

## **Integrating DE&I into content creation: The URICA! Model**

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### **Abstract**

A new *content creation model* of sequential steps and considerations for inclusive and sensitive brand messaging was concept-tested for use in the college classroom or corporate workplace. The URICA! model provides a versatile means of facilitating diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) efforts whether in classroom interactions or organizational strategic planning and messaging. Recommendations from corporate strategists and advertising professors who evaluated the URICA! model are discussed and implemented, and current DE&I information and resources for students and professionals are included.

## Background and Method

We describe the development and test of an approach to message creation strategy that takes into account Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) best practice. Labeled with its acronym, the URICA! model initially was created as a graduate student project for an advertising class, to address the social media phenomenon of digital blackface (Jackson, 2017; Jones, 2018; “What Is”, 2020). The graduate student and professor worked together to expand the original model, depicted herein, to extend to a range of message decision-making by teams in corporations or classrooms. A revised version of the URICA! model was then evaluated by six advertising professors and six professional corporate strategists from agencies and consultancies, and a final version, presented here, incorporated their feedback.

We begin with a review of selected research and commentary about DE&I issues and efforts in the U.S., employee and corporate governance issues, and instances of messaging and marketing missteps that can be traced to a lack of sensitivity to cultural realities in the current U.S. marketplace.

## Review of Related Literature

### *Corporate Environment and Culture*

Marketers operate inside a professional ecosystem that has been likened to their own “branding bubble” (Ritson, 2020). They know the strategies behind their campaigns as well as the people who created them. Ideally, consumers need to relate to campaigns as well as see themselves accurately represented in order for marketing success to be optimized (Sinno, 2021; Collings, 2021). After the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020, several US companies made statements condemning violence and pushed for society to stand together in solidarity to create change (Ritson, 2020; “Black Lives”, 2021). Multiple calls for change from Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) professionals and employees were made to companies so they could take action (Watson, 2020; Taylor, 2020). However, in some cases no tangible actions were taken (Ritson, 2020).

Recent polls show that support for the Black Lives Matter movement has waned in the US, with a 2023 Pew Research poll indicating that 51% of adults support the movement, down from 70% after the 2020 murder of George Floyd (Chavez, 2023). The study further reported that one-third of Americans feel the movement is divisive, and 87% of Republicans oppose it. In summer 2023 the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to forbid affirmative action in higher education admissions, translated as the consideration of race in admission policy, resulted in outcries that limiting the ability of universities to diversify student populations would inevitably affect entry-level corporate hiring of BIPOC across many industries (Scheiber, 2023; Stanage, 2023). Corporate support for DE&I initiatives has increased over since 2020, though adoption and operationalization vary widely among organizations, and recent layoffs of diversity executives have prompted some to declare *diversity fatigue* (Knolle, 2023).

Even a strict definition of DE&I that involves the recognition and addressing of inequality can be challenging to create, as the abbreviation itself refers to three distinct concepts. Robert Sellers, inaugural diversity officer at the University of Michigan (2023) likened DE&I to levels of engagement at a party: “Diversity is where everyone is invited to the party. Inclusion means that everyone gets to contribute to the playlist. Equity means that everyone has the opportunity to dance/experience the music.” How to refer to elements of DE&I is also the subject of debate, with recent thought suggesting that rather than using polarizing language to describe a movement, terms such as ‘belonging’ may be more accepted and embraced by managers and employees than ‘inclusion’ (see, for example, Miller, 2023).

Research indicates that in many cases BIPOC and other minority employees are expected to address and resolve workplace DE&I problems themselves, sometimes at the expense of their mental

health (Joseph, 2019a; Joseph, 2020; Fussell, 2021). Furthermore, authenticity can be difficult to establish when the C-Suite of many of these companies are primarily Caucasian males (Ritson, 2020; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2020). Nike's "For once, Don't Do It" ad received praise from many, including Adidas, which retweeted the ad stating, "Together is how we move forward". But moving forward, as Ritson (2020) contends, takes more than just making a statement on the injustices that plague society. Brands like Spotify, L'Oreal, and Apple were credited with demonstrating solidarity, but concerns arose when corporate structure did not fully embrace the advancement of BIPOC (Ritson, 2020). Current best practice recommends company policies executed from the top down that are dedicated to recruiting and supporting diverse candidates (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Smith, 2021; Hewlett, 2013). The singer Beyonce reportedly left a meeting with Reebok because no Black person was present on the team who would be working with her, a demonstration of how companies can jeopardize business when they don't prioritize inclusion (Gold, 2021; Ritson, 2020).

Although the "business case" for DE&I is seldom questioned in today's business milieu (Dominic, 2023; Minkin, 2023), some organizations continue to resist implementing DE&I efforts that have been shown to increase a company's financial returns (Hunt et al, 2015). In some cases, leadership encourages employees to speak about important issues but then these employees risk dismissal if such efforts put the company in a bad light (Asare, 2020; Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Joseph, 2019b). Silencing employees, especially in the age of social media, is potentially harmful and can result in the loss of valuable talent (Asare, 2020; Monllos, 2020).

According to a study by a non-profit think tank, the number one reason companies do not practice DE&I is because employees are "too busy" (Asare, 2020). High expenses also deter management when trying to create flexible working conditions (Costa, 2021). To incentivize employees to make DE&I a priority, some employers tie the success of DE&I initiatives to performance indicators on employee evaluations and base compensation bonuses accordingly (Boulton, 2020). Expanding hiring practices and focusing on DE&I efforts such as belonging (Miller, 2023; Brands & Mateo, 2017) has been shown to lead to increased retention (Heisler, 2020; Sherwood, 2018).

#### *DE&I Policies, Diverse Leadership, & Inclusivity*

The prevalence of DE&I in politics was exemplified by the Labor Department's suspension of the enforcement of former President Donald Trump's executive order restricting diversity training by government agencies and contractors, after asserting that such training was "divisive" and "un-American" (Guynn, 2021). Addressing DE&I issues at the corporate governance level, Governor Gavin Newsom of California signed a bill to require "more diversity within boards of executives" in publicly traded Californian companies (Kelley, 2020). The President of the Judicial Watch, Thomas Fitton, characterized Newsom's plan as "a quota, and quotas are unconstitutional" (Kelley, 2020). The bill identified underrepresented groups in terms of race and sexual orientation.

To create a diverse workforce and leverage the resulting benefits, simply hiring women and people of color to work teams has proved to be insufficient (Riordan, 2014; Brownlee, 2019; Ely and Thomas, 2020). Companies should listen to employees and tap "into their identity-related knowledge and experiences as resources for learning" (Ely & Thomas, 2020). This *learning-and-effectiveness paradigm*, which "cultivate[s] a learning orientation toward diversity", takes the experiences of diverse and underrepresented groups to inform their work and organizational processes and to cultivate inclusivity (Ely & Thomas, 2020). The authors contend that people of diverse backgrounds may fight and disagree more due to their separately lived experiences and their formed worldviews but the creation of safe non-judgmental spaces can decrease the likelihood of confrontations.

Consultants suggest that white leaders should allow themselves to be vulnerable when having sensitive conversations, instead of “staying silent from a place of privilege and self-protection” (Ely & Thomas, 2020; Kennedy & Jain-Link, 2020). To create and leverage a *learning-and-effectiveness paradigm*, companies need to build trust, actively work against discrimination and subordination, embrace a wide range of styles and voices, and make cultural differences a resource for learning (Ely & Thomas, 2020), even if homogeneity may be more comfortable (Barber, 2020; “6 Tips”, 2020; Smith, 2021; Ibarra, 2019; Bennhold, 2019; Auger-Dominguez, 2020). Bourke and Titus (2019) reported that “teams with inclusive leaders are 17% more likely to report that they are high performing, 20% more likely to say they make high-quality decisions, and 29% more likely to report behaving collaboratively”. In addition, “10% improvement in perceptions of inclusion increases work attendance by almost 1 day a year per employee”. According to the authors, the six traits that make an inclusive leader are visible commitment, humility, awareness of bias, curiosity about others, cultural intelligence, [and] effective collaboration.

#### Proposed Solutions Centered on Recruitment and Career Advancement Initiatives

Numerous DE&I initiatives have been created in advertising and related industries. Tables 1, 2 and 3 provide examples of programs and resources benefiting Students and Educators, Advertising Professionals and Corporate Recruiters in advertising and related fields, respectively.  
*Resources for Students and Faculty (see Table 1)*

After the death of George Floyd, a Minneapolis agency Solve penned an open letter that was sent by 500 advertising professionals that “called out agencies and colleagues for making little progress to ensure Black voices were a part of the creative process” (Reed, 2020). Of the 50 employees at the agency, 16% were people of color and none was in leadership roles. CEO John Colasanti said that “[The company] tried to dissect the problem of why aren’t there students of color entering the advertising world” (Reed, 2020). Solve reached out to 30 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to give guest lectures and Morgan State University responded by featuring six lectures by Solve employees in an online strategic communications course (Reed, 2020). They also created a student board of directors in its American Advertising Federation college chapter.

Apple attempted to address “systemic bias in the computing industry” by pledging \$100 million dollars to their Racial Equity and Justice Initiative which included “a developer academy in Detroit [and] venture capital funding for Black and brown entrepreneurs” (Gentile, 2021). They also dedicated \$25 million to the Propel Center which will facilitate learning for HBCUs (Gentile, 2021). Two grants and 100 scholarships are available for people from underrepresented communities.

#### *Resources for Advertising Professionals (see Table 2)*

The American Association of Advertising Agencies (4A’s) created the Equity & Inclusion Congress, which met in September 2020 to address the advertising industry’s complicity in upholding systemic racism and how to address resultant issues (Boulton, 2020). An Equity & Inclusion Manifesto was created with over 300 people on Zoom to answer shareholders' questions. The manifesto stated that the “\$8 billion spent on diversity training has not produced measurable outcomes” and that leadership must have annual reviews and bonuses that are based on performance, specifically diversity KPIs (Boulton, 2020). It also challenged itself to “align the numbers of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx professionals in advertising with their relative percentage of the U.S. population” in 10 years (Boulton, 2020).

To increase the chances of success of DE&I initiatives, some companies form a Diversity and Inclusion Council consisting of a representative group from the organization that meets regularly to review and advance the firm’s DE&I goals. According to Atcheson (2020), topics regarding available resources,

talent, and scope of the council should be addressed. One such type of council is populated by senior-leadership who can make business decisions, though other companies may enjoin junior or mid-level talent.

Pinterest partnered with the NAACP to form an Inclusion Advisory council, to meet regularly with its executives (Cohen, 2020). Two former black female employees at Pinterest, Ifeoma Ozoma and Aerica Shimizu Banks, raised issues of salary and leveling that came with working at the company, after which more people of diverse backgrounds were hired in senior roles and two people of color were added to its board of directors. TikTok created a 3-month program to support Black creatives and facilitate conversations between them, Black entrepreneurs, celebrities, and Tik Tok executives. The company apologized to Black creators ‘who have felt unsafe, unsupported, or suppressed’ and felt their content wasn’t getting promoted like their white counterparts (Rosenblatt, 2021). In May 2020, people protested on the app “against the suppression of Black voices” (Rosenblatt, 2021). Some creators felt TikTok’s apology was genuine and saw their content promotions increase while others said they did not notice a change. TikTok also partnered with Macro, a media company dedicated to representing BIPOC perspectives, to fund creators through grant funding (Rosenblatt, 2021).

*Resources for Corporate Recruiters (see Table 3)*

Several companies including Publicis and Omnicom “shared their workforce diversity data as a part of #CommitToChange, an initiative started by advocacy group 600 & Rising” (Smiley, 2020). Learning and mentorship programs were created. The brand experience agency Elephant, owned by IPG, created a “six-week experience design program called Elephant XD Academy” that was targeted toward BIPOC students when their internships were canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Smiley, 2020). Droga5’s D5in10 Academy featured a free 10-week crash course in creative focused on getting working adults into the advertising industry for the first time. Global head of diversity and inclusion Tiffany Edwards reported that 83% of participants were “racially diverse” (Smiley, 2020). The Growth Initiative, created by Keni Thacker, was described as “an eight-week program for multicultural college students that focuses on providing real-world marketing and advertising experience”. BBDO New York partnered with Thacker to create “Beyond Introductions” where the students of the Growth Initiative were given 25-minute virtual chats with agency employees to foster relationships. Thacker contended that “[finding] simple ways to slowly start to fix the problem is how we’re actually going to fix the problem” (Smiley, 2020).

Debunking misconceptions, avoiding tokenism, and creating equality through data has been shown to improve diversity and inclusion (Williams, 2019; Mander, 2021), as has focusing on in-depth learning and creating safe spaces where various perspectives are welcome and encouraged (Stone, 2021; “How Agencies”, 2019). Diversity training has different levels of effectiveness depending on the individual (Lindsey et al, 2017; Bourke & Titus, 2019). Mentorship and sponsorship programs for employees have been shown to stimulate career advancement and therefore increase retention because employees feel they are valued (Pace, 2018; Castellano, 2021; Toppin, 2018; Ward, 2020; Henderson, 2020). Leadership that makes inclusion a priority can increase employees’ commitment to the company, which in turn can lead to overall improved performance (Brimhall, 2019).

Integrating DE&I into brand messaging: The URICA! Model

In researching programs and approaches for DE&I efforts in advertising agencies, no examples could be found that discussed *internal processes or structured approaches* related to the advertising work product. The dearth of this type of specific information could be due to the proprietary nature of advertising development processes, which would mitigate against their being shared publicly. We asked: How can those who call for, concept and craft marketing messages align with DE&I in the course of their

everyday work? The URICA! Model is an attempt to facilitate that alignment in a variety of settings, as we explain below.

### Three iterations of the URICA! Model

Figure 1 depicts the original URICA! model that was submitted for a project on digital blackface in an advertising account planning class. The purpose of the project was to familiarize the class with the disturbing practice of digital blackface, to trace its origins and uses, and to suggest how brands could avoid falling into trendy albeit misguided popular culture traps that might promote insensitive or offensive messages. The original version was clearly focused on steps that advertising *creative staff* could take to avoid mistakes based on their lack of information or sensitivity to cultural realities, and the importance of conducting brand and consumer research to gauge brand ‘fit’ of any given message or image.

Figure 2 is the second iteration of the URICA! model, as it was further extended to encompass the topic of DE&I and its possible incorporation into communication strategies. Companies are guided through steps to keep them aligned with their diversity and inclusion vision. Some activities explained in the model are similar to what a communication strategist would normally undertake such as research, informing other employees and management of findings, and risk consideration. It was hoped that Version 2 of the model would offer a direct and uncomplicated process primarily to inform external brand communications while also teaching employees internally how to improve their own DE&I practices. A test of URICA! model Version 2

Six advertising professors and six advertising executives provided feedback to Version 2 of the URICA! model. Without any accompanying explanation, the model (Figure 2) was sent as an email attachment to the reviewers, who were asked three questions:

First, “What was your first reaction to the URICA! model as depicted?” Secondly, “What, if anything, do you believe adopting the URICA! model in class and/or in a professional advertising setting (agency, client, etc.) would achieve?” And thirdly, “How, if at all, could the URICA! model be improved/revised/edited/clarified/etc.?”

#### *First reaction*

Instructors reacted favorably to the model’s name, but some mentioned that it was not completely clear and might benefit from an explanatory subtitle. Commented one professor, “I love the name, but it needs a sub-title. Exactly what is this and what is it for?” Another wrote “My first thought was that I loved the name URICA!! I saw it as a play off of Eureka.”

The advertising professionals offered substantially longer comments about their initial reactions and assessment. One commented “It’s a great idea that I wish I had!” They continued: “This interlocks diversity within the agency process, easily adaptable, creates an intentional step to make the brand stronger and work better by being culturally inclusive. Unfortunately, diversity is often overlooked until casting specs are written and then it often feels forced and is inauthentic. This could help alleviate that issue by integrating cultural inclusivity from the strategy all the way through execution.” Another simply said: “Smart. This is a great idea that should be considered at every brand if it is not already.”

Another strategist likened URICA! to a pilot’s checklist: “My first reaction is that it seems simple. But that is not a bad thing! A lot of things go wrong simply because no one stopped to think about how something would look, sound or be perceived outside of their in-group. While the advocate step seems to be about the long-term solution (have a more diverse team), the other steps offer a pilot’s checklist that will help anyone think about DE&I in a repeatable framework. I think if each step is

executed carefully, it will result in a nice set of guard rails that would catch a lot of the uninformed missteps that we see.” Another commented that URICA! represented a “Useful acronym that could assist in understanding the process for successful brand communication. Reference to ‘consider’ seems very appropriate for creative teams when designing brand communications.” One advertising agency CMO echoed the professors’ concern about lack of context, saying “Typically you have to acknowledge where you have come from to move forward...It feels like there are a few steps that might already encompass this, but without a ton of context, figured I'd call it out.”

*Effects of using URICA!*

Professors welcomed the prospect of a teaching and discussion tool they could use in class to facilitate conversations about DE&I issues involved with planning and producing advertising. One commented: “I think it could be helpful to teach how to integrate DE&I considerations into brand management. Models are always helpful in the classroom because they explain/illustrate complex ideas.” Another commented that it would serve as a guide to “authentically participate in these conversations.” Another professor said that more detail would be helpful, and that “with some clarification, I think this model can offer a good road map for brands who want to incorporate DEI to their business practices.” One mentioned their own course protocols around content creation and said “I’m not sure this is really much different than what we already do in campaigns (class).”

Again, advertising executives who evaluated the model were more effusive in their reactions. Each is presented below:

*It would help to reduce unconscious bias. We tend to move so fast that it's easy to get tunnel-vision. Something like this could create more intention behind checking biases and avoiding cultural myopia.*

*Heightened awareness among well-meaning people who genuinely want to take steps on DE&I but inadvertently blunder and/or do not understand the consequences of their words and actions....Love that this is forward-looking instead of putting DEI always in a “reactive” lens.*

*Part of the human challenge is that people are uncomfortable talking about these topics so weaving this type of thinking into everyday due diligence makes people practice and live it.*

*Would hope that most agencies and clients are considering the elements of the model but from recent events, we know that is not true. It could act as a strong reminder that is repeatedly emphasized.*

*Most marketers are well-meaning individuals with the desire to do right by their consumers. When considering inclusive marketing efforts, they often lack the confidence to start, don't know where to begin, or simply don't have the time. URICA provides a simple, time-saving model for these marketers that gives them a framework of where to start, what to consider, and how best to communicate.*

*I really think it comes back to that guard rail thing. Long term organizations will hopefully become more diverse, in the short term there are a lot of people used to bouncing around in their bubble and not thinking about broader impacts or interpretations of their work. I see the accessible framework of URICA! as being a very useful tool to help those who are starting to wonder how they and their organization can do less harm while working towards a truly equitable organization.*

*How could URICA! be improved?*

Professors again offered specifics, primarily in the way of questions, about clarifications to the model. One asked “Don’t you also need to do other things to communicate the brand’s position on the issue beyond posting a visual?”, and another “What is the problem you want to solve?” Another professor asked “Data. Which data? Again, I am not sure. I think a few bullet points in each step may more clearly communicate what each step involves/stands for.” “I’m sure their situation analysis probably fleshes out much of this,” commented another. The last comment was “You may want some examples for each part of the model...add some more description.”

Advertising professionals also expressed desire for specificity and explanation. One commented “Frameworks tend to become cumbersome and perceived as another layer to manage, so any way to tighten the scope and create repeatable steps will help with adoption.” Another asked “Who leads this? Is this an internal group of brand leaders or an external person (maybe with some expertise in DEI issues?)...Also are there a few broad questions that could be bullet points in ‘Understand’ to make this more tangible - what kinds of issues are we trying to understand?” Another interpreted the word ‘visual’ as limiting: “...this could be bigger than ‘posting a visual’ - does it weigh the options of any brand action or communication?” Two professionals asked about a feedback mechanism: “Many good processes have a feedback loop. Is there something to be noted to capture learning and build them into the brand’s baseline history documents so any new insights can be baked in for future efforts?” Another asked: “How is this sustainable? The very nature of the model is linear, so I wonder what happens when you get to ‘advocate.’ Do you start over?”

URICA! Version 3 re-design and verbiage

Adding a framework that can keep companies aligned with their goals provides a way to improve current DE&I initiatives as well as future ones -- hence the final proposed solution of URICA!. With adherence to the five pillars of unite, research, inform, consider, and advocate, we believe companies may have an easier time creating long-lasting initiatives that reap long-term benefits. As described below, Version 3 incorporates much of the faculty and professional feedback that was offered in response to Version 2.

**Unite.** The first call to action is to unite. As potentially pollyanna as that word might sound, it is absolutely critical to deriving the best work from a team. The importance of finding one’s voice as an underrepresented employee and having the personal agency or confidence to speak up when something doesn’t seem right, is emphasized with this one simple command: Unite. Individuals either internally or externally who come from various backgrounds with expertise in multiple disciplines must collaborate and cooperate in order to create a full view of what success looks like.

**Research.** The second call to action is research. A company must understand where it has been before it can know where it’s going. Understanding cultural, political, personal and marketplace context is critical in making appropriate adjustments in the brand’s current environment.

**Inform.** The third call to action is to inform. Employees inform each other, strategic messaging is informed by society, and a brand informs its stakeholders every time it speaks or acts. Similar to the contention that it takes a village to raise a child, it takes an entire company’s inclusive perspective to successfully execute ideas and messaging that will be received as authentic by audiences. Employees ranging from the C-Suite to the junior level must have sufficient knowledge in their respective areas of technical expertise as well as awareness of societal trends in order to make informed and appropriate decisions for their company and consumers.



Consider. The fourth call to action is to consider. Everyone in the process must weigh the options of sending a message and take into account how it will be received given the company's history and the current socio-political climate. The ability of decision-makers and influencers to "put themselves in another's shoes" and exercise empathy is key to this phase.

Advocate. The fifth and final call to action is to advocate. DE&I isn't just a human resources problem. It's a creative problem. It's a media problem. It's a tech problem. Everyone has a role to play individually and in concert before real change can occur. Ensuring that employees feel like they belong as well as showing consumers that the company believes in more than making a profit will allow the best work to emerge and has the best chance of cultivating loyalty to the company's mission.

### *Discussion*

Analysis of current research and commentary revealed that although DE&I in corporate America is definitely at the forefront of business conversation, few if any concrete actions in terms of internal processes for conceptualizing, producing and vetting brand messages are offered in detail. In the course of creating a project for an account planning class, a graduate student produced a process model they felt could be introduced to advertising planners, strategists and creatives that would act as a reminder of the value of cultural intelligence and could also potentially avert the all-too-common cultural faux pas that have characterized many U.S. ad messages.

The tested and updated URICA! protocol may help organizations create sustainable DE&I communications by internalizing a fairly simple but thorough process of *shared thinking* and *weighing of options and outcomes* before communicating in a variety of contexts and channels. Advertising is a global industry, and it is important to note that one limitation of this study is that it was conceived, created and concept-tested among U.S. academics and communications professionals, whose U.S.-centric view of DE&I can result in a global blindspot (Digiday, 2023). URICA! was designed to be broadly applicable, and future trials of the model should include communicators in other geographic areas, where issues of diversity might focus more on age and gender than race.

The business case for diversity having been made, the advertising industry in particular has a duty to itself and to society to promote positive social change. It is a unique industry that reflects culture as well as shapes it. In order to do that successfully, a communications strategy that allows the industry to keep itself in check and optimize the work of a diverse group of employees could prove valuable. The model can guide and remind organizational communicators to take into consideration multiple points of view throughout the planning process.

URICA! represents five pillars that can help communicators keep the promises they are making about DE&I, reassess brand communications, and implement improvements when necessary. The versatile model can also be used with students during the formative years of their advertising education or other training, in the hopes that their appreciation and respect for differing views and nuanced receptivity to brand messaging will be enhanced.

Far from a 'quick fix' for issues of systemic racism in advertising or elsewhere, the URICA! model might best be viewed in terms like those Keni Thacker (Smiley 2021) used to describe the "simple ways to slowly start to fix the problem" by augmenting and supplementing existing processes of brand strategy and communication in a way that makes a small, sustainable and positive difference. Beyond the potential value of the URICA! model itself, we hope that the research and analysis that led to the creation of DE&I Proposed Solutions tables in this paper can serve as resources for professors, students and professionals as they seek opportunities to participate in increasing levels of diversity, equity and inclusion in their respective environments.

**Table 1. Selected Proposed Solutions for Promoting Sustainable DE&I for Education**

<p>Apple’s Propel Center  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://propelcenter.org/#">https://propelcenter.org/#</a></p>
<p>Blacks at Microsoft Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/programs/blacks-scholarships.aspx">https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/diversity/programs/blacks-scholarships.aspx</a></p>
<p>Solve &amp; Morgan State University’s HBCU Ad Program  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.solve-ideas.com/solve-inspires-industry-diversity-through-academic-partnership-with-morgan-state-university/">https://www.solve-ideas.com/solve-inspires-industry-diversity-through-academic-partnership-with-morgan-state-university/</a></p>
<p>Miami Ad School Minority Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://miamiadschool.com/blog/200000-in-minority-advertising-scholarships-">https://miamiadschool.com/blog/200000-in-minority-advertising-scholarships-</a></p>
<p>Colorful: A Prelude to Young Guns 19 Global BIPOC Grant  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://enter.youngguns.org/">https://enter.youngguns.org/</a></p>
<p>MDG “Looking Beyond College” Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.mdgadvertising.com/scholarship/">https://www.mdgadvertising.com/scholarship/</a></p>
<p>Helen Lansdowne Resor Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://foundation.aaaa.org/helen-lansdowne-resor-scholarship.html">https://foundation.aaaa.org/helen-lansdowne-resor-scholarship.html</a></p>
<p>Bill Bernbach Diversity Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://foundation.aaaa.org/bill-bernbach-diversity-scholarship.html">https://foundation.aaaa.org/bill-bernbach-diversity-scholarship.html</a></p>
<p>AMA Diversity Leadership Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.ama.org/ama-diversity-leadership-scholarship/">https://www.ama.org/ama-diversity-leadership-scholarship/</a></p>
<p>Digitas Multicultural Scholarship Award  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://foundation.aaaa.org/digitas-multicultural-scholarship.html">https://foundation.aaaa.org/digitas-multicultural-scholarship.html</a></p>
<p>The Bill Sharp Award  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://foundation.aaaa.org/bill-sharp-award.html">https://foundation.aaaa.org/bill-sharp-award.html</a></p>
<p>Dream in Color Grant  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.womenwhocreate.org/grant-application">https://www.womenwhocreate.org/grant-application</a></p>
<p>Alliance for Women in Media Foundation  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://allwomeninmedia.org/foundation/scholarships/">https://allwomeninmedia.org/foundation/scholarships/</a></p>
<p>New York Women in Communications Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://scholarships.nywici.org/">https://scholarships.nywici.org/</a></p>
<p>AMA Valuing Diversity PHD Scholarship  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.ama.org/valuing-diversity-phd-scholarship/">https://www.ama.org/valuing-diversity-phd-scholarship/</a></p>

PRSA Diversity Multicultural Scholarship

Website: <https://www.prsafoundation.org/scholarships-awards/prsa-diversity-multicultural-scholarship/>

**Table 2. Selected Proposed Solutions for Promoting Sustainable DE&I for Professionals**

<p>Pinterest &amp; NAACP Inclusion Advisory Council  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://newsroom.pinterest.com/en/post/pinterest-inclusion-advisory-council">https://newsroom.pinterest.com/en/post/pinterest-inclusion-advisory-council</a></p>
<p>Asian American Advertising Federation  <i>Website:</i> <a href="http://www.3af.org/">http://www.3af.org/</a></p>
<p>Lean In's 50 Ways to Fight Bias  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://leanin.org/50-ways-to-fight-gender-bias">https://leanin.org/50-ways-to-fight-gender-bias</a></p>
<p>3% Movement  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.3percentmovement.com/movement">https://www.3percentmovement.com/movement</a></p>
<p>Ladies Get Paid  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.ladiesgetpaid.com/">https://www.ladiesgetpaid.com/</a></p>
<p>WAATBP (Where Are All The Black People)  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.waatbp.org/">https://www.waatbp.org/</a></p>
<p>The One Club for Creativity  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.oneclub.org/">https://www.oneclub.org/</a></p>
<p>Color of Change  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://colorofchange.org/">https://colorofchange.org/</a></p>
<p>ColorComm Professional Network  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.colorcommnetwork.com/">https://www.colorcommnetwork.com/</a></p>
<p>#HIREBLACK Initiative Community  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.hireblacknow.com/">https://www.hireblacknow.com/</a></p>
<p>Hue  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.wearehue.org/">https://www.wearehue.org/</a></p>
<p>Black Creatives: The Global Network for Multicultural Talent  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.blackcreatives.com/">https://www.blackcreatives.com/</a></p>
<p>600 &amp; Rising  <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.600andrising.com/">https://www.600andrising.com/</a></p>

The Female Lead <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.thefemalelead.com/">https://www.thefemalelead.com/</a>
Boss Women Media Group <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://bosswomen.org/">https://bosswomen.org/</a>
Boss Women Collective <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://linktr.ee/bosswomencollective">https://linktr.ee/bosswomencollective</a>

**Table 3. Selected Proposed Solutions for Promoting Sustainable DE&I for Recruitment**

Instagram “We Create” Campaign <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://business.instagram.com/we-create">https://business.instagram.com/we-create</a>
4A’s MAIP <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://foundation.aaaa.org/maip.html">https://foundation.aaaa.org/maip.html</a>
The Marcus Graham Project <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://marcusgrahamproject.org/">https://marcusgrahamproject.org/</a>
Wieden+Kennedy ADMAGIC <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.wk.com/news/admagic/">https://www.wk.com/news/admagic/</a>
100 Roses From Concrete G.R.O.W.T.H Virtual Ad Agency Initiative <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.100rosesfromconcrete.com/">https://www.100rosesfromconcrete.com/</a>
Women Who Create Mentorship Program <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.womenwhocreate.org/mentorship">https://www.womenwhocreate.org/mentorship</a>
She Runs It <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://sherunsit.org/">https://sherunsit.org/</a>
Diverse Creatives <i>Website:</i> <a href="http://www.diversecreatives.com/">http://www.diversecreatives.com/</a>
Toni Speed Mentoring Series <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/toniii/">https://www.facebook.com/groups/toniii/</a>
The Strategy Room Mentorship Program <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8941783/">https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8941783/</a>
We Are Next <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://we-are-next.com/">https://we-are-next.com/</a>
4A’s The Project Act Fund <i>Website:</i> <a href="https://foundation.aaaa.org/project-act.html">https://foundation.aaaa.org/project-act.html</a>
AAF MPMS

Forum on Public Policy

*Website:*

[https://www.aaf.org/Public/Public/Events/Awards/Most\\_Promising\\_Multicultural\\_Students/MPMS\\_Home.aspx](https://www.aaf.org/Public/Public/Events/Awards/Most_Promising_Multicultural_Students/MPMS_Home.aspx)

ADCOLOR

*Website:* <https://adcolor.org/>

ADCOLOR Futures Program

*Website:* <https://adcolor.org/futures/>

c0ffe3

*Website:* <https://www.linkedin.com/company/c0ffe3/>

Advertising for Change

*Website:* <https://advertisingforchange.org/>

Figure 1. Version 1 of URICA!

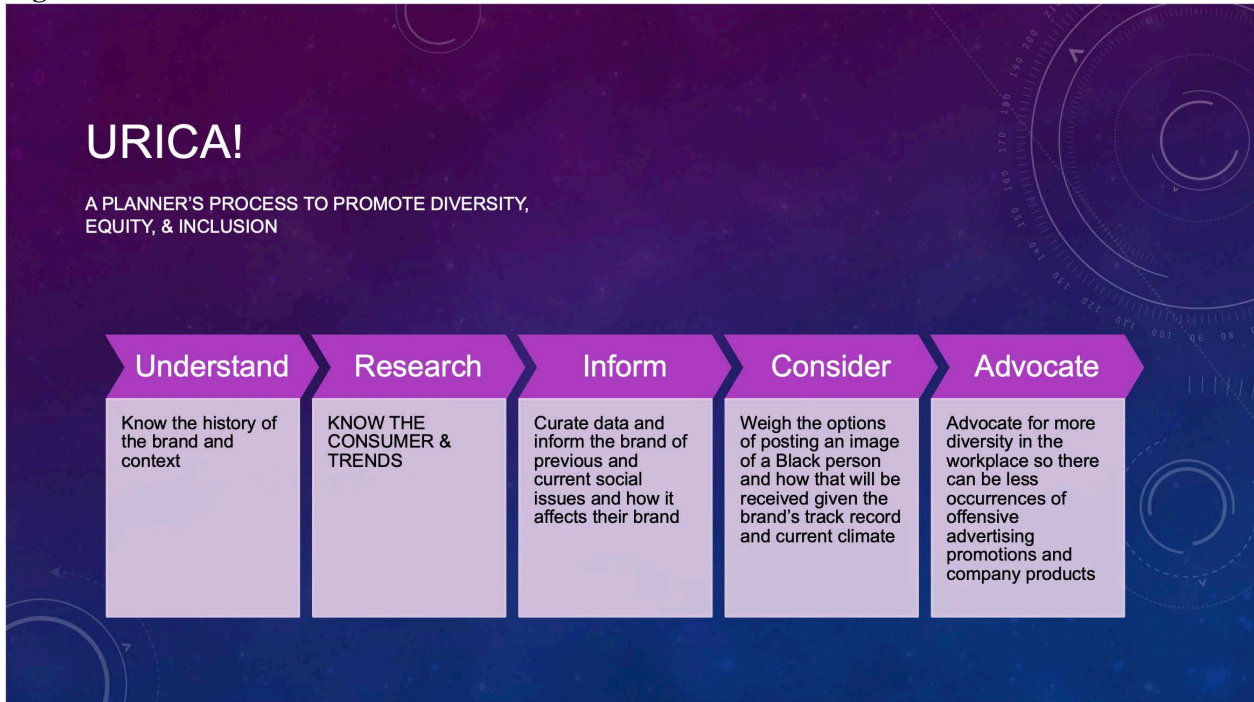
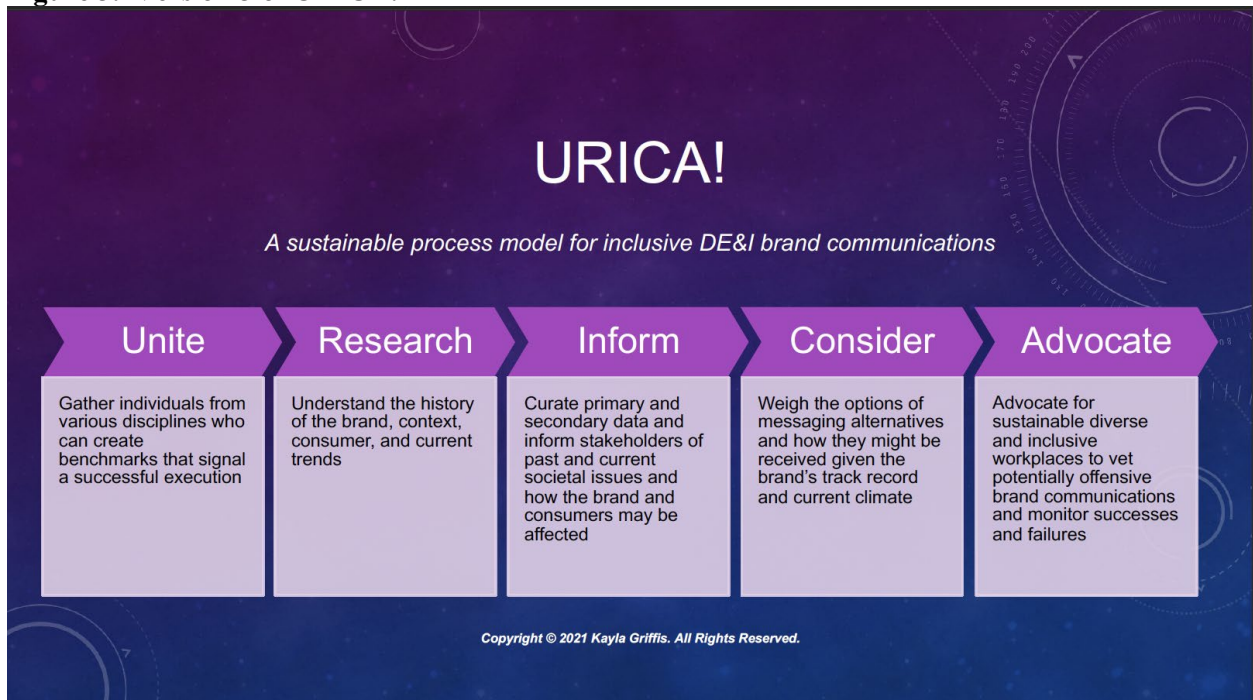


Figure 2. Version 2 of URICA!



Figure 3. Version 3 of URICA!



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