SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

Chancellor's Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion

Final Report
March 11, 2016

INTRODUCTION
On October 16, 2015, Chancellor Kent Syverud directed this Workgroup to build on the work done by other campus groups and, guided by the Academic Strategic Plan, make recommendations to help "sustain an inclusive, accessible campus of opportunity for a richly diverse student body."

While Syracuse University has a history of inclusivity, inclusion does not always mean equity and acceptance; too often, it manifests in marginalization as well as overt and covert discrimination. This Workgroup reaffirms that tradition and makes the recommendations below to move the institution forward in a positive and progressive way.

We believe Syracuse University's academic excellence depends on our commitment to diversity and inclusion. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity." In creating institutional frameworks and infrastructures that support the ongoing work of inclusivity, we aim to serve not just marginalized and underrepresented members of the campus but the entire community.

DEFINITIONS
The Workgroup views diversity and inclusion as interconnected concepts shaped by a social justice framework. We value individual and group differences and recognize that identities are varied, complex, and intersecting.

We define diversity as the presence and/or representation of the individual and group differences that make us unique. Diversity is not always noticeable and can be invisible.

We define inclusion as the deliberate and ongoing act of creating and maintaining systems, practices, and spaces that respect individual and group differences and that systematically address broader issues of discrimination, oppression, and exclusion.

Diversity (or the lack of diversity) is a fact, while inclusion is a set of dynamic and intentional actions.

PROCESS
We have met several times a week since October, inviting testimony from representatives of many campus groups, including undergraduate and graduate students, staff, and faculty, about experiences regarding race and ethnicity, gender and

sexual orientation, internationalization, religious identity, military status, (dis)abilities, and other intersecting identities. We read and discussed the university's mission statement, as well as student concerns and demands, and reports from previous Senate and campus workgroups that made recommendations around these issues. We also held two open campus forums, where all members of the community were invited to offer testimonies and concrete suggestions about how to make our campus more inclusive. We issued an Open Letter and several news releases to the university community, listing our names and email addresses and inviting people to contact us directly. Information gathered through all these channels helped shape our recommendations.

We are aware that many comparable efforts on campuses across the country have failed[1]. Those efforts typically did not take into account broader societal issues like the profound effects of implicit bias. We have, therefore, aimed our recommendations at addressing systemic issues in higher education, as well as those specific to our campus. To make our university a place in which all members feel welcome and find a sense of safety and "unity in our diversity," we need to rethink the ways we interact, remove structural barriers to full participation in the life of our community, and build intercultural competencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We've organized our recommendations into three main categories—however, many could fit easily into multiple categories. This speaks to the intersectionalities at the heart of issues of diversity and inclusion. Within each category, we've indicated short-term and long-term recommendations.

Institutional Commitment

Under this category, we address structural and policy issues at the university that can shape the environment in which individuals and groups work and learn. These recommendations begin a process of creating new positions and structures to enhance the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion and to make this commitment clear to the campus community and beyond.

<u>Short-term (to be addressed by the end of calendar year 2016):</u>

1. Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Council, representing relevant offices, programs, committees, schools, colleges, and undergraduate and graduate students. This Council will support and inform the work of the (proposed) Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) and help build on existing plans to develop and implement a university-wide strategy on diversity and inclusion.

2. Establish an Ombuds Office and official Ombudsperson whose mandate is to serve as an informal, confidential resource for all faculty, staff, and students.

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[1] See Turner, Shane, "Dear Higher Education—This Is Why Your Diversity Initiatives Are Failing," *Advancing Diversity,* http://www.advancingdiversity.com/dear-higher-education-this-is-why-your-diversity-initiatives-are-failing/.

3. Restore staffing positions at the Slutzker Center for International Services and the Native Student Program to previous levels to meet the urgent needs of their constituents. Reinstate the position of Assistant Provost for Equity and Inclusion/Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

4. Offer free tutoring for all undergraduates across campus to address inequities and to support and retain undergraduates from marginalized and underrepresented groups.

5. Adopt a university-wide policy on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) accessibility. Within Information Technology Services, hire permanent, full-time staff who focus solely on ICT accessibility and assistive technology.

6. Create a centralized budget for faculty/staff disability accommodations to promote inclusion and relieve individual schools and departments of the costs of such accommodations.

7. Commit appropriate and permanent financial support for the Women in Science and Engineering (WiSE) program. Merge WiSE with SU-ADVANCE. Over the longer term, consider whether these personnel and principles can be extended to support the diversification of other fields (e.g., architecture, philosophy).

<u>Long-term (to be addressed within the next two to three years):</u>

8. Hire a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) who reports directly to the Chancellor and is a member of the Chancellor's Executive Team. The CDO should provide executive leadership, oversight, and vision in the administration of a range of services, programs, policies, and procedures related to advancing the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusion. The CDO's office should be funded at appropriate levels.[2]

9. Increase hiring and retention of faculty and staff of color and other underrepresented groups on campus. For example, develop and standardize a comprehensive set of guidelines for faculty and staff searches that adopt best practices for achieving greater diversity. The goal should be for faculty and staff to reflect the diversity of our country. Responsibility for this effort must rest with

[2] See Williams, Damon A. and Wade-Golden, Katrina C. *The Chief Diversity Officer—Strategy, Structure, and Change Management* (2013). The CDO is a boundary-spanning senior administrative role that prioritizes diversity-themed organizational change as a shared priority at the highest levels of leadership and governance. Reporting to the president, provost, or both, the CDO is an institution's highest-ranking diversity administrator. The CDO is an integrative role that coordinates, leads, enhances, and in some instances supervises formal diversity capabilities of the institution in an effort to create an environment that is inclusive and excellent for all. Within this context, diversity is not merely a demographic goal, but a strategic priority that is fundamental to creating a dynamic educational and work environment that fulfills the teaching, learning, research, and service mission of postsecondary institutions.

the deans and vice presidents, who should incentivize their departments and units to develop effective models for increasing diversity.

10. Critically examine and financially support enhanced staffing patterns in crucial areas, including the Disability Cultural Center, the LGBT Resource Center, the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Native Student Program, and the Slutzker Center for International Services.

11. Restore public mechanisms to analyze salary equity across campus. This could involve reinstating data transmittal to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) or creating a confidential faculty committee to take on a similar role at the university.

12. Support existing scholarships and programs that help recruit and retain underrepresented students, such as the Haudenosaunee Promise Scholarship, the Higher Education Opportunity Program, the Posse Program, Say Yes to Education, Student Support Services, and the Syracuse Challenge, and develop new ones as appropriate.

13. Adopt a regular and publicly known practice—through the Office of Campus Planning, Design, and Construction and such entities as Academic Affairs and Student Affairs—of consulting campus stakeholders when space changes are being considered, especially those that involve moving units. Include and consider the social capital and cultural uses of spaces to be allocated, along with other issues.

Faculty, Staff, and Student Education

These recommendations speak to the pressing need for all faculty, staff, and students to become better versed in issues of diversity and inclusion. Many people gave testimony to the goal of increasing how we "engage one another's cultures" in authentic, open-hearted ways, and to the devastating effects of the failure to approach one another in all our complexities.

<u>Short-term (to be addressed by the end of calendar year 2016):</u>

14. Require attention to diversity and inclusion as key components of all faculty and staff evaluations, CV updates, and tenure and promotion decisions. Require an expanded statement on diversity and inclusion in all syllabi.

15. Strengthen the systems, publicity, and resources for the STOP BIAS reporting system. The Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Equal Opportunity, Inclusion, and Resolution Services should address any existing gaps in resources available to those who experience bias, discrimination, or harassment. For example, increase education of faculty, staff, and students about how to respond to bias incidents and concerns.

16. Enhance orientation and onboarding for international students, faculty, and staff, so they are aware of the full range of programs, services, and resources available to them.

17. Improve New Student Orientation to deepen understandings and forge relationships across racial, ethnic, religious, and other lines. Create a Syracuse Reads Program and consider the selection of books, such as Ta-Nehisi Coates' *Between the World and Me*, that foster a sense of understanding and inclusion. Follow such readings with small group meetings facilitated by diversity educators.

Long-term (to be addressed within the next two to three years):

18. Create and require ongoing faculty and staff development on issues of race, class, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, sexual harassment, and religion. Opportunities for such development could include the recruitment process, enhanced onboarding and orientation, workshops, and campus conferences. For example, require the Safer People/Safer Spaces program for all faculty and staff.

19. Develop and require a first-year forum or course in diversity and inclusion for all students. Opportunities might include expanding programs such as Intergroup Dialogue and Conversations About Race and Ethnicity (C.A.R.E.) or creating a new campus-wide program. Facilitate more diversity training for resident advisors and members of the Office of Residence Life.

20. Accept American Sign Language as a language that can fulfill the language requirement for schools and colleges across campus.

21. Better support faculty, staff, and student families through child-care options, eldercare provisions, and consistently applied family leave procedures. For example, adjust the schedule of the Syracuse University Early Education & Child Care Center to meet faculty, staff, and student scheduling needs. Develop more child-care openings for faculty, staff, and students.

22. Create an LGBT Studies major, hire additional faculty, and allocate more funding for the program.

Full Access

These recommendations speak to the need for all students, staff, and faculty to feel welcome and included in formal and informal university activities. *Access* refers not only to the goal of physical access (e.g., ramps, sign language interpretation, the removal of impediments to participation) but also to the overarching idea that we are "One University" and all may benefit and engage in a variety of opportunities. Our goal is that no one feels unwelcome because they can't enter the building, eat the food, have their religion respected, or be included.

Short-term (to be addressed by the end of calendar year 2016):

23. Conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit of university spaces and update the Campus Access Map, including all-gender bathrooms.

24. Acknowledge at all major public events on campus that Syracuse University sits on Native land. Fly the Haudenosaunee flag wherever the American flag is flown on campus (e.g., the Carrier Dome, Goldstein Student Center). Make sure dedications and invocations at university events are nondenominational.

25. Institute Indigenous Peoples Day as a campus initiative to honor Indigenous history and culture on the second Monday of October.

26. Compile an online inventory of diversity and inclusion programs and activities across campus. Create a Diversity Portal—with links to this resource and the central university calendar—to provide extensive information on Syracuse's efforts to foster a richly diverse and inclusive learning community.

27. Conduct a needs analysis of how to make American Sign Language and CART services available for all university events. Consider hiring one or more full-time American Sign Language interpreters, as determined by the analysis.

28. Offer transportation to La Casita and other community sites to give students physical and curricular access to important aspects of the Syracuse community.

29. Offer inclusive food options (e.g., kosher, halal, vegetarian) at Syracuse University events where food is included. The annual Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration is a good model.

Long-term (to be addressed within the next two to three years):

30. Develop a Physical Access Plan, with the aim of removing physical barriers to access over time. Increase the annual budget of the Office for Campus Planning, Design, and Construction earmarked for stand-alone accessibility improvements. Incorporate Universal Design principles in all new construction and major renovations.

31. Create a plan within the Campus Framework to house distinct cultural centers (e.g., Disability Cultural Center, LGBT Resource Center, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Native Student Program, Slutzker Center for International Services) in a centralized location such as the to-be-renovated Schine Student Center. Ensure that all cultural centers are accessible and have adequate space.

32. Expand the university's Preferred Name/MySlice process for choice of gender pronouns, email display names, ID cards, and issues related to Blackboard and other relevant platforms.

33. Re-examine current university policies around religious observance, which place the burden of observance on students. Ensure that important university events (e.g., Commencement, convocations, graduation, finals) are not scheduled on major religious holidays (e.g., Yom Kippur, Eid al-Fitr, Diwali).

CONCLUSION

Syracuse University has historically been committed to principles of diversity and inclusion. These recommendations extend that commitment, strengthening the university's visible position as an institution that prepares global citizens.

We want to make clear, however, that they are more than just a collection of activities and initiatives. To be truly effective, these proactive measures—each representing a substantive marker of demonstrative change—must build upon one another to create a welcoming and enriching community that seeks to promote the inclusion, engagement, and success of all its members.

In addition to accomplishing the short- and long-term goals outlined here, it is vital that the university vigorously and publicly promote a unified vision that fosters diversity and the inclusion of all its members. Our individual and collective efforts will be more visible, and will affect the institutional culture more deeply, if we recognize that these are ongoing processes designed to change the deep structures of our university and its institutional climate.

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Special thanks to Megan Travis and Gretchen Goldstein, who helped organize the Workgroup.