations**

Student-led organizations that focus on ethnic identities play a crucial role at colleges and universities for several reasons. They can provide a supportive community for students of diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment. These student-led organizations offer spaces where students can freely express their cultural heritage, share experiences, and celebrate traditions, enriching campus life.<sup>23</sup> Student-led organizations that focus on ethnic identities also serve as platforms for advocacy and activism, addressing systemic issues such as discrimination, inequality, and cultural insensitivity on campus. Through educational initiatives, events, and campaigns, student-led organizations raise awareness and promote social justice,

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<sup>21</sup> “Honors Student Says Washington, D.C. Trip was Miserable; Chancellor Calls for Faculty Training,” *TCU360*, February 3, 2020, accessed 3 May 2024. <https://tcu360.com/2020/02/03/honors-student-says-washington-d-c-trip-was-miserable-chancellor-calls-for-faculty-training/>

<sup>22</sup> “CUJE List of Demands, January 2020” *TCU Race & Reconciliation Initiative*, accessed 3 May 2024. <https://www.tcu.edu/race-reconciliation-initiative/conversations/posts/cuje-list-of-demands-january-2020.php>

<sup>23</sup> Samuel D. Museus, “The Role of Ethnic Student Organizations in Fostering African American and Asian American Students’ Cultural Adjustment and Membership at Predominantly White Institutions,” *Journal of College Student Development* 49, no. 6 (2008): 568-586.

contributing to a more inclusive and equitable university environment. Moreover, these organizations enhance diversity and multicultural understanding within the broader campus community.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, student-led organizations that focus on ethnic identities often provide valuable leadership and networking opportunities for their members, helping them to develop important skills such as communication, organization, and advocacy. These experiences can empower students to become effective agents of change both on campus and in wider society.<sup>25</sup> At TCU, student-led organizations focusing on ethnic identities are pivotal for nurturing a diverse and inclusive campus culture. They provide spaces for students of different backgrounds to find community, celebrate their diverse cultures, and share in similar lived experiences. These student-led organizations promote cross-cultural understanding, combat stereotypes, and contribute to a more welcoming environment. Additionally, these student-led organizations empower students to advocate for their needs and raise awareness about issues of social justice, ensuring that TCU continues to reflect its commitment to inclusivity.

At many colleges and universities, student-led organizations such as the Student Government Association (SGA) enable students to elect and vote for their peers to represent them to ensure their needs are being met and their collective voices are heard.<sup>26</sup> Considering this, in 2002, the TCU Student Government Association established the Inclusiveness Task Force, which was a student-led committee that tackled issues addressing diversity and inclusion. The

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<sup>24</sup> Nicholas A. Bowman, Julie J. Park, and Nida Denson, "Student Involvement in Ethnic Student Organizations: Examining Civic Outcomes 6 years after Graduation," *Research in Higher Education* 56 (2015): 127-145.

<sup>25</sup> Julie J. Park and Young K. Kim, "Interracial Friendship and Structural Diversity: Trends for Greek, Religious, and Ethnic Student Organizations," *The Review of Higher Education* 37, no. 1 (2013): 1-24.

<sup>26</sup> Alf Lizzio and Keithia Wilson, "Student Participation in University Governance: The Role Conceptions and Sense of Efficacy of Student Representatives on Departmental Committees," *Studies in Higher Education* 34, no. 1 (2009): 69-84.

Inclusiveness Task Force was a great addition to the already established Council on Diversity led by Cornell Thomas, described earlier. The Inclusiveness Task Force and the Chancellor's Council on Diversity enabled minoritized and marginalized student voices and lived experiences to be amplified and considered when issues regarding diversity and inclusion were being discussed.<sup>27</sup>

The formation of student-led organizations that focused on ethnic identities was especially crucial for students from marginalized and minoritized backgrounds attending private, predominantly white institutions such as TCU. At TCU, many Black student-led organizations were among the first established and were at the forefront when it came to addressing issues regarding race, diversity, equity, and inclusion. One organization in particular, the Black Student Caucus (BSC), which was active from 1982 to 1997, actively worked on ensuring the voices and needs of Black students at the TCU campus were heard. From hosting events such as the "Black Student Caucus Lecture Series" to partnering with various departments and other student-led organizations on campus, BSC worked to promote and amplify issues that Black students were facing at TCU and beyond. Darron Turner, Director of Minority Affairs, cited low attendance and lack of engagement as reasons for the disbandment of the Black Student Caucus in 1997.<sup>28</sup>

An important legacy of the Black Student Caucus was TCU's Black Alumni Alliance, established in 1999, which recruited its initial membership from the BSC. The Black Alumni Alliance operated under TCU's Alumni Association and aimed to offer culturally enriching and educational programs for its members and to create opportunities for Black alumni to engage

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<sup>27</sup> Jioni A. Lewis, Ruby Mendenhall, Ashley Ojiemwen, Merin Thomas, Cameron Riopelle, Stacy Anne Harwood, and Margaret Browne Hunt, "Racial Microaggressions and Sense of Belonging at a Historically White University," *American Behavioral Scientist* 65, no. 8 (2021): 1049-1071.

<sup>28</sup> "Black Student Caucus," TCU Mary Counts Burnett Library, accessed 3 May 2024.  
<https://naming.tcu.edu/authorities/9161/black-student-caucus>

with the University community, including interactions with current students and fellow alumni. Moreover, the BAA endeavors to foster a supportive environment for its members by organizing programming, community service initiatives, and social gatherings centered around cultural appreciation and connection.<sup>29</sup> Since the 1990s, Black student-led organizations such as the TCU chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Black Student Association (BSA) made their presence evident across the University by celebrating Black culture, providing academic and professional support, and advocating for racial equity. These Black student-led organizations promote cultural enrichment, academic success, and social activism, contributing to a more inclusive campus environment for all students.

Much like Black student-led organizations at TCU, several organizations promoting community for Latinx and Latin American students, since the 1980s, have promoted student networking, professionalization, and community support. The student-led organizations on TCU's campus, some of which are still active, include the Organization of Latin American Students (1988 - 2006), the Hispanic Alumni Alliance (HAA) (2004-present), the League of United Latin American Citizens (2006-2010), the United Latino Association (2010-2022), and more recently the United Latinx Association, whose motto is "unifying the diverse Latinx students at TCU with a desire to promote academic excellence in our community."<sup>30</sup> Throughout the years, Latinx students and community members have put on various events and initiatives to promote and uplift the greater Latinx community at TCU. From hosting Hispanic Heritage Month events on campus since the late 1980s, to advocating for DACA students during the 2016

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<sup>29</sup> "TCU Forming First Ever Black Alumni Organization," *TCU This Week: Events and Information for the TCU Community*, June 21, 1999.

<sup>30</sup> TCU United Latinx Association (@tcuula), Instagram, accessed 3 May 2024.

[https://www.instagram.com/tcuula?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_button\\_share\\_sheet&igshid=ZDNIZDc0MzIxNw](https://www.instagram.com/tcuula?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet&igshid=ZDNIZDc0MzIxNw)



presidential election, the Latinx community continues to make its presence known at TCU. The founding of the TCU Hispanic Alumni Alliance in 2004 encouraged Latinx students and alumni to continue to give back to future Latinx students at TCU.<sup>31</sup> HAA fosters communication and collaboration among Hispanic Alumni and TCU. Its objectives include community service, mentoring current and prospective students, promoting cultural awareness, and supporting access to higher education through the Greg Trevino Memorial Scholarship. With the growing number of Latinx students attending TCU, it is imperative for administration to continuously support existing student-led organizations for these students.

In the 1990s, as increasing Asian and Asian American students enrolled at TCU, various Asian ethnic groups worked diligently at being seen and heard at TCU. Through student-led organizations such as the United Asian Community, Students for Asian Indian Cultural Awareness, and Asian Student Association, many social events and educational sessions that highlighted the diverse cultures and experiences of the Asian students at TCU were held. In 1999, TCU's Asian community hosted the institution's first-ever "Asian Festival." Michael Ly, president of the Asian Student Association, described to the *TCU Daily Skiff* that the purpose of the festival was to expose students to different Asian cultures through food, dance, and education. Events like these at TCU highlighted the ever-growing population of various ethnic groups who were settling within the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.<sup>32</sup> In the late 2010s, TCU saw an increase in its international student population. This population made up five percent of TCU's student body.<sup>33</sup> In particular, a vast number of international students at TCU during this

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<sup>31</sup> "Hispanic Alumni Alliance," *TCU Alumni*, accessed 3 May 2024. <https://alumni.tcu.edu/new/hispanic-alumni-association>

<sup>32</sup> "Asian Festival," *Skiff*, April 21, 1999.

<sup>33</sup> "Texas Christian University Facts and Data," Office of Institutional Research, 2014, accessed 3 May 2024, <https://ir.tcu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Fall2014.pdf>

time came from Vietnam; many of these Vietnamese students at TCU came together in 2013 to form the student-led Vietnamese Student Association (VSA), with the goal of spreading awareness about Vietnamese culture, representing Vietnamese students' voices on campus, and enhancing TCU's student unity.<sup>34</sup>

Like many colleges and universities across the United States, TCU was established on Indigenous land. In addition to acknowledging this history, TCU has long had a small population of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty members on TCU's campus. Indigenous communities have historically been marginalized and their voices silenced or ignored.<sup>35</sup> Supporting and amplifying their voices in higher education is a step towards rectifying this historical injustice. Indigenous perspectives enrich the academic discourse. Also, Indigenous knowledge systems, cultures, and experiences offer unique insights that can enhance learning for all students.<sup>36</sup> This is why empowering Indigenous students contributes to their academic success and well-being. A prominent student-led organization at TCU that has and continues to advocate for Indigenous students while centering this population's voices and needs is the TCU Native and Indigenous Students Association (NISA). Established in the 1990s, NISA came into existence under the leadership of four Indigenous students - Kathleen Whitekiller (Cherokee), Robyn Mitchell (Diné), Tabitha Tan (Diné), and Mike Charlie (Navajo). Since its establishment, NISA has engaged in hosting events during Native American Heritage Month, co-sponsored the annual Native American and Indigenous People's Day Symposium, and been part of the movement to

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<sup>34</sup> "Vietnamese Student Association Seeks to Bring Cultural Diversity to Campus," *TCU 360*, November 9, 2015, accessed 3 May 2024.

<https://tcu360.com/?s=Vietnamese+Student+Association+Seeks+to+Bring+Cultural+Diversity+to+Campus>

<sup>35</sup> Michelle Pidgeon, "More than a Checklist: Meaningful Indigenous Inclusion in Higher Education," *Social Inclusion* 4, no.1 (2016): 77-91.

<sup>36</sup> Teresa McCarty and Tiffany Lee, "Critical Culturally Sustaining/Revitalizing Pedagogy and Indigenous Education sovereignty," *Harvard Educational Review* 84, no. 1 (2014): 101-124.

help establish a monument on campus acknowledging and honoring the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes and all Native Americans who have lived since time immemorial in what we now call North Texas.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, NISA supported the founding and implementation of the Native American and Indigenous Peoples' Initiative at TCU. Supporting Indigenous student-led organizations such as NISA at TCU aligns with supporting the efforts of decolonization and reconciliation. By acknowledging and valuing Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, colleges can contribute to healing historical traumas and building stronger, more equitable societies.

As student activism has enacted change and inclusion on campus, so too student-led organizations have made their mark. One recent and effective tool that student-led organizations have been able to utilize to amplify their collective voices is social media. The collective student voice at TCU encompasses the engagement of student activism as well as student-led organizations to facilitate change to ensure that students' identification of their needs are heard and responded to across the university. The last twenty years have repeatedly illustrated what positive change can occur when students are on the front lines of creating and implementing such transformations.

## **Academics**

As the section on student involvement notes, TCU's academics changed dramatically over the last twenty years, as students, faculty, staff, and administration sought to diversify the campus and promote a more inclusive space for all. With the addition of now standing initiatives to recruit and support highly talented students of color, such as the Community Scholars and

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<sup>37</sup> Tabitha Tan, "Resilience Kicks In: An Interview with Tabitha Tan (Diné)," in *Being in Relation: Indigenous Peoples, the Land, and Texas Christian University, 1873-2023*, ed. C. Annette Anderson, Theresa Strouth Gaul and Scott M. Langston (TCU Press, 2024); TCU Native & Indigenous Students Association (@tcunisa), Instagram, accessed 3 May 2024.

[https://www.instagram.com/tcu.nisa/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_button\\_share\\_sheet&igshid=ZDNlZDc0MzIxNw](https://www.instagram.com/tcu.nisa/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet&igshid=ZDNlZDc0MzIxNw)

STEM Scholars programs, as well as building on existing TRiO programs such as the Upward Bound and McNair Programs, TCU faculty twice revised the core curriculum, began to develop new courses, and established new interdisciplinary programs in ethnic or area studies to provide all TCU students with the knowledge and skills to live and thrive in diverse communities.

In 1989, the U.S. Department of Education created the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. A TRiO program (that is, a federal outreach and student services program tasked with identifying and providing services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds), the McNair program was designed to prepare undergraduates from underrepresented backgrounds for doctoral studies.<sup>38</sup> In 1991, TCU joined this program and the U.S. Department of Education awarded the university \$400,000 for the next three years to help serve marginalized communities from low-income and first-generation backgrounds. During the first year of McNair, the university was able to fund twenty students, ten of whom were freshmen and sophomores, and ten of whom were juniors and seniors.<sup>39</sup> TCU's McNair Program joined the existing Upward Bound Program, established at TCU in 1970, which served academically disadvantaged high school students in the area to encourage these individuals to attend universities through tutoring, mentorship, and going to the TCU campus during the summer.<sup>40</sup> Adding to these two distinctive TRiO programs, TCU established the Student Support Services in 1997, an attempt to retain undergraduates, boost their grade point averages, support on-time graduation, and encourage these individuals to pursue post-graduate degrees.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Edward J. McElroy and Maria Armesto, "TRIO and Upward Bound: History, Programs, and Issues-Past, Present, and Future," *The Journal of Negro Education* 67. No. 4 (Autumn 1998). 373-380.

<sup>39</sup> Lisa Silver, "Grant Encourages Minorities to Get TCU Education," *Skiff*, October 8, 1992. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/45708>; Greg Weed, "Grant Ready for Minorities, Under-represented Students," *Skiff*, October 24, 1991. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/17364>

<sup>40</sup> Cindy Rugeley, "High School Students Aided by Program," *Skiff*, April 6, 1977. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/15973>

<sup>41</sup> Kristina D'Aun Bosquez, "TRIO Helps Expand Students' Resources," *Skiff*, October 24, 1997. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/17967>

Despite some preliminary attempts to address the lack of diversity on the TCU campus in the 1990s, many people argued – [recalling the Black student demands of 1971](#) – that the university could do more by recruiting talented local students from predominantly non-white high schools to TCU.<sup>42</sup> In 2000, TCU created the Community Scholars program as a way to give full tuition, fees, housing, and books to underrepresented high school students who did not have the financial resources to attend TCU on their own. Students who received this scholarship had to maintain rigorous standards as they had to be active in Student Support Services, complete community services, meet monthly with program advisors, attend intercultural meetings, participate in the Leadership Council, and attend four monthly workshops.<sup>43</sup> By 2020, the Community Scholars Program had expanded to support, cumulatively, 500 students from across thirteen majority-minority Dallas-Fort Worth high schools.<sup>44</sup> In 2017, TCU established the STEM Scholars program, which similarly provides a four-year comprehensive scholarship, academic support, and leadership development to increase the number of the best and brightest students who show a commitment to diversity and inclusion in STEM fields.

Yet even with all these distinctive programs designed to help underrepresented communities attend and thrive at TCU, state and national events involving diversity, equity, and inclusion complicated these efforts to diversify the student body at TCU. One of the most consequential court decisions to affect higher educational policies in the late 1990s was

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<sup>42</sup> Joaquin Herrera, “Focus on Diversity: Students Question TCU’s Minority Enrollment, Committee to Discuss Answer,” *Skiff*, November 18, 1999. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/18518>; Diana Munro, “Students Speak Out,” *Skiff*, March 30, 1999. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/18134>

<sup>43</sup> Emily Ward, “New Program Attracts Area Students,” *Skiff*, December 1, 2000. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/18634>

<sup>44</sup> Rachel McDaniel, “Program Works to Counter Low Hispanic Attendance,” *Skiff*, November 15, 2007. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/45951>  
 “These Scholars Transform Our Community,” TCU Community Scholars, accessed 24 May 2024. <https://communityscholars.tcu.edu/>

*Hopwood v Texas* (1996).<sup>45</sup> Decided by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which adjudicates court cases in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, the court held that “the University of Texas School of Law may not use race as a factor in deciding which applicants to admit in order to achieve a diverse student body, to combat the perceived effects of a hostile environment at the law school, to alleviate the law school’s poor reputation in the minority community, or to eliminate any present effects of past discrimination by actors other than the law school.” When the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review the *Hopwood* ruling, it effectively banned affirmative action policies in public universities in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, albeit leaving undisturbed the nationwide constitutionality of this policy, which was established in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978).<sup>46</sup> Despite the court’s position, many Texas lawmakers pushed to rectify the situation, including John Cornyn, then-Texas Attorney General, who petitioned the Supreme Court to reverse the decision, based on “the long history of discrimination against minority students at all levels” in the Texas educational system.<sup>47</sup>

*Hopwood* considerably hampered diversity in Texas higher education, most notably in flagship public universities, such as the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M, both of which modified their admissions processes to avoid factoring race into these processes, leading to a precipitous decline in Black and Hispanic students in these schools.<sup>48</sup> In terms of TCU’s admission policies post-*Hopwood*, there was a small decline in the Black and Hispanic student body for the 1998 academic year; it was not until the early 2000s that this number recovered up

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<sup>45</sup> *Hopwood v. Texas*, 78 F.3d 932, (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1996)

<sup>46</sup> *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 438, U.S. 265 (1978); Jeremy Moeser, “Hopwood v. Texas: The Beginning of the End for Racial Preference Programs in Higher Education,” *Mercer Law Review* (1997) 48.2: 941.

<sup>47</sup> Maeve Reston, “Minorities in College: Texas Still Fights Case: Lawmakers, Officials Try to Offset Effects of ‘Hopwood’ Legal Ruling,” *Austin-American Statesman*, April 29, 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Jeremy Moeser, “Hopwood v Texas.”

to pre-*Hopwood* levels.<sup>49</sup> Feeling pressure from this court case’s decision, TCU administrators could not legally give students of color higher financial aid or scholarships based on race even as they simultaneously tried to recruit and retain students of color.<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile, Texas legislators looked for other avenues to boost diversity in colleges across the state. In 1997, Texas state representative Irma Rangel introduced a bill into the state house to correct this issue through legislation. Dubbed the Ten Percent Plan by its supporters, House Bill 588 was a “race-neutral” mechanism to increase the diversity in Texas higher education without going against the *Hopwood* decision by allowing any Texan in the top 10 percent of their graduating class to attend any state public university. On May 20, 1997, Governor George W. Bush signed the bill into law. By the start of the 1999 academic year, the enrollment of Black and Hispanic students at public flagship universities such as University of Texas and Texas A&M increased significantly.<sup>51</sup>

In 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed *Hopwood* in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, where the court confirmed the constitutionality of the affirmative action admissions procedures at the University of Michigan Law School and subsequently legalized these policies nationwide.<sup>52</sup> As public universities such as the University of Texas began to use race as a factor in admissions again, in addition to the Top Ten Percent Plan, private universities like TCU continued to evaluate students on a case-by-case basis in order to attempt “to create an environment where a

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<sup>49</sup> “Texas Christian University Facts and Data,” Office of Institutional Research, 2001, accessed 3 May 2024, <https://ir.tcu.edu/facts-data/archived-facts-data/>

<sup>50</sup> Matt Welack, “Freshman Enrollment Up as Officials Push for Diversity,” *Skiff*, September 23, 1999. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/18487>

<sup>51</sup> Matthew Watkins and Neena Satija, “How an Attempt to Boost Diversity at Texas Colleges Could Kill Affirmative Action,” *Texas Tribune*, March, 29, 2016, [https://apps.texastribune.org/price-of-admission/?\\_ga=2.171282918.779702361.1698165891-1358212124.1697558053](https://apps.texastribune.org/price-of-admission/?_ga=2.171282918.779702361.1698165891-1358212124.1697558053)

<sup>52</sup> *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539, U.S. 306 (2003)

number of ‘voices’ can be heard.”<sup>53</sup> Yet Fort Worth business leaders, student activists, and TCU administration agreed that TCU still had a long way to go in increasing racial and ethnic diversity. In 1998, only 12 percent of TCU’s undergraduate and graduate students identified as persons of color; by 2005, this had grown slightly to 14 percent of TCU’s student body.<sup>54</sup> By 2011, students of color comprised 19 percent of the student population; in 2020, 27.8 percent of TCU students identified as people of color.

Adapting structures and policies to support TCU’s changing demographics, TCU created additional programs to help benefit underrepresented students (and, later, faculty) throughout the campus. In October of 1998, TCU held its first-ever annual Diversity Institute, chaired by Cornell Thomas, who was a TCU professor of education. During this month, the “One World” celebrations held a variety of workshops seeking to educate and emphasize the importance of promoting diversity on campus.<sup>55</sup> Building on this month-long celebration of diversity, TCU founded the Diversity Council in 1999 as a way for students, staff, and faculty to discuss their perceptions of diversity and how that impacts the experiences of underprivileged groups on campus.<sup>56</sup> The Diversity Council was revived and reimaged in 2016 when the Faculty Senate established the Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, the only faculty senate committee that reported directly to the chancellor. In its first few years, the DEI Committee

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<sup>53</sup> Brent Yarina, “Officials Back Non-Discrimination Policy,” *Skiff*, February 13, 2003.

<https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/18867>

<sup>54</sup> Caitlin Tomasik, “Market Demand Requires Varied Representation,” *Skiff*, December 1, 2005.

<https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/19177>

Office of Institutional Research, “Texas Christian University Facts and Data,” 1998, accessed 3 May 2024,

<https://ir.tcu.edu/facts-data/archived-facts-data/>

Office of Institutional Research, “Texas Christian University Facts and Data,” 2005, accessed 3 May 2024,

<https://ir.tcu.edu/facts-data/archived-facts-data/>

<sup>55</sup> “The Horned Frog: A Visible Difference,” *TCU Yearbook* (1998),

<https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/11119>

<sup>56</sup> Karen Kassebeer, “Diversity Council Forms,” *Skiff*, March 9, 1999.

<https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/18126>



prompted several campus-wide adjustments and recognitions to promote positive change, from the establishment of the Chancellor's and Provost's DEI Postdoctoral Scholars Program and the DEI annual award to the passage of the DEI essential competency in the core curriculum. The DEI Committee, together with the new Office of Diversity and Inclusion, also advocated for a comprehensive DEI inventory, which ultimately influenced the decision to mark diversity and inclusion as one of the three themes that "transcend TCU's institutional goals and are key" to the TCU strategic plan, *Vision in Action: Lead On*, which was adopted in 2017.<sup>57</sup>

Alongside such faculty-driven transformations over the last twenty years, TCU built additional structures to ensure equity in academic affairs. In 2005, Darron Turner was tasked to lead the Inclusiveness and Intercultural Services unit, which among other responsibilities oversaw mentoring and advising students of color and holding diversity training for both faculty and students.<sup>58</sup> Over time, Turner's office oversaw community engagement, veteran services, assessment, affirmative action, equal employment opportunities, and faculty hiring processes. In 2018, he was named the inaugural Chief Inclusion Officer, overseeing the newly launched Office of Diversity and Inclusion, directed by Aisha Torrey-Sawyer, and the Office of Institutional Equity, led by Sharon Gooding. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) has shouldered important responsibilities in offering training to all TCU employees in best practices to promote diverse hiring, interrupting microaggressions, and mitigating unconscious bias. ODI now hosts an annual diversity conference and runs a myriad of events to mark heritage months, from Hispanic Heritage and Black History to Asian American and Pacific Islander month. ODI was

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<sup>57</sup> TCU "Vision In Action" Strategic Plan, <https://www.tcu.edu/strategic-plan/index.php>

<sup>58</sup> Caitlyn Tomasik, "Turner Heads New Department," *Skiff*, August 24, 2005. <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/19124>

also instrumental in advocating for the Inclusive Excellence framework to be adopted across the university.

Statewide legislation sought to greatly increase the level of diversity in the classroom through granting in-state undocumented students better tuition rates than before. Other transformative changes were happening in higher education legislation in Texas concerning tuition rates of undocumented Texans around the turn of the twenty-first century. To remedy this educational gap, Rick Noriega, a Democratic state representative from Houston, authored House Bill 1403 with bipartisan support to change public university tuition policies to provide all Texans, regardless of citizenship status, with in-state tuition.<sup>59</sup> After an amendment from the Texas Senate, the Texas state legislature passed the Texas DREAM Act, which provided in-state tuition for all Texans regardless of their immigration status. Governor Rick Perry signed the bill into law on June 16, 2001, and the bill immediately came into effect for the Fall 2001 semester. To get this reduced tuition cost, undocumented students needed to provide proof that they had resided in Texas for three years, attended a Texas high school, had been a dependent of a parent/guardian living in the state, and filed an application to seek permanent residency in the United States.<sup>60</sup> With the passage of the Texas Dream Act, the Texas legislature's granting of benefits to undocumented students, many of whom were Latinx, followed national trends looking to provide educational benefits to individuals with permanent residence in the United States. Although TCU, as a private university, was not directly impacted by these legislative changes, it is an important state context to TCU's efforts to recruit and retain diverse students, including those who are not U.S. citizens.

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<sup>59</sup> Chloe Sikes and Angela Valenzuela, "Texas Dream Act [House Bill 1403]," *Handbook of Texas*, Texas State Historical Association, August 23, 2016, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/texas-dream-act-house-bill-1403>

<sup>60</sup> Chloe Sikes and Angela Valenzuela, "Texas Dream Act [House Bill 1403]."

If TCU attempted to strike a balance between providing quality education and maintaining accessibility for both current and prospective students, the ever-increasing tuition over the last twenty years no doubt also impacted its efforts to promote greater student diversity.<sup>61</sup> In 1998, annual full-time tuition, which at the time was based on credit hours, averaged \$10,350; by 2002, it had crept up to \$14,580. By 2011, annual undergraduate tuition was a little over \$32,000. By 2020, full-price annual tuition for undergraduates was \$52,000.<sup>62</sup> TCU's tuition hikes were not isolated. Such rate hikes were felt across the state and country. Leaders at the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University systems argued that deregulating tuition rates from governmental oversight would allow these institutions more flexibility in setting their prices and subsequently give prospective students more affordable options in choosing a particular school.<sup>63</sup> Other supporters of these measures argued that decoupling tuition rates from governmental oversight would allow students to seek out the best deal for their education, which would in turn force universities to offer reasonably priced yet quality degrees to prospective students.<sup>64</sup> Yet due to budget shortfalls during these years, the state legislature began to discuss austerity measures to cut money to higher education in order to balance the state's financial books.

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<sup>61</sup> Blair Busch, "TCU Aims to Keep Tuition Low," *Skiff*, October 22, 2003, <https://repository.tcu.edu/bitstream/handle/116099117/18932/20031022.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

<sup>62</sup> Office of Institutional Research, "Texas Christian University Facts and Data," 2011, accessed 11 July 2024, <https://ir.tcu.edu/facts-data/archived-facts-data/>  
Office of Institutional Research, "Texas Christian University Facts and Data," 2020, accessed 11 July 2024, <https://ir.tcu.edu/facts-data/tcu-quick-facts/>

<sup>63</sup> Jeongeun Kim and Kevin Strange, "Pricing and University Autonomy: Tuition Deregulation in Texas," *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 2, 1 (2016):112-146. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7758/rsf.2016.2.1.06>

<sup>64</sup> Charles Schwertner, "Tuition Deregulation is Failing Texas Students," *TribTalk*, December 7, 2014, <https://www.tribtalk.org/2014/12/07/tuition-deregulation-is-failing-texas-students/>

In 2003, the Texas State Legislature passed House Bill 3015, which allowed public universities to set their tuition rates without any governmental oversight.<sup>65</sup> In theory, this law was an attempt for schools to lower prices to attract more students. This legislation had the opposite effect, as the average tuition rate began to climb starting in the 2004 fall semester. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, tuition increased 47 percent between 2004 and 2008 at statewide public institutions and nearly 29 percent at private universities and colleges.<sup>66</sup> Compounding these problems further, the Great Recession from 2007 to 2009 significantly increased the tuition prices of nationwide public institutions, which rose 19 percent from 2006 to 2009. As states spent less on public higher education, student loans and college borrowing soared from \$110 billion a year in 2007 to \$132 billion a year by 2010.<sup>67</sup> No doubt, diversity in the classroom was hindered by the rising financial costs of colleges across the state and nation.

Alongside the efforts to diversify the TCU student population, TCU also implemented several new initiatives to support diversifying the professoriate, as its faculty has always been far less diverse than the student population. Among full-time faculty, 10.7 percent identified as BIPOC in 1998. A little over a decade later, in 2011, BIPOC faculty increased slightly to almost 12 percent. In response to TCU's Strategic Plan Lead On: Vision in Action, which prioritized building a diverse and inclusive campus culture, the Office of the Provost implemented several changes to prioritize the hiring of faculty who reflect the growing diversity of TCU students and

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<sup>65</sup> "Overview: Tuition Deregulation and Tuition Set Asides," 60x30TX, Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, December 2016.

<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth Young, "Tuition Deregulation Didn't Deregulate Tuition," *Texas Public Policy Foundation*, April 3, 2010, <https://www.texaspolicy.com/tuition-deregulation-didnt-deregulate-tuition/>

<sup>67</sup> Jill Barshay, "How the Last Recession Affected Higher Education: Will History Repeat?," *Hechinger Report*, April 6, 2020, <https://hechingerreport.org/how-the-2008-great-recession-affected-higher-education-will-history-repeat/>

are skilled in inclusive teaching pedagogies. Academic affairs instituted a faculty hiring checklist, designed to facilitate efforts by hiring managers and search committees to attract and hire the best, most diverse faculty, consistent with TCU's high standards of inclusive excellence. The DEI Scholar Fellowship, launched in 2020 and scheduled to conclude in 2025, is designed to recruit emerging scholars from a range of disciplines who are well-prepared to use diversity as a resource for enriching the education of all students. Started in the same year as the DEI Scholars Fellowship, the shared cost hiring initiative provided additional resources to enhance the success of transforming faculty diversity at TCU. Many of these initiatives have had positive results: in 2023, the last year of available data, 23.3 percent of full-time faculty identified as BIPOC.

As TCU attempted to push for more demographic diversity, several important curricular changes facilitated such efforts. In 2005, a new undergraduate core curriculum was implemented, ensuring students practice skills in cultural diversity and intercultural sensitivity, civic responsibility and global problem-solving. Based on the tradition of a liberal arts education, the TCU core curriculum comprises approximately 30 percent of an undergraduate student's academic study. In 2019, the faculty voted to amend the current core curriculum with the addition of a DEI essential competency, which has yet to be implemented as originally intended. In 2023, TCU selected as its five-year Quality Enhancement Plan, "Finding Ourselves in Community," to amplify the curricular work already in progress and to support faculty in developing courses that ensure all TCU graduates demonstrate the skills to act as equitable and inclusive members of diverse communities.<sup>68</sup>

As the student section noted, a recurrent theme in student protests since 2016 was the call for a more diverse curriculum, which has galvanized some TCU faculty to establish a range of

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<sup>68</sup> "Finding Ourselves in Community," TCU Office of the Provost, 2024.

interdisciplinary area or ethnic studies programs where students could pursue a minor. Most of these programs are housed in the AddRan College of Liberal Arts. Over thirty years ago, Asian Studies – the first ethnic or areas studies program at TCU – was established in 1993, in response to students seeking a more comprehensive academic course of study about Asia. Andy Fort, professor of religion, was its first director, followed by Carrie Liu Currier, associate professor of political science, who directed the thriving program until 2018. Like Asian Studies, Latino/a (now Latinx) Studies built on a campus history of celebrating Hispanic Heritage. After over a year of organizing by liberal arts faculty with expertise in Latino/a history and culture, it was first offered as a minor in 2009, with anthropology senior instructor Miguel Leatham as the inaugural director.

Whereas the first ethnic studies programs emerged from heritage months and student-led organizations celebrating distinctive ethnic cultures, students' demands in reaction to rising national, state, and campus racial tensions catalyzed other academic changes to curriculum and campus practices. In 2015, the Native American and Indigenous Peoples Initiative began. It was a collaboration between TCU instructor of religion Scott Langston and professor of English Theresa Gaul, Indigenous leaders, Chebon Kernell, a citizen of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Terri Parton, president of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. This initiative focuses less on research or curriculum building and more on modeling mutual understanding and respect between our campus and Indigenous communities. The same year, Jewish Studies (now offered in the Brite Divinity School only) was launched; the program has struggled to thrive at TCU due to an inadequate number of faculty to offer courses to sustain the minor. Students advocated for the need to study the history, politics, culture, and religions in the Middle East, prompting Hanan Hammad, professor of history, to launch Middle East Studies, a thriving

program she directed for nearly ten years. African American and Africana Studies and Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, on the other hand, were established in direct response to student protests and demands in 2016. Like the Native American and Indigenous Peoples Initiative, Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) relies on collaborations among faculty, staff, and community members to fulfill its mission. Indeed, CRES expresses ambitions that go beyond course offerings and programming: its motto, “More than a Major, a Movement,” promises to help decolonize the curriculum and higher education overall. CRES, which now houses Latinx and African and Africana Studies, was elevated to a department in 2018, and offers students the opportunity to major or minor in this area of study. The CRES curriculum has expanded through course offerings and ethnic and area studies programs, as well as retention efforts to support students’ sense of belonging, especially students from culturally diverse racial or ethnic backgrounds. The establishment of these ethnic studies programs was the result of a collective effort by faculty which incorporated students’ voices and needs.

### **Athletics**

Just as student activism prompted change at TCU to ensure that students’ voices were heard, many student athletes of color were instrumental in seeking and advocating for change across and beyond TCU’s campus. Race and athletics are two forces that frequently come to the fore in societal, political, and cultural discussions in the United States. In the past twenty years, discussions over the role of protests in sports, racial justice messaging, and the racial dynamics of athletic teams have risen to the surface throughout the United States. At TCU, the rise of the football team, women’s basketball team, and men’s basketball team to national prominence impacted the lives of student-athletes and entwined itself with issues of race, athletic exploitation, and the university’s changing obligations to these students. As the culture of

athletics changed dramatically at TCU from 1998 to 2020, this section addresses the key athletic developments that happened due to several major conference changes and realignments, the Rose Bowl effect, social justice protests, and the growth of student-athlete activism on campus.

After four conference changes in the late 1990s and early 2000s, TCU's athletic successes in the 2000s and the 2011 Rose Bowl win over the University of Wisconsin-Madison Badgers, catapulted the university to national attention. This prominence brought in financial incentives, drove up student enrollment, and spurred renovations to some of the major campus sporting venues such as the Amon G. Carter Stadium and the Ed and Rae Schollmaier Arena. Because of the increasing prestige and attention paid to athletics, some TCU students saw athletic events as a prime location to protest racial inequalities on campus, as the 2016 "silent protests" revealed. Whereas student activists used athletics to attract the attention of the administration and publicize racial inequality, student-athletes themselves increasingly became more involved in protests as well, such as when they organized to create an "End Racism" mural outside Schollmaier Arena in 2020. In this important and transformative time in the history of TCU, the intersection of race and athletics has impacted the experiences and trajectory of athletics, student-athletes, and the entire student population in the past two decades.



## TCU's Conference Changes

### 1923-1996

TCU joined the Southwestern Conference in 1923. In 1996, the Southwestern Conference was dissolved and TCU was not invited to join the new Big 12.



### 1996-2001

TCU joined the Western Athletic Conference (WAC) in 1996.



### 2001-2005

TCU joined Conference USA (C-USA) in 2001. The men's football team rose to prominence during this time under Coach Gary Patterson.



### 2005-2011

In 2005, TCU joined the Mountain West Conference. In 2011, the TCU football team defeated Wisconsin in the Rose Bowl 21-19.



### 2011-PRESENT

In 2011, the Big 12 Conference invited TCU to join the conference. As of 2024, TCU still competes in the Big 12.



Graphic showing TCU's conference changes

From 1998 to 2003, TCU's athletics expanded and underwent several conference changes from the Western Athletic Conference (1996) to Conference USA (2001) to the Mountain West Conference (2005) and then to the Big 12 Conference (2011), where it remains to this day.<sup>69</sup> TCU's rapid transition to more prominent conferences enhanced the national stature of several TCU athletic teams, including the men's football, men's basketball, and women's basketball programs. In particular, the hiring of Gary Patterson in 2000 as the head coach of the football team built on the successful revitalization of the football team under Coach Dennis Franchione from 1997 to 2000. By the end of the 2000s, Patterson had guided the football team to five ten-win seasons, four straight postseason bowl wins from 2004 to 2008; the team frequently appeared in the Associated Press' top twenty-five polls throughout the season.<sup>70</sup>

### **Rose Bowl Effect**

In 2011, the TCU football team won one of the biggest games in program history with its 21-19 victory over the University of Wisconsin in the Rose Bowl to cap off an undefeated season. After this impressive victory, the university began investing more money into football and other athletic programs as student applications increased by over 5,000 from Fall 2010 to 2011 alone.<sup>71</sup> Alongside the renovations of the Amon G. Carter Stadium and Lupton Stadium, the creation of the Ed and Rae Schollmaier Arena, and the creation of a new volleyball arena, TCU administrators saw an opportunity to expand the university prestige through built

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<sup>69</sup> J.D. Pells, "The 'Whirlwind' of TCU Football's Conference Realignment," *TCU 360*, September 18, 2021, <https://tcu360.com/2021/09/18/the-whirlwind-of-tcu-footballs-conference-realignments/>

<sup>70</sup> "Patterson Signs Contract Extension," *TCU 360*. December 5, 2008, <https://tcu360.com/2008/12/05/patterson-signs-contract-extension-12286878/>; "Patterson on Verge of 100 Games Coached," *TCU 360*. December 5, 2008, <https://tcu360.com/2008/12/05/patterson-on-verge-of-100-games-coached-12286883/>; "Gary Patterson," *TCU 360 Athletics*, Gofrogs.com, 2003, <https://gofrogs.com/sports/football/roster/coaches/gary-patterson/548>; Joel Anderson, "Mobile Bowl Officials Extend Invitation to TCU," *Skiff*, November 30, 1999, <https://repository.tcu.edu/handle/116099117/18522>.

<sup>71</sup> Brandon Kitchin, "Success in Athletics Attracts Students to University," *TCU 360*, December 11, 2016, <https://tcu360.com/2016/12/11/success-in-athletics-attracts-students-to-university/>.

infrastructure. They stressed the importance of improving athletic facilities to attract more recruits, media attention, revenue, and enrollment to the university as it began to compete in the Big 12 Conference.<sup>72</sup>



TCU football players celebrate their victory over the Wisconsin Badgers in the 2011 Rose Bowl.<sup>73</sup>

Even as facilities improved alongside increasing media attention to the athletics programs, student-athletes, many of whom were students of color, did not reap the monetary benefits. Because of strict NCAA regulations ensuring student-athletes maintain amateur status,

<sup>72</sup> Josh Davis, "Athletic Director, Del Conte, Deserves Praise," *TCU 360*, December 1, 2010, <https://tcu360.com/2010/12/01/athletic-director-del-conte-deserves-praise-12419392/>; "Athletic Renovations Add to Texas Construction University," *TCU 360*, November 20, 2015, <https://tcu360.com/2015/11/20/athletic-renovations-add-to-texas-construction-university/>.

<sup>73</sup> Jeff Gross, "The TCU Horned Frogs Celebrate after Defeating the Wisconsin Badgers 21-19 in the 97th Rose Bowl Game on January 1, 2011 in Pasadena, California," Photograph, Getty Images, <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/the-tcu-horned-frogs-celebrate-after-defeating-the-news-photo/107915397>.

student-athletes during the 2000s and 2010s could not make any money on their name, image, or likeness (NIL). At this time, TCU could provide student-athletes with only room, board and tuition, which in 2015 was an average of \$52,000. This failed to cover the full living expenses required to attend the university.<sup>74</sup> Because of these rules, student-athletes with need had to apply for additional funds and student loans through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) programs. Alongside the pressures of paying for school, the NCAA required all student-athletes to devote no more than twenty hours a week to their sport, even though many athletes frequently broke these rules to prepare for big competitions with few internal penalties.<sup>75</sup> According to University of Texas-Arlington professor Krystal Beamon, Black student-athletes struggled to maintain their academic duties alongside the rigorous demands of their athletic responsibilities while attending universities.<sup>76</sup> Despite the pronounced growth of athletics and the university's increased profits from some of these activities, student-athletes did not experience the full financial benefits from their athletic prowess.

Around this time, the university sought to reach a more equitable balance between men's and women's sports on campus to fulfill Title IX obligations. With the addition of new sports such as women's equestrian and women's volleyball, female athletics became another important way TCU addressed equity in athletics. Despite not receiving as much attention as their male

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<sup>74</sup> "Athletes Could be Compensated for Name, Image, Likeness in Future," *TCU 360*, January 14, 2015, <https://tcu360.com/2015/01/14/33433athletes-could-be-compensated-name-image-likeness-future/>; "Athletic Scholarships Could Soon Cover Total Cost of Attendance," *TCU 360*, January 8, 2015, <https://tcu360.com/2015/01/08/33424athletic-scholarships-could-soon-cover-total-cost-attendance/>; "Tuition Rising at a Higher rate than room and board," *TCU 360*, March 27, 2015, <https://tcu360.com/2015/03/27/34018tuition-rising-higher-rate-room-and-board/>.

<sup>75</sup> "Is a scholarship enough?," *TCU360*, October 27, 2005, <https://tcu360.com/2005/10/27/is-a-scholarship-enough-12292695/>.

<sup>76</sup> Komanduri S Murty, Julian B. Roebuck, and Jimmy D. McCamey, "Race and Class Exploitation: A Study of Black Male Student Athletes (BSAS) on White Campuses," *Race, Gender & Class* 21, no. 3/4 (2014): 165-166, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43496990>; Krystal Beamon, "'Used Goods': Former African American College Student-Athletes' Perception of Exploitation by Division I Universities," *The Journal of Negro Education* 77, No. 4 (Fall 2008): 352-364, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25608704>.

counterparts, the women's basketball team won twenty games in eight of the nine seasons and made the NCAA Women's Tournament eight of the nine years from 2000 to 2009 under head coach Jeff Mittie.<sup>77</sup> In an NCAA report celebrating the 50th anniversary of Title IX, the authors noted that female athletics became much more racially and ethnically diverse: by the 2019-2020 academic year, more than 32 percent of student-athletes were students of color, an 8 percent increase over the last twenty years.<sup>78</sup> As TCU sought to fulfill its Title IX obligations and promote women's athletics through the media, an increasingly more diverse female athletic population emerged on campus, representing students of color and international students from a variety of sports.<sup>79</sup>

After TCU's move to the Big 12 Conference, the decreased travel time proved helpful for student-athletes who could more effectively balance their academics, training, and competitions.<sup>80</sup> Despite these added benefits from inclusion in a major Power Five conference, former student-athletes such as Tekerrein Cuba, articulated the difficulty of the life of a student-athlete. He described a usual day: "After class, go watch film. After practice, go to study hall."<sup>81</sup> Balancing the academic demands of attending classes, studying for exams, and graduating on time with athletic practices, film sessions, and games, first-generation and international students

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<sup>77</sup> Michael Carroll, "Basketball Teams End Season Poorly," *TCU 360*, March 24, 2009, <https://tcu360.com/2009/03/25/basketball-teams-end-season-poorly-12286258/>; Ryne Sulier, "Rising Success of Frog Basketball Deserves Fan Recognition," *TCU 360*, January 25, 2010, <https://tcu360.com/2010/01/25/rising-success-of-frog-basketball-deserves-fan-recognition-12284768/>.

<sup>78</sup> NCAA Media Center, "Title IX Report Shows Gains in Female Participation," NCAA, June 23, 2022, <https://www.ncaa.org/news/2022/6/23/media-center-title-ix-report-shows-gains-in-female-participation-though-rates-lag-increases-by-men.aspx>.

<sup>79</sup> Colin Post, "More than a Game: Volleyball Works to Make a Difference through 'Equality' Patches," *TCU 360*, September 14, 2020, <https://tcu360.com/2020/09/14/more-than-a-game-volleyball-works-to-make-a-difference-through-equality-patches/>; Kayley Ryan, "Title IX: TCU Coaches See Growth in Opportunities for Female Athletes," *TCU 360*, November 9, 2017, <https://tcu360.com/2017/11/09/context-story-how-title-ix-has-changed-womens-sports-at-tcu/>.

<sup>80</sup> "Athletes Spend More Time in School with Big 12 Schedule," *TCU 360*, April 30, 2012, <https://tcu360.com/2012/04/30/15350athletes-spend-more-time-school-big-12-schedule/>.

<sup>81</sup> "Balancing the Act of Being a Student Athlete," *TCU 360*, December 22, 2014, <https://tcu360.com/2014/12/22/33403lifestyle-student-athlete/>.



often struggled to maintain their academic standing while attempting to excel in their sport. These challenges disproportionately impact Black student-athletes, especially those who lack access to rigorous college preparation courses and tend to use fewer academic resources in comparison to their white counterparts, and thus frequently struggle with academics and have a higher dropout rate than other racial groups.<sup>82</sup>

### **Athletics & Social Justice Protests**

As athletics became a critical component of TCU's growing visibility in the 2010s, student-athletes began to take a more active role in using their platform to advocate for social changes in their community. At the same time, other students began to see athletic venues as a strategic location to promote a more socially inclusive and conscious student body. In 2016, Caylin Moore, a junior quarterback on the TCU football team, created an organization called Strong Players Are Reaching Kids (SPARK), alongside teammates Aaron Curry and Michael Carroll. The main goals of the organization were for the football players to travel around the Fort Worth area and "encourage children to reach their dreams." The organization sought to cultivate leadership among student-athletes while also bridging the divide between the university and the broader Fort Worth community.<sup>83</sup> These leadership programs spurred on greater involvement from alumnus and NFL Hall of Famer LaDainian Tomlinson, who helped create the Tomlinson Student-Athlete Development Endowment Fund to help student-athletes become leaders and better citizens. Tomlinson, a former Horned Frog running back saw this to give back to the university and its student-athletes. With the backing of Jeremiah Donati, TCU's Director of

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<sup>82</sup> Komanduri S. Murty, Julian B. Roebuck, and Jimmy D. McCamey, "Race and Class Exploitation: A Study of Black Male Student Athletes (BSAS) on White Campuses," *Race, Gender & Class* 21, no. 3/4 (2014): 163-164, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43496990>.

<sup>83</sup> "TCU Athletes are 'SPARK-ing' an Interest in Fort Worth Area Students," *TCU 360*, April 18, 2016, <https://tcu360.com/2016/04/18/tcu-athletes-are-spark-ing-an-interest-in-fort-worth-area-students/>.

Intercollegiate Athletics, Tomlinson hoped that student-athletes from all twenty-one of TCU's sports could use the funds to prepare, on and off the field, to be responsible university and community leaders.<sup>84</sup>



LaDainian Tomlinson discussing the Tomlinson Student-Athlete Development Endowment Fund. Photograph courtesy of Benton McDonald.

This enhanced role of student-athletes at TCU paralleled the growing strength across the country of social protests used by student-athletes of color to enact greater change in their university policies toward inclusion and diversity. In 2015, the University of Missouri football team staged a protest against the sitting president and helped to force his resignation over failing to adequately respond to racial and social injustices on campus. Because of these specific trends at other universities, this growing intersection of race and sports in universities showed how

<sup>84</sup> Benton McDonald, "Tomlinson, Athletics Announce Endowment Fund Geared towards Student-athlete Development," *TCU 360*, March 18, 2019, <https://tcu360.com/2019/03/18/tomlinson-athletics-announce-endowment-fund-geared-towards-student-athlete-development/>.

student-athletes could affect positive change in their university environments.<sup>85</sup> Analyzing the growth of student-athletes' power in relation to the increasing role of these individuals as leaders within and outside of the community, sports began to take center stage over questions surrounding social injustices at TCU and across the United States.

After TCU's impressive 2014 football season, where they finished 12-1 and defeated the University of Mississippi in that season's Peach Bowl, and TCU Men's baseball enjoyed three consecutive appearances at the College World Series from 2014 to 2016, TCU athletics became a major tool for administrators to promote the university, increase financial resources on campus, and drive up students' applications.<sup>86</sup> Other students saw this increasing prioritization of athletics as a venue to draw attention to racism, racial injustices, and the lack of diversity on TCU's campus. As these two diverging forces intersected, national events would soon take center stage after San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick took a knee during the United States National Anthem before a National Football League pre-season game against the San Diego Chargers. He used the gesture to draw attention to social injustices and police brutality against people of color in the United States; however, intense criticism leveled against Kaepernick from fans, politicians, and NFL executives, contributed to Kaepernick not being drafted by another team for the following season. The vitriolic attacks led to the end of his NFL career.<sup>87</sup> Despite the untimely end of Kaepernick's football career, his protests against social injustices not only sparked debates over racism, police practices against people of color, and the role of sports and

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<sup>85</sup> Sarah Breuner and Evan Watson, "Missouri President's Resignation Prompts TCU Reaction," *TCU 360*, November 9, 2015, <https://tcu360.com/2015/11/09/missouri-presidents-resignation-prompts-tcu-reaction/>.

<sup>86</sup> Brandon Kitchin, "Success in Athletics Attracts Students to University," *TCU 360*, December 11, 2016, <https://tcu360.com/2016/12/11/success-in-athletics-attracts-students-to-university/>.

<sup>87</sup> Barry Wilner, "Colin Kaepernick: Timeline of a Gesture and its Echoes," *Associated Press*, June 7, 2020, <https://apnews.com/article/f9bbe38b748072531b07713736409181>.



protests, but they also led others throughout the sports world to kneel during the national anthem in solidarity with the quarterback's protest.<sup>88</sup>



Students protesting at TCU football game during homecoming on September 16, 2016. Photograph courtesy of *TCU 360*

The prevalence of these nationwide protests would influence how some students used college athletics to enact changes on the campus of TCU. In 2016, three students – Shanel Alexander, Emily Laff, and Dione Willis – formed a student-led group on campus to protest social injustices and urge TCU administrators to implement more equitable racial policies at the university level.<sup>89</sup> In order to bring attention to these conversations on campus and support the ongoing social protest by Kaepernick, the group decided to protest TCU's homecoming game on

<sup>88</sup> Tamera Hyatte, "Some TCU Students Stage Silent Protest during the National Anthem," *TCU 360*, September 17, 2016, <https://tcu360.com/2016/09/17/some-tcu-students-stage-silent-protest-during-the-national-anthem/>.

<sup>89</sup> Shanel Alexander, "Interview with Shanel Alexander," interview by Sylviane Greensword, *TCU Race and Reconciliation Initiative Oral History Project*, audiovisual, TCU Library Repository.

September 16, 2016, as its first public event designed to start conversations about racial injustices in U.S. society. During the game, twenty students knelt during the National Anthem, which immediately divided the student body over whether this protest was “disrespectful” or a protected protest under the First Amendment.<sup>90</sup>

The publicity from this protest and continuing demonstrations at home football games allowed these students to talk to Chancellor Boschini and other high-level TCU administrators about their fourteen demands to address social and racial injustices on campus.<sup>91</sup> Explaining how the group came up with the idea of using athletic events as a venue for their protests, Shanel Alexander argued that the group used the protests at the football game to draw attention to their demands as administrators “realized that it wasn't a joke.”<sup>92</sup> While all fourteen demands were not fulfilled, the implementation of microaggression and sensitivity training for students and faculty members showed how sports could be used to address social injustices happening on TCU’s campus.<sup>93</sup> While the student-led Silent Protest and fourteen demands of 2016 played an integral role in how TCU came to grips with its contemporary racial problems, sports played a vital role in amplifying the voices of students and providing a platform to create meaningful dialogue to address issues surrounding systemic racism and increase diversity on campus.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in 2020 highlighted the strength and power that student athletes have in bringing attention to racial injustices on TCU’s campus. Additionally, two pandemics – COVID-19 and racism – converged, dramatically affecting the TCU campus

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<sup>90</sup> Tamera Hyatte, “Silent Protest Divides Students and Social Media,” *TCU 360*, September 19, 2016, <https://tcu360.com/2016/09/19/silent-protest-divides-students-and-social-media/>.

<sup>91</sup> Tamera Hyatte, “Organizers of Protests Release List of Demands,” *TCU 360*, October 18, 2016, <https://tcu360.com/2016/10/18/the-organizers-of-the-protests-release-list-of-demands/>.

<sup>92</sup> Shanel Alexander, “Interview with Shanel Alexander,” interview by Sylviane Greensword, *TCU Race and Reconciliation Initiative Oral History Project*, audiovisual, TCU Library Repository.

<sup>93</sup> Shanel Alexander, “Interview with Shanel Alexander,” By Sylviane Greensword. *TCU Race and Reconciliation Initiative*. Audiovisual, TCU Library Repository.

and the work of race, diversity, and inclusion in Fort Worth and across the country. On March 11, 2020, to prevent spread of the deadly coronavirus on campus, Chancellor Boschini officially moved classes online after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 virus a pandemic.<sup>94</sup> Due to the rapid spread of the deadly virus, the NCAA canceled all spring and summer championships in 2020, which impacted sports such as men's baseball, women's rifle, women's basketball, and men's basketball.<sup>95</sup>

While social distancing and quarantine kept most people at home, a longstanding national pandemic of anti-Black violence and racism spiked following the murder of George Floyd, killed by a Minneapolis police officer who knelt on his neck for over nine minutes.<sup>96</sup> In the weeks after his death, protests spread to over 140 cities across the United States; at TCU, student-athletes and coaches were among the leading figures in the June 9, 2020, protest march around TCU's campus.

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<sup>94</sup> Renee Umsted, "Spring Break Extended, Classes Move to Online," *TCU 360*, March 11, 2020, <https://tcu360.com/2020/03/11/spring-break-extended-classes-move-to-online/>; Renee Umsted, "Spring Semester to be Finished Online, Graduation Moved to August," *TCU 360*, March 21, 2020, <https://tcu360.com/2020/03/21/spring-semester-to-be-finished-online-graduation-moved-to-august/>.

<sup>95</sup> Colin Post, "Frog Fans Left Wondering What Could've Been, after Sports Put on Hold by COVID-19," *TCU 360*, March 18, 2020, <https://tcu360.com/2020/03/18/frog-fans-left-wondering-what-couldve-been-after-sports-put-on-hold-by-covid-19/>.

<sup>96</sup> Drew Mitchell, "Students, Faculty Protest Police Brutality," *TCU 360*, June 10, 2020, <https://tcu360.com/2020/06/10/students-faculty-protest-police-brutality/>.





TCU graduate Shelby Johnson leading the BLM protest around TCU’s campus in June 2020. Photo courtesy of *TCU 360*.

Led by the Coalition for University Justice and Equity (CUJE), this student-led march included men’s basketball coach Jamie Dixon and player development coordinator and TCU basketball alum Corey Santee, who encouraged their players to bring change into the broader campus and Fort Worth communities. Because of this leadership from Dixon and his coaching staff, guard RJ Nembhard participated in a Black Lives Matter (BLM) march in his hometown of Keller, just outside of Fort Worth, where the young student-athlete noted that having a break from practices allowed players to “to interact with our communities and bring change.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Garrett Podell, “TCU’s Dixon Creating Environment for Substantive Change,” *Frogs O War*, June 29, 2020, <https://www.frogsowar.com/2020/6/29/21304829/tcus-dixon-creating-environment-for-substantive-change>.



TCU basketball player R.J. Nembhard (far left) marches with friends during a Black Lives Matter protest in Keller, Texas.

While BLM protests were ongoing, a swift rise in anti-Asian rhetoric and anti-Asian violence also converged at this time, a bigoted response to the origins of COVID-19 in China. Because of such national events, one student-athlete directly asked TCU administrators to magnify the voices of students regarding racial injustices in U.S. society. On June 29, 2020, offensive guard Kellton Hollins approached Boschini and Donati, proposing to create an anti-racism mural where students, staff, and faculty could express their views on racial injustices and social problems. Inspired by his participation with the “End Racism” mural in downtown Fort Worth, Hollins believed that these murals could “bridge the gap” between student-athletes, particularly student-athletes of color, and the rest of the student body and strive to continuously combat racism throughout U.S. society. Expressing his ambition to enact societal changes, Hollins explained, “If you cheer for us on the field, cheer for us off the field when we are

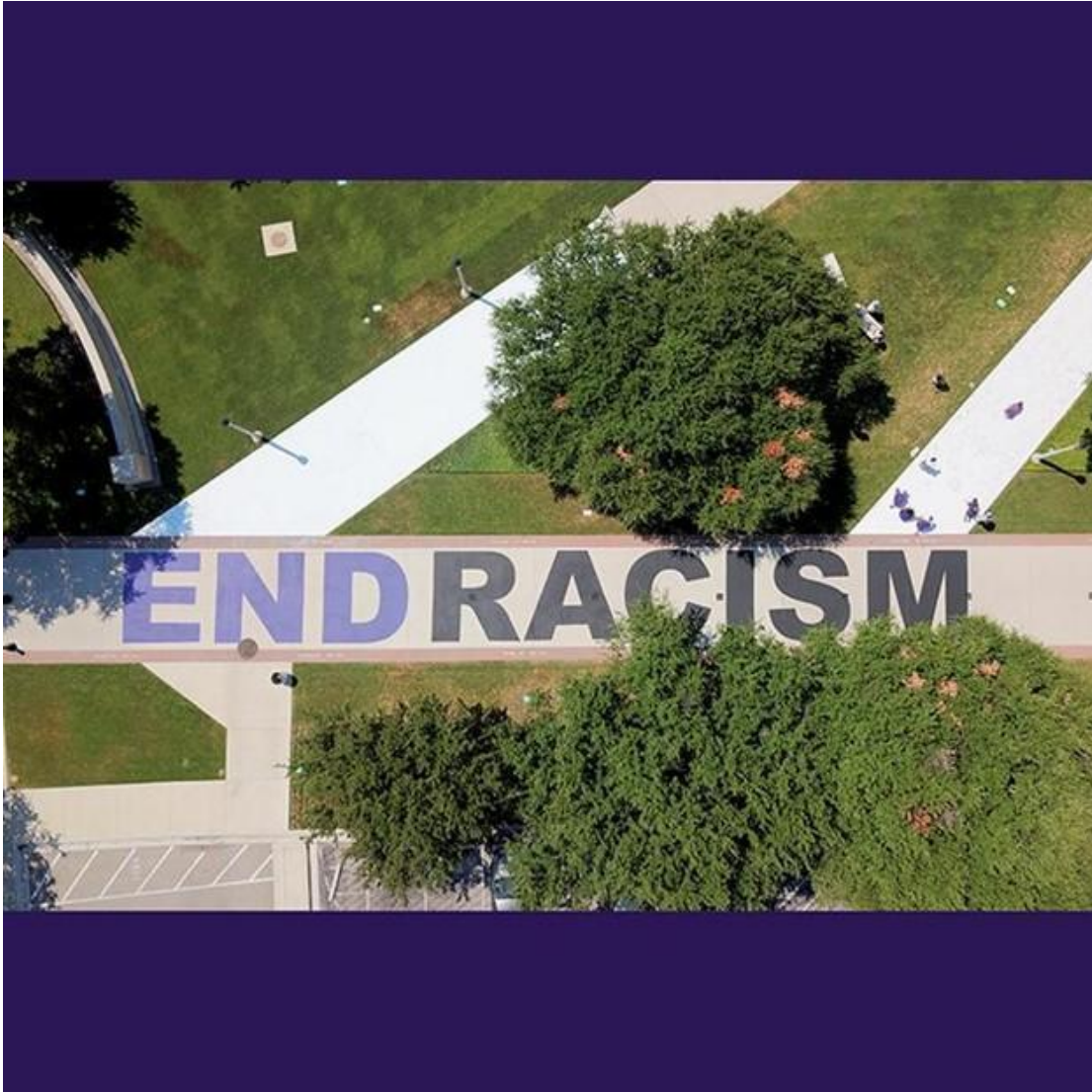
fighting to end racism.”<sup>98</sup> As other athletes from the men’s football, men’s basketball, women’s basketball, women’s soccer, and women’s volleyball teams banded together to promote equity, end racism, and protest systemic racism with the support of their coaching staffs, the activities of student-athletes in 2020 came to the forefront of university life to protest racial injustices, police brutality, and push for greater inclusion throughout TCU’s campus.<sup>99</sup> Thus, the intersection of sports, racial justices, and protests helped reveal the power of student-athletes in enacting changes in their university spaces and sparking uncomfortable conversations among students, faculty, staff, and community members to create a more equitable environment for people of color on TCU’s campus.

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<sup>98</sup> Renee Umsted, “TCU Football Player Sparks Making of ‘End Racism’ Mural,” *TCU 360*, August 10, 2020, <https://tcu360.com/2020/08/10/tcu-football-player-sparks-making-of-end-racism-mural>.

<sup>99</sup> Colin Post, “More than a Game: Volleyball Works to Make a Difference through ‘Equality’ Patches,” *TCU 360*, September 14, 2020, <https://tcu360.com/2020/09/14/more-than-a-game-volleyball-works-to-make-a-difference-through-equality-patches/>; Drew Davison, “Inspired by Downtown’s End Racism Now painting, TCU Athletes Share Message on Campus,” *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, August 6, 2020, [https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/apps/news/openurl?ctx\\_ver=z39.88-2004&rft\\_id=info%3Asid/infoweb.newsbank.com&svc\\_dat=WORLDNEWS&req\\_dat=0F3172437331D383&rft\\_val\\_format=info%3Aofi/fmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft\\_dat=document\\_id%3Anews%252F17CB22E28CB259D8](https://infoweb-newsbank-com.ezproxy.tcu.edu/apps/news/openurl?ctx_ver=z39.88-2004&rft_id=info%3Asid/infoweb.newsbank.com&svc_dat=WORLDNEWS&req_dat=0F3172437331D383&rft_val_format=info%3Aofi/fmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=document_id%3Anews%252F17CB22E28CB259D8).





End Racism mural, located in front of the Schollmaier Arena on TCU's Campus.

## **Infrastructure**

Just as student-athletes informed conversations surrounding race at TCU, the growth of TCU's campus infrastructure from 1998 to 2020 drew greater attention to student voices and concerns over issues surrounding inclusion and diversity on campus. One of the most striking changes to TCU over the last twenty years is its infrastructure. The additions and renovation of dorms, classrooms, a student union, and athletic facilities have been so extensive to earn TCU

the weary nickname “Texas Construction University.” Less well appreciated is how some of this infrastructure has been enhanced to reflect its growing diversity and commitment to inclusion; many of these changes have come about due to student activism. While the improvements have enhanced the utility and beauty of TCU’s infrastructure and campus, this built environment also communicates who is welcomed and included. For years, students who identify with historically minoritized and marginalized backgrounds have called for changes to TCU’s infrastructure that communicates that they belong. Hence, this final section of the report highlights several important changes to TCU’s infrastructure that focus on belonging and have benefitted from student advocacy. They include the Native American Monument, the Divine Nine Pillars, the Intercultural Center, the Portrait Project, the James Cash Statue, and Sesquicentennial Plaza.

TCU’s campus is situated on the home of the original inhabitants of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. At the university, we acknowledge the many benefits of being in this place, which we share with all living beings, human and non-human. To pay homage to the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, in 2018, the university erected the [Native American Monument](#).<sup>100</sup> The monument was created and established jointly by TCU and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. As it stands, the monument encompasses a bronze, circular plaque mounted in rustic mahogany granite. Ascribed are two statements, along with the seals of TCU and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes. This monument pays homage to individuals of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, including students who identify with these backgrounds. Further, it reflects the history of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes on whose homeland TCU sits.

A second change in infrastructure driven by inclusivity to TCU’s built environment is the [Divine Nine Pillars](#), which is located in the Greek Village, on the west side of campus. As TCU

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<sup>100</sup> For the information on each of these new changes, we are indebted to RRI’s Heritage Tour, designed by Team RRI and the RRI Taskforce. For the complete tour, please see here: <https://maps.tcu.edu/index.html>.



was redesigning the Greek Village in 2016, students petitioned to increase the visibility of Black Greeks on campus, specifically those affiliated with the Divine Nine. TCU became the first university in the country to create pillars to represent the National Panhellenic Council (NPHC), often referred to as the Divine Nine, which was groundbreaking in U.S. higher education. The Divine Nine features nine historically Black fraternities and sororities: Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity; Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority; Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity; Omega Psi Phi fraternity; Delta Sigma Theta sorority; Phi Beta Sigma fraternity; Zeta Phi Beta sorority; Sigma Gamma Rho sorority; and Iota Phi Theta fraternity. On TCU's campus, six of the nine organizations are currently active: Alpha Phi Alpha, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Kappa Alpha Psi, Omega Psi Phi, Delta Sigma Theta, and Sigma Gamma Rho. The Divine Nine Pillars are placed in the order in which they were chartered at TCU, with Alpha Phi Alpha being the first to be established in 1971.

Since 2016, TCU students of color have championed the need for a space of their own. In 2021, TCU fulfilled this demand by establishing the [Intercultural Center](#) in the Brown Lupton Student Union to cultivate a campus community that celebrates underrepresented students' identities, cultures, and experiences. This diverse and inclusive space on campus provides co-curricular opportunities and support to students of color, international students, LGBTQ+ students, and TCU's Student Government Association. Since its opening, the space has hosted mariachi performances, ballet folklorico dances, NAACP meetings, Heritage Month events, Greek life fundraisers, and a drag show celebrating Selena, the "Queen of Tejano music." The establishment of the Intercultural Center makes a strong statement that acknowledges TCU's past injustices as well as an ongoing dedication to forge a brighter future of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Furthermore, the Center aims to create and sustain a greater sense of belonging for members of the student body who identify with historically minoritized and marginalized

identities, inclusive of those whose identities meet at the intersections (such as, Black, Hispanic, and LGBTQ).

Another effort to diversify the campus has been via the [Portrait Project](#), an initiative that grew out of courses taught by Jacqueline Lambiase in Strategic Communication and Nino Testa in Women and Gender Studies, whose students cataloged the way TCU's portraits persistently excluded women and people of color. This project, which is now overseen by Marcellis Perkins, who presently serves as a graduate assistant in the Office of the President and Chancellor, was established to diversify portraiture around campus and commemorate historically marginalized and underrepresented members of the TCU community. Some of these portraits that are hung across campus include a portrait of [Allene Jones](#) ('63), TCU's first Black faculty member, which hangs prominently in Annie Richardson Bass building; "Among the Firsts," which honors some of TCU's first Black graduates: Ann McBride, Allene Park Jones, and Patsy Brown, hangs in The Harrison. Additional portraits include "Based on Quanah Parker" and "Based on Mrs. Jack Treetop-Standing Rock 1908," two stunning paintings by the contemporary Comanche and Kiowa artist J. Nicole Hatfield, commissioned to reflect TCU's relationship with Indigenous Peoples. The project committee, which includes stakeholders across campus, continuously works to incorporate future honorees in the Portrait Project, all of which bring awareness to individuals who are or were part of the TCU campus community and identify with historically marginalized racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Representation matters. In response to the Race & Reconciliation Initiative's First Year Survey Report, which highlighted the trailblazing courage of some of TCU's first Black student-athletes, TCU athletics resolved to erect a statue honoring James Cash, the first Black basketball player at TCU and the first Black athlete in the Southwest Conference. The [James Cash Statue](#) is

the first – and currently the only – statue on campus honoring a Black individual. The day of the statue’s unveiling prompted the city of Fort Worth to declare November 11, 2022, as Dr. James Cash Day. Cash was honored for the trailblazer he was during his time at TCU and for the remarkable leader he continues to be, from becoming the first Black tenured faculty member at the Harvard Business School to serving as a national leader and board member.<sup>101</sup>

To center the needs of students and to communicate equality and inclusion, TCU’s infrastructures contribute towards efforts of moving toward a multicultural, anti-racist community. In response to one of the recommendations of the Race and Reconciliation Initiative regarding the university’s built environment, TCU has announced plans to redesign a major artery on the east side of campus to commemorate the diversity of achievements throughout the history of TCU. As a highly traversed and visible area linking University Drive to Dan Rogers Hall on the east side of campus, [Sesquicentennial Plaza](#) will serve as a major campus gateway that reflects the university’s past, present, and future in the continuous commitment to race and reconciliation.

## **Conclusion**

TCU’s leadership, student involvement, academics, athletics, and infrastructure during the years 1998 to 2020 demonstrate the value of students’ voices as some of the most impactful drivers of change at TCU. A common thread throughout each of the themes addressed in this year’s survey report is student activism, which ignited critical and necessary change. The collective efforts of Black, Indigenous, Latinx and Hispanic, Asian Pacific American, and many

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<sup>101</sup> Brandon Kitchin, “How James Cash Forever Changed TCU,” *TCU Magazine*, Fall 2023, <https://magazine.tcu.edu/fall-2023/james-cash-harvard-business-school-first-black-southwest-conference/#:~:text=The%20statue's%20installation%20ceremony%20took,of%20the%20Board%20of%20Trustees>

others, supported consequential change to the university. While students of color were largely the trailblazers of much of the change that has happened at the university, there is a need for all student populations, inclusive of those who make up the majority (white students), to engage in the work of activism to reconcile TCU's history and create space for a more equitable and inclusive present and future for all that upholds and sustains a greater sense of belonging. Further, when students, faculty, staff, and community members work as a collective, they strengthen genuine efforts to repair, reconcile, and rebuild relationships at TCU, a project of continuous efforts in the work of race and reconciliation.

**Research Task Force**

Members of the Year 4 Research Task Force of the Race & Reconciliation Initiative at TCU, include Jenay Willis, Karen Steele, Amiso George, Todd Kerstetter, Mary Saffell, Kelly Phommachanh, Lucius Seger, and Marcela Molina.