

SPARK! JEDI

JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION

ANNUAL REPORT



spkjedi@bu.edu

www.bu.edu/spark/

Boston University Center for
Computing & Data Sciences
665 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, MA
02215
Floor 2, BU Spark! Space

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
2. WHAT IS SPARK! JEDI?	2
3. THE JEDI TEAM	3
a. DEI in Tech Course	4
b. DEI Tech Collective	4
c. DEI Training: Ignite & Clubs	4
4. INITIATIVES	5
a. DEI in Tech Collective	5
i. Project Descriptions	6
ii. Data Analysis	7
b. CDS DS 291: Exploring Tech In DEI	8
i. Project Descriptions	9
ii. Data Analysis	10
c. Student Consulting Group	11
i. Project Descriptions	12
ii. Data Analysis	13
5. PROCESS SUMMARY	14
6. CONCLUSION	15
7. NEXT STEPS	16
8. CONTRIBUTORS	17
9. RESOURCES.....	18

WHAT IS



JEDI?

Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
Ambassadors lead and build DEI skills
among students, provide education
and training opportunities about DEI in
tech and monitor culture climate
among tech students at BU.

➤ **DS 291**

Exploring
DEI in
Tech
Course

➤ **Tech Collective**

Research and
data collection
on the state of
student
computing

➤ **Consulting**

DEI
Training
Initiative

The JEDI Team!

**DEI IN TECH
COURSE**

**DEI TECH
COLLECTIVE**

**DEI IN TRAINING:
IGNITE & CLUBS**

The JEDI Team!

Project Managers



Shateva Long

DEI Tech Collective



Junia Janvier

DEI in Training , DEI in
Tech Course

Ambassadors



Ashley Anyanwu

Hannah Dedji

Maya Frazier

Ella Hain

Asianna Haughton

Rashik Hossain

Lamese Ibrahim

Amelia Liston

Anissa Patel

Nhan Ton

DEI in Training

DEI in Training

DEI in Training

DEI in Training

DEI in Tech Course

DEI Tech Collective

DEI Tech Collective

DEI in Training

DEI in Training, DEI in
Tech Course

DEI in Tech Course

DEI Tech Collective

The DEI Tech collective is an initiative comprised of representatives from computer science, data science, engineering, and other computing-related departments and units at Boston University. Together, we are focused on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in our shared community and other aspects of the technology sector.

We specifically address issues including the lack of representation and the inclusion disparities that exist within our community. To learn more, visit our [website](#).

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Increase the collective knowledge of racism and bias, and its impact in tech
- Create an inclusive and equitable tech community at Boston University
- Ensure the involvement of student, staff, and faculty voices in the change-making process
- Foster a shared responsibility in creating a culture of inclusion

Project Descriptions

Project 1: DEI in Tech Climate Survey

In Spring 2022, the DEI Tech Collective administered the first iteration of the DEI in Tech Climate Survey. The main purpose of the survey was to collect data about student experiences and interactions within computing departments at Boston University. These departments include Computer Science, Math and Stats, Data Science, Information Systems, and Computer Engineering. The data was used to identify what students were particularly happy with, where more work needed to be done, and any existing disparities that were concerning.

Project 2: Focus Groups

In Fall 2022, the DEI Tech Collective hosted a series of focus groups. The purpose of the focus groups was to further investigate trends uncovered from the climate survey and humanize the data collected. The sessions also provided an organized forum for students to express their feelings and share experiences that can not be captured by numbers.

Project 3: DEI in Tech Town Hall

The Tech Collective hosts an annual town hall to bring together the entire computing community into one space. During this grand meeting we share recent findings from the data we've collected and engage in discussion surrounding the data. This discussion may brainstorming for solutions to issues or disparities uncovered from student experiences. Department representatives also have the opportunity to share their department's DEI updates to ensure the entire community is aware of their efforts.

Concluding Statement

Through our projects, we work towards our goal to educate the wider computing community on DEI, foster a shared responsibility, amplify and involve voices from the community, and promote inclusion.



**632 Total
Responses**

DATA & ANALYSIS

Summary

Broadly, survey responses point to somewhat favorable experiences within departments and at BU. Within that overall assessment, there are many areas where a sizable percentage of students indicate negative feelings or interactions that need to be addressed. A simple majority responding positively is not a reasonable goal.

Additionally, when responses are evaluated through breakdowns of demographics like race, gender, international status, and first-generation status, the nuances in experiences are demonstrated. Unfavorable experiences tend to be overrepresented in historically excluded populations.

Visit the [full report](#) to review more detailed summaries and to interact with data elements of interest.

CDS DS 291: Spark! Exploring DEI in Technology

This course will explore topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) in the technology sector. Students will start by gaining a foundational understanding of the concepts of identity, intersectionality, and inclusive dialogue. They will then apply this framework to understand issues of DEIJ in the tech sector in Academia and business, and the different technology domains from AI to hardware.

The second part of the course will be focused on leadership and action and includes a final project where students will assess a problem they are passionate about and develop solutions they believe can have impact at BU and beyond. Through this course, students will learn how to engage in and facilitate impactful discussions about diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Foster deep understanding of DEIJ issues in technology, computing, and data sciences.
- Equip students with skills to proactively advocate and disrupt adverse effects of inequity.
- Address bias, micro-aggressions, and ethical dilemmas in computer science and software sector.
- Ideate and implement intervention and advocacy tactics to shift policies, practices, and cultures in STEM and CDS.
- Employ intersectional and holistic understanding of DEIJ in STEM and CDS for transformational leadership, active ally ship, and radical reinvention.

DS 291

Course Content

Lecture Series

The lecture series immerses students in the vital principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI), providing an in-depth exploration of pertinent terminology while uncovering biases in technology, workplace discrimination, and industry challenges regarding recruitment and retention. Additionally, the series delves into post-secondary DEI issues, the STEM pipeline, algorithmic bias, fairness, and biases inherent in hardware, computer vision systems, and UX/UI Design.

Guest Speakers

Our lecture series featured an exceptional lineup of guest speakers, including Seth Villegas, a PhD candidate from BU's School of Theology, and experts from renowned organizations such as Intel, Google, and Snap Inc. Jennifer Cone and Bertrand Saint-Preux shared their insights, along with Jasmine LeFlore from Greater Than Tech and representatives from the Institute for Human Centered Design. Moreover, talented students Shateva Long and Sara Lubin from BU also contributed their perspectives, ensuring a comprehensive and inspiring learning experience for all participants.

Final Project

Students select a domain where they would like to see change occur from a diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice perspective. They research and present a strategy for action including conducting a minimum of 3 interviews with stakeholders who impact or are impacted by the issue they are seeking to address and a projected 6 -month timeline.

Students choose issues in any domain, i.e. an issue in their academic environment, in their community, or in a particular technology domain. Their final proposals cover their understanding of the problem including stakeholder insights, their proposed solution, what the barriers may be to achieving change, and how they would measure and track success. This also includes an accompanied presentation to be shared during the final class.

Pre-Semester Survey Results:

Q. Why did you decide to take this course?

- **A.** "I took this class because as a black woman entering the tech field, I find that DEI and dialogue surrounding these topics are very important."
- **A.** "I decided to take this course because I believe diversity in the technology sector is valuable. As the only girl in all of my high school computer science classes, I experienced lack of diversity and inclusion first hand. Learning about these problems and developing solutions to them is of importance to me provided these previous experiences."

Q. What do you want to gain from this course?

- **A.** "I hope to learn more about the problems within various technology sectors, namely Artificial Intelligence. I also hope to understand how to develop solutions to these problems and further understand why there is a lack of diversity in the technology sector."
- **A.** "I want to gain the ability to become more tolerant, knowledgeable and open minded regarding certain aspects of diversity, inclusion and equity in technology. As a woman and person of color, I know there are multiple intersectionalities that make my position in the world and my story unique."

DATA & ANALYSIS

Post-Semester Survey Results:

Q. Would you recommend this course to a peer?

- **A.** "Yes, I would. I found the course highly beneficial in terms of both educating me about DEI and pushing me to become better. I highly enjoyed the format and the discussions in class."

Q. Who was your favorite speaker in the course? Why?

- **A.** "I most enjoyed the speaker from Snap Inc., Bertrand Saint-Preux, who discussed Computer Vision. Considering this is an app that I regularly engage with, it was interesting to hear about the racial inequities within the camera itself and how the speaker brought attention to them and took initiative to make improvements."

Student Consulting Group

The student consulting group (SCG) is a student-run program that provides consultation services to students and the Spark! community. Working heavily with the Ignite Student Council, a collection of leaders in the computing community, the SCG has provided trainings and programming to increase awareness and understanding of JEDI related topics.

Some of the accomplishments of the SCG to date include in-person trainings related to DEI in tech, focused on Action, Community, and Data. These trainings have reached over 50 students, with plans to expand further into the Spark! community. In accordance with the in-person trainings, the SCG also recently developed an online module for DEI in tech, with collaboration from the entire consulting team.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Increase awareness and understanding about topics related to DEI in tech
- Provide 1 on 1 consulting services to interested student clubs and the Spark! community
- Host trainings and workshops in multiple areas across DEI in tech
- Complete an online training module to increase outreach

Project Descriptions

Project 1: Ignite In-Person Trainings

One of the main projects the SCG worked on this semester, and in past semesters, includes in-person DEI trainings for the Ignite Student Council. Each of these workshops covers topics such as Action-Oriented thinking, Community, and Data-Driven DEI. In each training, participants engaged in short lectures and activities to better understand the importance of DEI in technology. The SCG plans to expand these trainings to the broader Spark! community and beyond.

Project 2: Online Module

Another notable project the SCG worked on this semester is the online training module in DEI - Foundations: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Technology. Each section of the online training guides participants through slides and activities informing the participants of the current climate in the technology, and how DEI can improve in technology. Each training was curated by members of the SCG, including animated videos. Additionally, this online training encourages participants to self-reflect on their progress and learning throughout the module.

Concluding Statement

The SCG will continue to develop new projects as the program continues to run, and will work to improve upon the current projects as needed in order to ensure they are up to date and are continuing to educate the community.

Action-Oriented Thinking:

Q. What's one thing you'd like to STOP doing in your org to promote JEDI on campus...

Notable responses:

"Making groups within the club" - SHPE

"Having the same people table at every splash so we have a better shot at attracting new faces." - CleanTech Club

Q. What's one thing you'd like to CONTINUE doing in your org to promote JEDI on campus...

Notable responses:

"Continue reaching out to new students and encouraging them to join the club regardless of skill or experience level " - BUHPC + SHPE

"We will continue to advise it with our club to our members bc we are a minority club it is something that we will never stop fighting for." - NSBE

DATA & ANALYSIS

Community:

Level of skill or knowledge:
prior to the training:

- **7.7% Excellent**
- **38.5% Very Good**
- **38.5% Satisfactory**
- **15.4% Fair**

After the trainings :

- **38.5% Excellent**
- **38.5% Very Good**
- **23.1% Satisfactory**

Data Driven DEI:

Level of skill or knowledge:
prior to the training:

- **22.2% Very Good**
- **77.8% Satisfactory**

After the trainings:

- **22.2% Excellent**
- **66.7% Very Good**
- **11.1% Satisfactory**

Analysis

According to the survey results, there were significant jumps in the participants' understanding of the topics discussed in the DEI trainings. Additionally, the participants are aware of various ways in which their clubs/organizations may not have incorporated DEI. However, the participants were able to identify these faults and identified solutions to promote DEI within their clubs/organizations after taking the trainings.

Next Steps and Conclusion

- To acquire first-year metrics and data from the initial rollout of the Foundations: DEI in Tech Blackboard Ultra Training
- To collaborate with the Learning Ambassadors to incorporate Tech Talk speakers that coincide with our DEI objectives
- To foster cohesion among all three JEDI tracks through more frequent communication and programming
- To seek learning opportunities both inside and outside BU for JEDI employee enrichment, particularly incoming ambassadors
- To develop and facilitate inaugural All-Employee Trainings to the BU Spark community, and measure the impact of content
- To standardize ways to effectively measure the JEDI impact of training and workshops, to create an ongoing analysis of work

For this inaugural JEDI term, we amassed a dedicated group of students who were able to support in developing foundational systems, programming, and workflows, that will inform future iterations of JEDI in their work. In the future, JEDI will continue cultivating an inclusive technical community and fostering collectivism in the DEI space at BU.

RESOURCES

[BU SPARK!](#)

[Getting Started](#)

[DS 219: Spark! Exploring DEI in Tech](#)

[DEI Tech Collective](#)