2017–2022
Diversity and Inclusion
Strategic Action Plan
and Report to the University (Draft)

Submitted By:
Members of the Council for Inclusive Excellence and Equity
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Executive Summary

Our public urban university is among the most diverse higher education institutions in the commonwealth, measured using key student demographics such as gender, race and ethnicity. That said, we are keenly aware that a diverse student body does not ensure the existence of a welcoming, inclusive and equitable learning and working environment where we honor, respect and engage with differences in our community. That is why an active, intentional and ongoing commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity through our community building, our curriculum and co-curriculum, and our engagement with communities beyond the university is central to the university’s mission.

The Council for Inclusive Excellence and Equity (CIEE, or council) was officially established through President Rao’s appointment of the 24-member group in August 2015. The council’s membership includes students, staff and faculty; spans the various administrative areas of the campus; and is representative of the vice presidents’ units. CIEE’s charge was to provide broad-based recommendations to the president – through the vice president for inclusive excellence – on issues, policies and practices that affect the university’s inclusive excellence work and support for its widely diverse population of students, staff and faculty. The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan was created through the CIEE’s working committees and steering committee. The plan is informed by findings from the 2016 climate surveys, which were distributed to faculty, staff and students; Diversity and Inclusion Cafes; the president’s Social Justice Forums; and numerous meetings, interviews and correspondence with students, faculty, staff, alumni and other constituent groups.

The framework to measure progress toward VCU’s inclusive excellence ideals has four key themes connected by an assessment process. These themes provide a guiding structure for the development of an action plan to make excellence inclusive:

- Institutional commitment
- Campus climate and intergroup relations
- Recruitment, retention and success
- Education, scholarship and research

The themes are grounded in national frameworks developed to advance diversity, inclusion and equity in higher education institutions. They are meant to guide rather than dictate the framing of how the university and its various academic and administrative units will define the work they will undertake. Listed below are the strategic goals for each of the thematic areas and the assessment process.

I. Institutional Commitment: Dedicate resources, establish intentional and committed initiatives, and act to advance diversity, inclusion and equity at all institutional levels.
- Provide clear, cohesive and comprehensive communication regarding diversity, inclusion and equity to all university stakeholders.
- Build and sustain the infrastructure to enhance diversity, inclusion and equity at all levels of the university to support teaching, research, scholarship, creative expression and service.
- Provide resource supports for diversity and inclusion initiatives aligned to strengthen our university’s academic mission of teaching, research scholarship, creative expression and service.
- Ensure accountability for the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan at all institutional levels and across all constituencies.

2. Climate and Intergroup Relations: Create and sustain a welcoming climate of inclusion where individuals of differing cultural backgrounds, identities, abilities and life experiences are welcomed, valued and supported in their learning, working and living.
  - Create and sustain a climate where all members of the VCU community from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and part of a university-wide community.
  - Create and maintain a living, learning and working environment where everyone feels respected, supported and valued, and where everyone has agency and voice.
  - Create and maintain a living, learning and working environment characterized by respect, support, where people of diverse backgrounds share experiences.
  - Ensure that the buildings and facilities are welcoming and accessible for all people and cultures, and, where feasible, are arranged to facilitate cross-cultural interaction.

3. Recruitment, Retention and Success: Intentionally attract and retain a diverse faculty, staff and student body, with reflective and deliberate attention to community needs. Implement strategies for enhancing recruitment, retention and success.
  - Enroll, retain, support and graduate a diverse undergraduate, graduate and professional student body.
  - Proactively attract, recruit, support and retain a diverse faculty and staff population who have voice and agency in helping to shape the Great Place Culture we seek.

4. Education, Scholarship and Research: Provide rich teaching, learning, research, scholarly, creative and service experiences to prepare all students for global citizenship. Support faculty, staff and student research, scholarship and creative expression that address diversity and inclusion issues in disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.
  - Increase the proactive, ongoing university support of research, scholarship and creative expression addressing diversity and inclusion issues in disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields, including those initiatives that harness the benefits of diversity in areas not traditionally viewed through a diversity lens.
  - Increase and assess diversity-rich learning curricular and co-curricular experiences that raise students’ critical self-awareness and cultural competency, increase understanding of global diversity, and encourage engagement in the greater community.
  - Develop comprehensive resources for faculty to learn, use and evaluate inclusive teaching practices that foster communication, collaboration and relationship building across differences, and support curricular transformations that are reflective of this type of education, research and scholarship.

5. Assessment Process: The assessment process offers an important means to monitor progress toward goals and ensure accountability in the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan. It serves to inform, support and report on efforts to improve diversity, inclusion and equity among all VCU stakeholders in alignment with the university’s mission and strategic goals.
  - Establish and track accountability measures for each theme.
  - Establish institutional baseline metrics and identify gaps in the monitoring of progress toward the university’s goals and initiatives to advance diversity, inclusion and equity.
  - Design and deploy climate surveys and focus groups to monitor, assess and report on VCU’s climate around diversity, inclusion and equity.
  - Monitor, assess and report on progress in achieving goals and targets, and communicate findings to the broader university community.
The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan, Quest for Distinction, the Affirmative Action Plan and the Health Equity Strategic Plan weave together a comprehensive strategy for inclusive excellence at VCU. Virginia Commonwealth University is at a significant juncture in time, and has the unique opportunity to demonstrate in real, meaningful and impactful ways its institutional commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity. The focus of that commitment is to build a caring community that appreciates, welcomes and is ready to harness the unique talents and expertise of our widely diverse and dynamic community.
Diversity ... is not casual liberal tolerance of anything not yourself. It is not polite accommodation. Instead, diversity is, in action, the sometimes painful awareness that other people, other races, other voices, other habits of mind have as much integrity of being, as much claim on the world as you do. ... And I urge you, amid all the differences present to the eye and mind, to reach out to create the bond that ... will protect us all. We are all meant to be here together.

William Merritt Chase

Diversity is a hallmark of VCU that truly differentiates us as an institution of higher education.

Michael Rao, Ph.D., President, VCU and VCU Health System

Introduction

As an institution of higher learning, Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) chooses to be engaged with and respond thoughtfully and intentionally to the social and demographic changes that are transforming our society. To that end, VCU will intentionally integrate its efforts at achieving inclusive excellence into the core aspects of the institution – its academic priorities, leadership, quality improvement initiatives, decision-making, day-to-day operations, community engagement and organizational cultures. Every member of the university community has a stake in VCU’s achievement of inclusive excellence. This plan challenges every member of this university community to embrace diversity, inclusion and equity as core values and to coordinate efforts to make excellence through diversity real at VCU.

For VCU, diversity includes characteristics of race, age, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, migratory status, abilities, political affiliation, veteran status and socioeconomic background. It also includes differences in backgrounds, ideas, thought, values and beliefs. In addition, diversity is associated with principles of inclusion and the creation of safe and supportive environments where differences are respected, particularly with regard to historically underrepresented groups and legally protected categories and characteristics by which individuals identify.1 Virginia Commonwealth University is a microcosm of a global dynamic pluralism.

VCU is capitalizing on opportunities to launch new initiatives that will redouble efforts to achieve greater gains in access, diversity, urban outreach, equity and inclusion. These initiatives allow the university to establish innovative goals, chart new pathways, review current practices, assess progress and celebrate our successes. They support VCU’s goal to be recognized as a leader and innovator in diversity, inclusion and equity in higher education – a critical and core priority for a premier public urban research university.

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan, Quest for Distinction, the Affirmative Action Plan, and the Health Equity Strategic Plan weave together a comprehensive strategy for inclusive excellence at VCU. Virginia Commonwealth University is at a significant juncture in time, and has the unique opportunity to demonstrate in real, meaningful and impactful ways its institutional commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity. The focus of that commitment is to build on the foundation of a caring community that appreciates, welcomes and is ready to harness the unique talents and expertise of our widely diverse and dynamic community.

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1 For a glossary of terminology, please see Appendix X.
Inclusiveness in higher education\(^2\) has become a national priority, as seen in the commitments of accrediting agencies such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), VCU’s accreditation body. In its 2011 diversity position statement, SACSCOC stated, “Diversity is not an abstract concept; rather, it is a true picture of an ever-changing national demographic landscape that reflects every sector of society. Institutions of higher education mirror diversity through their missions, their structures, and their students, faculty and staff.”

SACSCOC also recognizes that “diversity in higher education is critical to the social and economic future of this country. Consequently, the commission supports the leadership role of its member institutions in promoting and sustaining diversity in all arenas of higher education.”

VCU’s 2017–2022 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan is an outgrowth of the president’s strategic diversity actions, and the university’s core value and commitment to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. This also is an extension of VCU’s previous diversity plan: 2020 Vision for Excellence Five-Year Diversity Plan.\(^3\) This document is intended to lead Virginia Commonwealth University toward its goals of advancing access, diversity and excellence by means of the inclusive excellence model.

This comprehensive long-term diversity, inclusion and equity plan provides overarching institutional guidance for our focused work on strategic priorities. The plan is organized around four themes: institutional commitment; climate and intergroup relations; recruitment, retention, and success; and education, scholarship and research. These themes are connected by an extensive assessment plan.

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\(^2\) Inclusive excellence, a principle that was introduced by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in 2003, is a comprehensive and well-coordinated set of systematic actions that focus specifically on fostering greater diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability at every level of university life. Institutionally, inclusion is defined as “the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity – in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.” For a glossary of terms, please see Appendix X.

\(^3\) Virginia Commonwealth University 2020 Vision for Excellence Five-Year Diversity Plan, approved November 2010.
VCU’s Commitment to Inclusive Excellence

It is our highest and best calling as a public research university to drive innovation, progress and compassion for those who learn here, who teach here, who create here, who heal here – and for the countless lives they will someday touch. The impact of what we do, the ripples we make in the pond, are profound and unbounded. As we have taken our place among the nation’s elite public research universities, we have also positioned ourselves at the intersection of access and excellence in ways that very few others have.

Michael Rao, President of VCU and VCUHS

Our public urban university is among the most diverse higher education institutions in the commonwealth, measured using key student demographics such as gender, race and ethnicity. Over forty percent of the VCU student body reports as minority race or ethnicity, and VCU is home to 1,600 international students representing 100 countries. That said, we are keenly aware that a diverse student body does not ensure the existence of a welcoming, inclusive and equitable learning and working environment where we honor, respect and engage with the differences of others. That is why an active, intentional and ongoing commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity through our community building, our curriculum and co-curriculum, and our engagement with communities beyond the university is central to the university’s mission.

VCU’s commitment to inclusive excellence is evident in many documents published by various units and leaders throughout the university over the past seven years. The following citations demonstrate that commitment.

On January 28, 2013, the Faculty Senate endorsed a statement to demonstrate its support for diversity and inclusion, and link the work of diversity and inclusion to the academic mission of VCU:

“The members of the Faculty Senate, which represents the faculty of Virginia Commonwealth University, believe that diversity of views, cultures and experiences are critical to the academic goals of higher education. We believe that the VCU community is stronger due to the diverse backgrounds and experiences that each faculty member brings to the university, and that a diverse faculty contributes to educational quality. VCU serves a diverse student population that benefits from diverse academic perspectives. We believe that the recruitment of a diverse faculty is essential to maintaining the excellence needed to achieve the goals of VCU in becoming the premier public urban research institution and academic institution in the commonwealth.”

The VCU Staff Senate is committed to inclusion. Its senators state:

“Our interests and goals are as diverse as our membership. Senators serve on committees across both campuses alongside representatives from the student body, faculty and administration, where we work toward achieving the goals and initiatives outlined in the university’s strategic plan, Quest for Distinction. ... We are open to new

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4 VCU Office of Planning and Decision Support’s Insights (Self-Service Data Analytics for Decision Support), February 2017.
5 VCU Office of Planning and Decision Support’s International Student Enrollment PDF, February 2016.
6 The Faculty Senate represents the faculty in areas of its responsibilities and concerns at VCU. The purpose of the Faculty Senate is the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and professional skills through teaching, study, research, creativity, exhibition, performance, provision of community service and promotion of shared governance.
7 The VCU Staff Senate works to facilitate honest and open communication to support staff employee development and resources and build a stronger university community. Staff Senate website: http://staffsenate.vcu.edu/about-us/.
ideas and initiatives, which lead to engaged and robust discussion in our meetings. In the spirit of openness and inclusion, our general meetings are open to all VCU staff members and we encourage attendance and participation."

Both VCU’s provost and vice president for academic affairs, and VCU’s vice president for health sciences, remind the university community that:

“Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to diversity, inclusion and equitable opportunity. In combination with the institution-wide core values, our dedication to this pledge makes VCU a place where people thrive and succeed.”

In 2012, VCU appointed its first chief diversity officer, Dr. Wanda S. Mitchell, vice president for inclusive excellence, and established the Division for Inclusive Excellence. The Inclusive Excellence website states:

“We are committed to fostering an inclusive community that welcomes and supports those historically excluded or underrepresented in higher education.”

VCU intentionally integrates its efforts at achieving inclusive excellence into the core aspects of the institution – its academic priorities, leadership, quality improvement initiatives, decision-making, day-to-day operations and organizational cultures – in order to maximize their success. Diversity is counted among the core commitments within VCU’s mission, underlies our ethical standard for respect and is one of the core values and guiding principles of VCU’s Quest for Distinction strategic action plan. VCU adheres to a dual focus in its diversity efforts that concentrate on both increasing compositional diversity and creating living, learning and working environments in which students, faculty and staff of all backgrounds can thrive and more effectively pursue the mission of the university because of the assets of diversity and inclusion.
Overview of the VCU Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan

The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) calls for higher education to address diversity, inclusion and equity as critical to the well-being of democratic culture. “Making excellence inclusive is thus an active process through which colleges and universities achieve excellence in learning, teaching, student development, institutional functioning, and engagement in local and global communities. The action of making excellence inclusive requires that we uncover inequities in student success, identify effective educational practices, and build such practices organically for sustained institutional change.”

The CIEE was officially established through President Rao’s appointment of the 24-member group in August 2015. The council’s work is to assist VCU in realizing and demonstrating its commitment to diversity and inclusion in significant ways.

The council was launched with a retreat on Friday, October 30, 2015, which included a full working session with nationally recognized diversity and inclusion leader and scholar in higher education Dr. Alma Clayton-Pedersen. The retreat facilitator was Dr. Susan Wilkes, a locally recognized psychologist and leadership development expert. The goals for the retreat were to:

- Envision how the council can best support the university's goal of making excellence inclusive at VCU.
- Clarify the role of the council's goals for their work, related organizational structure and next steps.

The council’s structure included a steering committee consisting of 13 members and five working committees. During the 2016 fiscal year, the steering committee met five times and the full council met four times to finalize the draft of the 2017–2022 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan. Committees met with facilitator Tammy Jackson, consultant with the Performance Management Group at VCU, throughout the plan drafting period to develop goals, strategic actions and outcome measures. All members participated in the university’s cultural competence workshops in February 2016 and a culturally based team-building retreat in June 2016.

The Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan was created through the CIEE’s working committees and steering committee. The plan is informed by the findings from the 2016 climate surveys, which were distributed to faculty, staff and students; Diversity and Inclusion Cafes; the president’s Social Justice Forums; and numerous meetings, interviews and correspondence with alumni, students and other constituent groups. The CIEE is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and The council’s membership includes students, staff and faculty; spans the various administrative areas of the campus; and is representative of the vice presidents’ units assessing the initiatives in this plan to ensure that they lead to institutional and cultural change.

The steps involved for broad university vetting, engagement and endorsement include:

- CIEE Steering Committee Plan drafting and endorsement
- Vetting by university stakeholders
- Posting of plan for public comment
- Review and approval by the President’s Action Group on Diversity and Inclusion (PAGDI), the University Council, the president's cabinet, the VCU president and the board of visitors

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8 [https://www.aacu.org/making-excellence-inclusive](https://www.aacu.org/making-excellence-inclusive)
The framework to measure progress toward VCU’s inclusive excellence ideals has four key themes, connected by an extensive assessment approach and reporting process. These themes offer a guiding structure for the development of the university’s action plan to make excellence inclusive:

- Institutional commitment
- Campus climate and intergroup relations
- Recruitment, retention and success
- Education, scholarship and research

These themes are meant to serve as a guide rather than an absolute framing of how the university and its various academic and administrative units will define the work they will undertake. The themes and their corresponding initiatives, assessment plans, accountability plans, performance metrics, and measurable goals provide campus leaders with a way to broadly conceptualize and implement diversity work on campus. They also help campus members see how their work and their unit’s work relate to institution-level goals for diversity, inclusion and equity. The institutional indicators, in particular, offer a means to measure progress on goals.
Themes with Goals, Initiatives, Metrics and Timeframes for Advancing Diversity and Inclusion at VCU

Listed below are the goals, initiatives, measurements, timeframes and assessment plans for the four themes. For those initiatives that do not have identified targets, precise targets will be established during the early implementation stage of the plan.

I. Institutional Commitment: Dedicate resources, establish intentional and committed initiatives, and act to advance diversity, inclusion and equity at all institutional levels.

- Provide clear, cohesive and comprehensive communication regarding diversity, inclusion and equity to all university stakeholders.
- Build and sustain the infrastructure to enhance diversity, inclusion and equity at all levels of the university to support teaching, research, scholarship, creative expression and service.
- Provide resource supports for diversity and inclusion initiatives aligned to strengthen our university’s academic mission of teaching, research, scholarship, creative expression and service.
- Ensure accountability for the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan at all institutional levels and across all constituencies.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Initiatives and Actions</th>
<th>Measurement and Timeframe</th>
<th>Responsible Unit/ Process Owner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.G1. Provide clear, cohesive and comprehensive communication regarding diversity, inclusion and equity to all university stakeholders.</td>
<td>Articulate a clear statement of diversity, inclusion and equity for VCU.</td>
<td>● Formal diversity and inclusion strategic action plan adopted and published – 05/2017</td>
<td>Division for Inclusive Excellence (IE)</td>
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<td>Incorporate diversity and inclusion goals and initiatives in all of VCU’s strategic planning processes (e.g., university’s strategic plan) and associated reporting.</td>
<td>● Template for incorporating diversity and inclusion goals, strategies and metrics into institutional planning – 08/2017</td>
<td>IE and vice presidents</td>
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<td>Develop a communication strategy on diversity and inclusion that encompasses all forms of media and communication formats for both internal and external efforts.</td>
<td>● Communication strategy developed – 09/2017</td>
<td>University Relations</td>
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<td>Provide access for faculty, staff and students to communicate directly with university leadership for open dialog on topics and issues concerning diversity and inclusion.</td>
<td>● Diversity and inclusion communications plan designed and implemented – 08/2017</td>
<td>IE, University Relations</td>
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<td>Establish periodic formal updates (written and other media and formats) to inform university community about progress on diversity and inclusion strategic goals.</td>
<td>● Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report (narrative and metrics) published – 08/30/2017</td>
<td>IE</td>
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### I.G2. Build and sustain the infrastructure to enhance diversity, inclusion and equity at all levels of the university to support teaching, research, scholarship, creative expression and service.

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| Incorporate into VCU’s policy development and review process a method to analyze the impact of individual university policies on diversity and inclusion. | - Guidance regarding how to conduct a diversity and inclusion policy analysis.  
- Number of policy certifications that reflect the findings of the analysis. | IE, Integrity and Compliance Office |
| Assess depth, breadth and availability of resources and services that currently support student, faculty and staff success to ensure that issues and concerns of underrepresented groups are effectively addressed. Make recommendations for enhancing university infrastructure. | - Baseline report and recommendations on diversity and inclusion infrastructure (resources and services) – 12/2017 | IE, CIEE |
| Plan and make available cultural competency training to all faculty, staff and students. | - Number of cultural competency programs offered; training participation rate by program and overall – 06/30/2018 | IE, Student Affairs (SA), Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA), Office of Faculty Affairs, Human Resources (HR), Equity and Access Service (EAS) |

### I.G3. Provide resource supports for diversity and inclusion initiatives aligned to strengthen our university's academic mission of teaching, research, scholarship, creative expression and service.

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<tr>
<td>Establish a clear and regular process for assessing and engaging recommendations of stakeholder groups (task force, councils, advisory committees, etc.)(^1) related to diversity and inclusion. Develop and implement methods to assess need and provide resource supports to achieve the diversity and inclusion goals. Integrate diversity and inclusion accomplishments into existing recognition and award programs.</td>
<td>- Process in place to review diversity and inclusion requests and initiatives at the unit level – 06/30/2017</td>
<td>President’s office, vice presidents, IE, CIEE</td>
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<td>- Reported on in unit annual reports</td>
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\(^1\) E.g., 2016 LGBTQ Task Force Report.
I.G4. Ensure accountability for the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan at all institutional levels and across all constituencies.

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<tr>
<td>I.G4. Ensure accountability for the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan at all institutional levels and across all constituencies.</td>
<td>Identify university, unit and division performance dimensions and establish reporting mechanisms relevant to achieving the goals of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan.</td>
<td>• Percentage of unit and division annual reports that include progress on efforts to support inclusion and address diversity and equity (baseline 05/01/2018, and targets – TBD)</td>
<td>IE, president’s office, vice presidents, CIEE</td>
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<td>Major divisions and departments develop and implement diversity plans consistent with university-wide Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan.</td>
<td>• Percentage of major divisions have plans in place and being implemented by 2018 • Items and/or rubrics for assessing performance related to diversity, equity and inclusion are established</td>
<td>IE, CIEE</td>
</tr>
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</table>

II. Climate and Intergroup Relations: Create and sustain a welcoming climate for inclusion where individuals of differing cultural backgrounds, identities, abilities and life experiences are welcomed, valued and supported in their learning, working and living.

- Create and sustain a climate at VCU where all members of the VCU community from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and part of a university-wide community.
- Create and maintain a living, learning and working environment where everyone feels respected, supported and valued, and where everyone has agency and voice.
- Create and maintain a living, learning and working environment where people of diverse backgrounds share learning experiences.
- Ensure that the buildings and facilities are welcoming and accessible for all people and cultures, and, where feasible, are arranged to facilitate cross-cultural interaction.

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<tr>
<td>II.G1. Create and sustain a climate at VCU where all members of the VCU community from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and part of a university-</td>
<td>Provide consistent onboarding and orientation for all new faculty, staff and students to ensure awareness and understanding of all VCU diversity and inclusion policies, resources and goals.</td>
<td>• Review and revise onboarding and orientation materials to ensure consistent information and inform awareness of VCU’s diversity and inclusion policies, resources and goals. Communication strategy developed – 07/2018</td>
<td>Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention (OFRR), HR, Division of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM), SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **II.G2. Create and maintain a living, learning and working environment where everyone feels respected, supported and valued, and where everyone has agency and voice.** | Provide professional development and training opportunities that support university commitments and goals targeting success for all students, faculty and staff, ensuring access by all members of the VCU community, and guaranteeing that such trainings are inclusive and culturally relevant in design. | • Number of professional development and training opportunities and resources: reported annually 06/30/2017  
  - Available  
  - Conducted  
  - Attended  
  - Evaluated  
• University Climate Survey results – reported on after climate survey administered every 2-3 years | IE, OFRR, HR |
| | Develop and maintain a faculty and staff mentoring program to enhance understanding of career advancement processes. Create opportunities to build valuable professional relationships and supportive positive relations among employees. | • Office of Faculty Recruitment and Retention–designed and -deployed faculty mentoring program – 09/01/2017  
• Human Resources redesign to define career paths and job requirements for staff advancement around Diversity and Inclusion professional competencies– 01/01/2018 | OFRR, HR |
| | Provide access to resources and information to enhance employee understanding of discrimination and harassment prevention, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and related topics. | • Percentage participation in mandatory Title IX training – 05/01/2017 | EAS |
| | Provide ongoing leadership workshops for department chairs and supervisory personnel that focus on department climate, new-generation faculty and staff, campus culture, and the impact of campus culture on the success of faculty and staff from diverse backgrounds. | • Redesign and implementation of department chair training – 07/01/2017  
• Number of participants in department chair training – 09/15/2017  
• Number of participants in optional Human Resources managerial training focused on diversity, inclusion and related topics – 06/30/2017 | VP Faculty Affairs, HR |
Provide support for faculty and staff participation in professional development and volunteer opportunities that have a diversity and inclusion component or focus.  

VP Faculty Affairs, HR, IE

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<tr>
<th>II.G3. Create and maintain a living, learning and working environment where people of diverse backgrounds share experiences.</th>
<th>Sponsor social and cultural activities and events to engage staff, faculty, alumni and students in university-wide collaboration and community building and in supporting awareness of VCU diversity and inclusion resources.</th>
<th>Provost, IE, SA, VP Health Sciences, DAR</th>
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<tr>
<th>II.G4. Ensure that the buildings and facilities are welcoming and accessible for all people and cultures, and, where feasible, are arranged to facilitate cross-cultural interaction.</th>
<th>Evaluate access issues affecting students, visitors and employees; develop and assess solution options; and develop or make visible initiatives that effectively address specific population access concerns.</th>
<th>Facilities, IE</th>
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- Assessment completed – 05/2018
- Climate survey administered every 2-3 years – 04/30/2018

IE, Office of Planning and Decision Support (OPDS)
### III. Recruitment, Retention and Success

Intentionally attract and retain a diverse faculty, staff and student body, with reflective attention to community needs. Implement strategies for enhancing recruitment, retention and success.

- Enroll, retain, support and graduate a diverse undergraduate, graduate and professional student body.
- Proactively attract, recruit, support and retain a diverse faculty and staff population who are given voice and agency in helping to shape the Great Place Initiative we seek.

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<tr>
<td>III.G1. Enroll, retain, support and graduate a diverse undergraduate, graduate and professional student body.</td>
<td>Recruit and enroll a diverse and representative population in all VCU academic programs.</td>
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<td>• Undergraduate, graduate and professional enrollment demographic data&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>SEM</td>
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<td>• Undergraduate and graduate recruitment efforts include outreach to diverse student populations</td>
<td>Graduate school</td>
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<td>• Schools and divisions document good faith efforts to help ensure proper outreach, and modify if necessary</td>
<td>OPDS (data analytics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Target 2017–2018: TBD</td>
<td>Schools and academic units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Recruitment efforts reflect outreach efforts to diverse student populations</td>
<td>Division for Health Sciences Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• In addition to university-established goals and metrics, schools and colleges determine their unique recruitment and retention goals with regard to diversity based on available baseline data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Annual reporting beginning with the 2017–2018 academic year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve successful outcomes among diverse populations as measured by graduation rates and post-graduation outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Measurement: Student demographic information on graduation rates:</td>
<td>SEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focused monitoring of data tracking undergraduate 4- to 6-year graduation rates for diverse populations (graduation rates and retention rates )</td>
<td>OPDS (data for graduation and retention rates, and analytics for all)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<sup>2</sup> Demographic data included race/ethnicity, nationality, gender, Pell eligible, socioeconomic, disability status, first generation, religion (if available), sexual orientation (if available), regional identity.

<sup>3</sup> To assist in successful outcomes, programs such as mentoring and proactive advising should be implemented and results monitored.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals and Metrics:</th>
<th>Timeframe:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● TBD</td>
<td>● Annual reporting of graduation rates, licensing and examination pass rates, and post-graduation destination results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measurements:**
- Demographic data on financial aid, scholarship and assistantship recipients in all programs (data available by academic program, race/ethnicity, gender)

**Advance university efforts to provide financial aid, scholarship assistance and assistantship assistance to students with financial need (socioeconomic, Pell eligible, etc.).**

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4 Student may report on race/ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, Pell eligible, socioeconomic, disability status, first generation, religion (if available), sexual orientation (if available), regional identity, etc.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>available for students, by academic program, by self-reported identities 4</th>
<th>SA (post-graduation destination information on employment through the Career Center) working with OPDS Division for Health Sciences Diversity – post-graduation destination of health sciences graduate and professional students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Graduate, professional student completion rates for diverse populations (completion rates available for students, by academic program)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Health Sciences program licensing and examination pass rate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-graduation destination results for diverse populations:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Implement data collection procedures and record systems that include the systematic tracking of post-graduation destination results for undergraduate, graduate and professional students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Goals and Metrics:**
- Licensing and examination pass rates for health sciences programs at established targets (see this link for more info: [http://sacs.vcu.edu/student-achievement/](http://sacs.vcu.edu/student-achievement/))

**Timeframe:**
- Annual reporting of graduation rates, licensing and examination pass rates, and post-graduation destination results
Develop and strengthen student mentoring, advising, and other academic and non-academic support programs (ensuring and supporting access by underrepresented and at-risk students) through continuous improvement and sharing of best practices to departments.

**Goals and Metrics:**
- TBD

**Timeframe:**
- Annual reporting on demographic data for all financial aid, scholarship and assistantship recipients in all programs, beginning with 2017–2018 academic year (baseline 2016–2017, and targets – TBD)

**Measurement:**
- NSSE, Noel Levitz, HERI and Office of Student Experience survey results reflecting student satisfaction with and use of academic and non-academic support services

**Timeframe:**
- NSSE: Triennial (last administration = spring 2014)
- HERI (Survey of Diverse Learning Environments): Annual (last administration = spring 2016)
- Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory: Triennial (last administration = fall 2015)
- Noel Levitz Adult Student Priorities Survey: Triennial (last administration = fall 2015)
- Office of Student Experience: Biannual (last administration = fall 2015)

Within three months of receiving survey data, schools, colleges and service units will review survey data, establish action items, identify necessary resources and follow up with a report on progress toward identified action items.

| Provost, OPDS (administration of NSSE, Noel Levitz and HERI, and analysis) | Office of Student Experience, Office of Public Health Sciences, OVPHS |
| Division for Academic Success | Division for Health Sciences Diversity, OVPHS |
| III.G2. Proactively attract, recruit, support and retain a diverse faculty and staff population. | Provide professional development and leadership advancement opportunities and support for career progression for faculty and staff from all groups, ensuring access to members and populations traditionally underrepresented in their fields. | Measurement:  
- Documented efforts to encourage participation in professional development and leadership advancement opportunities for all employees  
- Identified resources at the school and administrative level to support professional development and leadership advancement  

Goals and Metrics:  
- NOTE: Establish baseline and then determine goals/metrics  

Timeframe:  
- 2017–2018: Annual reporting on school-and-administrative-level efforts to encourage participation in professional development and leadership advancement opportunities for all employees  

| | Support faculty and staff in the continued development of scholarship, research, creative expression and service that expand an inclusive knowledge base. | Measurement:  
- Evidence of programs that support faculty and staff in the development of scholarship, research, creative expression and service that engage in the work of inclusion and diversity  

Goals and Metrics:  
- Percentage of participants engaged in the development of scholarship, research, creative expression and service that engage the work of inclusion and diversity  
  - NOTE: Establish baseline and then determine goals/metrics  

| OFRR  
iCubed  
HR  
Faculty Senate  
Staff Senate  
IE | Division for Community Engagement  
HR  
IE  
iCubed  
Schools and colleges, Faculty Affairs, OPDS |
### Timeframe:
- **2017–2018:** Annual reporting of scholarship, research, creative expression and service through the publication of such work, websites, social media efforts and other outlets, and percentage of participants engaged in these activities.

**Measurement:**
- Number of schools and departments that recognize diversity and inclusion contributions in the Promotion & Tenure (P&T) policies (baseline fall 2016, and targets – TBD)

**Goals and Metrics:**
- **100% of schools and departments** recognize diversity and inclusion contributions in their P&T policies and their annual performance evaluations for all employees.

**Timeframe:**
- **Annual reporting on school and department progress toward this goal.**

### Timeframe:
- Review current reward and recognition guidelines and processes to support appropriate review of inclusive research, teaching and service activities within tenure, promotion and annual performance evaluation.

**Measurement:**
- Number of schools and departments that recognize diversity and inclusion contributions in the Promotion & Tenure (P&T) policies (baseline fall 2016, and targets – TBD)

**Goals and Metrics:**
- **100% of schools and departments** recognize diversity and inclusion contributions in their P&T policies and their annual performance evaluations for all employees.

**Timeframe:**
- **Annual reporting on school and department progress toward this goal.**

### Timeframe:
- Provide professional development and leadership advancement opportunities for faculty and staff.

**Measurement:**
- Faculty Affairs–designed, -deployed and -evaluated faculty professional development workshops and initiatives – 09/01/2017
- Human Resources redesign to define career paths and job requirements for staff advancement – 01/01/2018

**Goals and Metrics:**
- Percentage of faculty and staff participating in training and workshops
  - **NOTE:** Establish baseline and then determine goals and metrics

**Timeframe:**
- Faculty Affairs
- HR
- Schools and divisions (individual professional development and school- and division-level training included)
| Timeframe: | **2017–2018**: Faculty Affairs and implementation of professional development workshops and initiatives  
**January 2018**: Human Resources redesign project implementation |
|---|---|
| Provide mentoring and professional development supports for all junior faculty members to support their career progression, ensuring access by all faculty members and programming that is inclusive and culturally informed. | **Measurement:**  
|  
**Faculty Affairs**–designed, -deployed and -evaluated faculty mentoring program and professional development workshops and initiatives – 09/01/2017  
**Goal and Metrics:**  
|  
**Percentage of junior faculty engaged in mentoring and/or professional development  
**NOTE:** Establish baseline and then determine goals and metrics  
**Timeframe:**  
|  
**2017–2018**: Programs are implemented and junior faculty are enrolled  
|  
**Office of Research and Innovation (research development services)**  
**Schools and colleges**  
**Center on Health Disparities**  
**Faculty Affairs**  
**OFRR**  
**iCubed**|
| Report annually on comprehensive hiring, retention, promotion and attrition demographic data. Ensure appropriate accountability in the development of candidate pools that are reflective of the diversity of the profession. | **Measurement:**  
|  
**Annual reporting of demographic data on faculty and staff, searches, hiring, promotion, retention and attrition – 10/30/2017  
**Development of toolkit and training to educate search committees and hiring managers on inclusive hiring practices – fall 2018  
**Number of persons completing training and departments represented  
|  
**HR**  
**OPDS**  
**OFRR**  
**Schools and departments**  
**EAS**|

---

5 Demographic data included race/ethnicity, nationality, gender, disability status, sexual orientation (if available), rank, position type.
| Support and fund the hiring of faculty with expertise in disciplines and studies that address and expand the scholarship, knowledge base and creative products relevant to diverse populations, cultures, beliefs and social identities. | **Goal and Metrics:**  
- Candidate pools consistently reflect the diversity of the profession  
- Percentage of trained search committee members and hiring managers familiar with inclusive hiring practices  
  - NOTE: Establish baseline and then determine goals and metrics  
- Percentage of people completing training from each school and department  
  - NOTE: Establish baseline and then determine goals and metrics  
**Timeframe:**  
- Fall 2017: Training on inclusive hiring processes offered  
- October 2017: Annual reporting of diversity data on faculty and staff searches  
- Fall 2018: Development of toolkit and training on inclusive recruitment practices\(^6\)  
**Measurement:**  
- Regular reporting of scholarship of new faculty hired  
**Goals and Metrics:**  
- Percentage of new faculty hired who have expertise in disciplines and studies that address and expand the scholarship, knowledge base and creative products relevant to diverse populations, cultures, beliefs and social identities.  
  - NOTE: Establish baseline and then determine goals and metrics | iCubed  
OFRR  
Schools and departments |

\(^6\) This initiative must align with current legal precedent under affirmative action rules.
then determine goals and metrics
Timeframe:
● 2017–2018: Annual reporting

**IV. Education, Scholarship and Research:** Provide rich teaching, learning, research, scholarly, creative and service experiences to prepare all students for global citizenship. Support faculty, staff and student research, scholarship and creative expression that address diversity and inclusion issues in disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.

- Increase the proactive, ongoing university support for research, scholarship and creative expression addressing diversity and inclusion issues in disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields, including those research initiatives that harness the benefits of diversity in areas not traditionally viewed through a diversity lens.
- Increase and assess diversity-rich curricular and co-curricular learning experiences that raise students’ critical self-awareness and cultural competency, increase understanding of global diversity and encourage engagement in the greater community.
- Develop comprehensive resources for faculty to learn, use and evaluate inclusive teaching practices that foster communication, collaboration and relationship building across differences, and support curricular transformations that are reflective of this type of education, research and scholarship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Initiatives and Action Steps</th>
<th>Measurement and Timeframe</th>
<th>Responsible Unit/ Process Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV.G1. Increase the proactive, ongoing university support for research, scholarship and creative expression addressing diversity and inclusion issues in disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields, including those research initiatives that harness the benefits of diversity in areas not traditionally viewed through a diversity lens.</td>
<td>Provide institutional support and infrastructure to incentivize research and collaborative scholarship that support the success of diverse populations on campus, in Richmond and beyond. Provide faculty development seminars and workshops each semester to develop research strategies and methods to increase skills and knowledge about conducting inclusive scholarship.</td>
<td>● Numbers and the amount of funds associated internal grants awarded for research addressing diversity and inclusion related scholarship – reported annually. ● Number of faculty development seminars or workshops focused on increasing knowledge and skills about conducting inclusive scholarship include participation rates and assessment</td>
<td>Office of Research and Innovation, IE Schools and colleges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | | | University Relations, IE |
### IV.G2. Increase and assess diversity-rich learning experiences that raise students’ critical self-awareness and cultural competency, increase understanding of global diversity and encourage engagement in the greater community.

| Identify, explore and support the development of a wider range of curricular programs and course offerings on diversity and inclusion. | Institutional and departmental support (dollars, course release time, etc.) for diversity and inclusion curricular and course development and evaluation (baseline 2016–2017, and targets – TBD) | Academic Affairs, IE, CTLE |
| Provide support to faculty and programs for the development, implementation and evaluation of courses and academic programs related to diversity and inclusion. | Number and percentage of students engaged in experiential and diverse learning opportunities (baseline 2016–2017, and targets – TBD) | GEO and Division of Community Engagement |
| Explore opportunities for integrating diversity and inclusion learning experiences through global education, study abroad and service learning. | Current percentages from nine diversity items on the NSSE (baseline 2016–2017, and targets – TBD) | Academic Affairs, OPDS for NSSE data |
| Ensure new diversity and inclusion initiatives are integrated with the design and implementation of VCU’s real-world experience initiatives and the university’s commitment to experiential learning for all students. | Number and percentage of students engaged in experiential and diverse learning opportunities (baseline 2016–2017, and targets – TBD) | Academic Affairs |
| Increase student exposure to and inclusion in faculty scholarly and research activities related to diversity and inclusion. | Number and perceive benefit of diversity- and inclusion-related session included in new faculty orientation and onboarding (baseline 2017–2018, and targets – TBD) | OFRR |

### IV.G3. Develop comprehensive resources for faculty to learn, use and evaluate inclusive teaching practices that foster communication, collaboration and relationship building across differences, and

| Expand new faculty orientation and onboarding to include ongoing sessions throughout the first year that feature topics on diversity and inclusion in the classroom and present inclusive classroom strategies that engage all students in discussions. | Number of seminars and workshops offered, and number of participants (baseline fall 2018, targets – TBD) | OFRR |
| Provide a series of faculty development seminars and workshops each semester to focus on creating inclusive classrooms and responding to challenging diversity and inclusion classroom issues. | | |

| | | |
support curricular transformations that are reflective of this type of education, research and scholarship.

Provide professional development opportunities that support university commitments and goals targeting success for all students, faculty and staff, ensuring access by all members of the VCU community, and guaranteeing such trainings are inclusive and culturally relevant in design.

- Number of professional development opportunities and resources: reported annually 06/30/2018
  - Available
  - Conducted
  - Attended
  - Evaluated
- University Climate Survey results – reported on after periodically administered climate surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Measurement and Timeframe</th>
<th>Responsible Unit/Process Owner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish and implement accountability measures for each theme.</td>
<td>• Percentage of major divisions that have plans in place and are being implemented by 2018&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish institutional baseline metrics and identify gaps in the monitoring of progress toward the university’s goals and initiatives to advance diversity, inclusion and equity.</td>
<td>• Items and/or rubrics for assessing performance related to diversity, equity and inclusion are established</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and deploy periodic diversity climate surveys and focus groups to assess, monitor and report on institutional progress.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assess and report on progress in achieving targets, and communicate findings to the broader university community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a diversity, equity and inclusion dashboard for CIEE review and feedback.</td>
<td>• Diversity and inclusion dashboard communicated to all VCU stakeholders – 06/30/2017</td>
<td>OPDS, IE, CIEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Populate dashboard with baseline data (where available).</td>
<td>• Diversity and inclusion dashboard annual results provided – 10/31/2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>7</sup> Plans should be developed by major units and reviewed and vetted by the CIEE.

**V. Assessment Process:** The assessment process offers an important means to monitor progress toward goals and ensure accountability in the implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan. It serves to inform, support and report on efforts to improve diversity, inclusion and equity among all VCU stakeholders in alignment with the university’s mission and strategic goals.

- Establish and implement accountability measures for each theme.
- Establish institutional baseline metrics and identify gaps in the monitoring of progress toward the university’s goals and initiatives to advance diversity, inclusion and equity.
- Design and deploy periodic diversity climate surveys and focus groups to assess, monitor and report on institutional progress.
- Assess and report on progress in achieving targets, and communicate findings to the broader university community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Action Plan Details</th>
<th>Responsible Parties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finalize dashboard and determine distribution schedule.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design or identify and refine survey instrument(s) and targeted</td>
<td>● Climate survey administered biannually – 04/30/2018</td>
<td>OPDS, IE, CIEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualitative tools to assess VCU climate for diversity, equity and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inclusion.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate on development of communication plan(s) to share</td>
<td>● Communications plan(s) designed and survey result disseminated – 01/31/2017</td>
<td>OPDS, IE, CIEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>survey results with various VCU and external constituencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support launch of communication plan(s) to share results with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>various VCU constituencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess results of climate survey(s), and identify issues and</td>
<td>● Overall climate satisfaction score for staff (7-point scale) (baseline 2016–2017, and target and gap – TBD)</td>
<td>OPDS, IE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>challenges.</td>
<td>● Percentage of students who report a positive experience at VCU (baseline 2016–2017, and target and gap – TBD)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicit feedback from key constituencies to inform action plan(s).</td>
<td>● Regular meetings with constituency groups to inform of progress and solicit input on action plans – 01/31/2017</td>
<td>IE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate with CIEE committees to track progress against action</td>
<td>● Number of CIEE meetings</td>
<td>OPDS, IE, CIEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plans.</td>
<td>● Diversity and inclusion dashboard annual results provided – 10/31/2017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Next Steps and Concluding Reflections

Feedback on the strategic priorities received at each stage of vetting will be incorporated and reviewed by the CIEE. The CIEE will, parallel to the vetting process, provide a preliminary implementation design, to include the development of a plan and process for integration into the university’s upcoming strategic planning process and the work on the university’s human resources transformation (Great Place Initiative). In addition, CIEE will develop a draft template and process for the integration of the diversity and inclusion plan and strategies into the work and planning processes of individual units. This will include explicit articulation of individuals and units responsible for specific action and strategies, as well as measurement strategies, timelines and necessary resources.

Virginia Commonwealth University is at a significant juncture in time, and has the unique opportunity to demonstrate in real, meaningful and impactful ways its institutional value and commitment to diversity for building a caring community that appreciates, welcomes and is ready to harness the unique talents and expertise of our widely diverse and dynamic community.

VCU has been active in addressing its recognized limitations and impediments to achieving a widely diverse and inclusive community. Much work remains to be done; it is evident that the university community must continue to champion, support and provide leadership and funding to promote a more inclusive community that advances all aspects of diversity and inclusion throughout the university structure. This Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan, in conjunction with Quest for Distinction, the Affirmative Action Plan and the Health Equity Strategic Plan, will guide our intentional and deliberate actions over the next five years, with a mid-term assessment in 2018 and annual progress reports in the interim to assess the university’s progress in meeting the goals set forth in this plan.
Members of the Council for Inclusive Excellence
This plan would not be possible without the members of the Council for Inclusive Excellence and Equity:

Holly Alford
President, Faculty Senate; Associate Professor, Department of Fashion Design

Marianne Baernholdt, Ph.D.
Director, Langston Center for Quality, Safety and Innovation

Leslie Brown
Director, Budget and Resource Analysis, Finance and Administration

Cathleen Burke
Assistant Vice President, Human Resources

Toni-Marie Chandler
Student Senate Appointee

Rosalie Corona, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Department of Psychology

Tim L. Davey, Ph.D.
Interim Dean, School of Social Work

Sybil Halloran, Ph.D.
Interim Vice Provost, Division of Strategic Enrollment Management

Rosalyn Hobson Hargraves, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Associate Vice President, Inclusive Excellence

Herbert Hill
Director of Undergraduate Research Opportunities

Catherine Howard, Ph.D.
Vice Provost, Community Engagement

Charles Klink, Ph.D.
Interim Vice Provost, Division of Student Affairs

Tom Klug
Associate Vice President, University Marketing

Sania Marcoccia
President, Staff Senate; Coordinator of Fiscal Operations, Office of the Provost

Gordon McDougall
Former Associate Vice President, Development and Alumni Relations
Edward McLaughlin  
Associate Vice President and Athletic Director, Department of Athletics

Wanda Mitchell, Ed.D.  
Former Vice President, Division for Inclusive Excellence

Rosa Morales-Theodore, M.D.  
Chair, Multicultural Affairs Advisory Board; Professor, Department of Psychiatry

Brittani Parham  
Student Senate Appointee

Laura Walsh Rugless  
Director and Title IX Coordinator, Equity and Access Services

Mary Secret, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, School of Social Work

Kathleen Shaw  
Vice Provost for Planning and Decision Support

Patricia Stauffer  
Senior Associate Athletic Director, Sports Administration

Blue Wooldridge, D.P.A.  
Professor, L. D. Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

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Turner, C. S. Diversifying the Faculty. 2007. Association of American Colleges and Universities: Washington, DC. A list of promising practices is given as a separate PDF document. The full document is no longer available on AAC&U’s website.

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http://www.vcu.edu/about/history.html

http://www.afam.vcu.edu/

http://wilder.vcu.edu/

http://www.medschool.vcu.edu/about/history/

http://www.omsa.vcu.edu/
Historical Sketch
Progress of Diversity at VCU

1838: VCU is founded with the opening of the medical department of Hampden-Sydney College in Richmond which became VCU Medical School.

1867: MCV, City of Richmond, and Freedman’s Bureau open an outpatient clinic for the “sick poor,” both white and colored.

1861: VCU hospital opens during the American Civil War, becoming home to the Confederate army; it is the only school left with the distinction.

1917: VCU admits women to its dentist, medicine and pharmacy programs to meet needs for more medical professionals during World War I.

1920: St. Philip School of Nursing is founded to train African American women. It exists as a separate institution within MCV, and trains 600 African American women before closing in 1962.

1927: The School of Social Work admits its first male students.

1951: Jean Harris enrolls at MCV, becoming the first African American at VCU – before the Brown v. Board of Education integrates public schools.

1967: A small interracial group of students at the Richmond Professional Institute (RPI) holds a series of meetings to address race relations and develop an African American studies program. The African American Studies Committee successfully creates two for-credit courses in African American studies at VCU in 1969.

1967: Grace E. Harris becomes one of three of RPI’s first hired African American faculty. She later becomes dean of the School of Social Work in 1982; provost in 1993; and acting president from April–June 1998, when former President Eugene E. Trani leaves for research purposes. She is the only African American woman to have a building at VCU named after her.

1970: The Black Education Association, or BEA, is formed, a community of scholars committed to advancing institutional equity and diversity through education, research and administrative efforts.

1970: The Eta Tau chapter of Delta Sigma Theta becomes the first historically black Greek letter organization to charter at VCU.

1970: Jim Elam becomes the first African American president of student government. He campaigns on inclusion for the entire study body and more minority professors. Elam uses his platform to establish an Afro-Studies program.

1976: A federal appeals court orders VCU to recognize the Gay Alliance of Students as a campus organization.

1988: The Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) is founded in response to intense lobbying from African American students who were underserved and underrepresented. In 1996, OMSA drafts a proposal for broader scope of role and activities on campus, and shifts to inclusiveness. In 2006, OMSA expands to include LGBTQ students.
1993: The Presidential Awards for Community Multicultural Enrichment is established to recognize contributions and efforts made toward enhancing the goals of inclusive excellence and VCU’s commitment to diversity and inclusion.

1998: VCU School of the Arts in Qatar is established.

1998: Safe Zones are created to reduce homophobia and heterosexism on the VCU campus.


2003: The State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) approves VCU’s African American Studies (AFAM) as a Bachelor of Arts program. As of 2015, the program currently has over 100 AFAM majors.

2005: The University Equity and Diversity Committee is established and chaired by Dr. Beverly Warren.

2007: Dr. M. Njeri Jackson is appointed special assistant to the provost for promoting diversity.

2012: Equality VCU is established as a collaborative, advisory and advocacy body representing the aspirations and concerns of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, queer, questioning, intersex/DSD and asexual peoples and their allies (LGBTQQIAA) affiliated with the university.

May 2012: Lavender Graduation is established at VCU as a special graduation ceremony that honors the achievements of graduating gender and sexual minority students on campus.

September 2012: Dr. Wanda Mitchell is appointed as vice president for diversity and equity, VCU’s chief diversity officer.

July 2015: The Council for Inclusive Excellence and Equity is established to monitor, review and assess VCU’s diversity, equity and inclusive excellence initiatives, and to develop the new Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Action Plan.

July 2015: The Institute for Inclusion, Inquiry and Innovation (iCubed) is established to promote diversity and inclusion through a strategic investment in academic programs and institutes, focusing on the welfare of urban populations.

October 2015: Gender-neutral and accessible restroom facilities are implemented on the Monroe Park Campus in the Academic Learning Commons, University Student Commons and James Branch Cabell Library.

November 2015: The President’s Action Group on Diversity and Inclusion is a five-member group that works in consultation with the president’s cabinet and the university’s senior leadership to actualize the institution’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.

November 11, 2015: Group of students rally at the Compass to support African-American students at the University of Missouri who are protesting discrimination.
November 12, 2015: A group of Black VCU student activists demonstrate a sequence of peaceful protests, including a sit-in at President’s Rao’s office, to demand an increase of Black professors and faculty.

November 19, 2015: A two-hour-long Presidential Forum on Diversity and Inclusion is held to address concerns that have arisen over hiring and retaining Black faculty; the need for improved communication about current efforts; cultural competency and respect in the classroom; support of staff diversity; and financial support for OMSA and the Division for Inclusive Excellence.

December 2015: The university renews its commitment to creating a more inclusive culture through the president’s call to action for change with the senior leadership team.

January and February 2016: Members of the president’s cabinet and senior leadership team (including deans, vice provosts and associate vice presidents) participate in cultural competence workshops, which will be ongoing.

May 3, 2016: The new Inclusive Excellence website is launched, enhancing diversity and inclusion communication efforts.

October 13, 2016: The President’s Forum on Social Justice is held with three two-hour sessions throughout the day to identify and discuss issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. More than 600 students, faculty, staff and alumni attend the sessions.
Glossary
Key Concepts

**Access**: The recruitment and retention of members of traditionally underrepresented groups. Access for all can be achieved only by intentional and deliberate action – utilizing policies, procedures and resources to increase hiring and admission of a widely diverse faculty, staff, administration and student body.

**Accountability**: Predetermined level of expectations that individuals, units and/or institutions are responsible for attaining.

**Assessment**: The act of making a judgment and/or the act of evaluating information to monitor and measure progress of institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion and make impactful decisions when necessary.

**Campus diversity**: A learning community that is enriched by persons of different races, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, marital statuses, languages, veteran statuses and religious beliefs, because intellectual thought and participation in a diverse educational community enriches students’ education and enhances their ability to participate in a rapidly evolving, multicultural nation.

**Climate**: The practices, principles and values of the working, living, and learning environment of an organization, as it is perceived by members of the organization.

**Diversity**: At VCU, diversity encompasses differences and similarities by such characteristics as race, age, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, disability status, political affiliation, veteran status and socioeconomic background. It also includes differences in backgrounds, ideas, thought, values and beliefs. Diversity is also associated with principles of inclusion and the creation of safe and supportive environments where differences are respected, particularly with regard to historically underrepresented groups and legally protected categories to which individuals may belong.

**Education, scholarship and research**: Provide rich teaching, learning, and research and service experiences to prepare all students for global citizenship; and support faculty, staff and student research that addresses diversity and inclusion issues in disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields.

**Equity**: The fair and just allocation of resources, opportunity and treatment aimed at success for every member of the university community.

**Inclusive excellence**: A comprehensive and well-coordinated set of systematic actions that focus specifically on fostering greater diversity, equity, inclusion and accountability at every level of university life.

**Inclusion**: The active, intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity – in people, in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect – in ways that increase one’s awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions.
**Institutional commitment:** Leadership establishes direction and commitment through mission, values, goals, and strategies, which combined define the behaviors and actions that are expected from all members of the institution. While institutional commitment begins with leadership, it is realized through the adoption and implementation by the members across the institution.

**Recruitment and retention:** Institutional efforts to increase diversity of students, faculty, staff and administrators at the university, with the goal of increasing the presence of diverse faculty and staff at all ranks, levels and pay bands. An important key is maintaining a student body reflective of the diversity of college bound students in the commonwealth of Virginia by ensuring a climate that offers access, opportunity and support for the success of all students.

**Success:** Performance or achievement that is marked by accomplishment of goals and expectations.