



FREDONIA

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan

— Centered in Inclusive Excellence —

November 1, 2016



Introduction

The Association of American Colleges and Universities identified, “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” ([AAC&U, n.d](#)). Strategically centered in inclusive excellence, the State University of New York at Fredonia embarks on a new process to ensure that diversity, equity, and inclusion are continually woven into the fabric of the institution.

This **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan** reflects Fredonia’s response to the SUNY Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy implemented in the fall of 2015. Additionally, the plan reveals a growing institutional responsibility and commitment to social justice, as well as the needs of the campus-community. This plan was conceived through a multi-faceted and extensive approach in which the students, faculty, staff, and community contributed to understanding where the institution has been, is currently situated, and plans to advance regarding inclusive efforts.

This strategic plan should be considered a living document that may be modified over time per the campus’ needs.

The plan details four main goals:

- Communication
- Assessment and Implementation
- Recruitment and Retention
- Engagement and Education

} **C.A.R.E.**

Each goal includes multiple strategies, which then involve multiple tactics to support progress toward the goal. The four goals display the acronym C.A.R.E, symbolizing the institution’s commitment to caring about diversity, equity, and inclusion.



About Fredonia

Situated in Chautauqua County, New York, Fredonia is a comprehensive, public, liberal arts university offering bachelor's and master's degrees and advanced certificate programs. The college has had a longstanding relationship and connection to the surrounding communities, including the Village of Fredonia, the City of Dunkirk, the city of Jamestown and the Community College, as well as the Seneca Nation. As of this Fall 2016, Fredonia enrollment includes:

- **4386 total Undergraduate students**
 - 56.9 % female, 43.1 % male*
 - 20.7 % students from underrepresented racial minorities.
 - 1.8 % International students.
 - 11 % students self reported from the LGBTQ+ community
 - 3.7 % of students request support from Disabilities Services.
 - 39 % of incoming first year students are Pell Grant eligible.
- **226 total Graduate students**
 - 74.8 % female, 25.2% male*
 - 13.6 % students from underrepresented racial minorities.
 - 11.5 % International students.
- **Total employees: 961 fulltime and part-time**
 - 52 % female employees
 - 9.9 % employees from underrepresented racial minorities.
 - 5 % faculty from underrepresented racial minorities.



** Fredonia acknowledges that not all students identify within the gender binary.*



Supporting the four baccalaureate goals of **Skilled, Connected, Creative, and Responsible**, the mission of the University is:

Fredonia educates, challenges, and inspires students to become skilled, connected, creative, and responsible global citizens and professionals. The university enriches the world through scholarship, artistic expression, community engagement, and entrepreneurship.

The University is currently developing a new vision statement to lead the overall efforts of the institution. This vision for Fredonia includes the following:

As a premier public university, Fredonia aspires to transform our students, our region, and our world through experiential, intellectual, and creative endeavors within the traditions of inclusive community and purposeful inquiry.

Keeping a connection to the mission and vision of Fredonia, the DEI Strategic plan also correlates with other comprehensive efforts at Fredonia, including the Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan and the [Power of Fredonia Strategic Plan](#). The SEM plan “attempts to reconcile the value of ‘exclusivity’ (i.e., selectivity) with ‘inclusivity’ (i.e., access and student success) in order to achieve optimal enrollment to fulfill its mission” (SEM, 2016, p. 4). Whereas, the Power of Fredonia Strategic Plan highlights that, “diversity is an essential and fundamental component of The Power of Fredonia. We as a university echo the SUNY-wide commitment of equity, inclusiveness, and access and that these principles be promoted in Fredonia’s student body, personnel, and curriculum” (Power of Fredonia, 2012, p. 5) The Power of Fredonia Plan also sparked campus wide efforts toward the Comprehensive Internationalization Implementation Plan, which created the Global and International Engagement Council, which focuses on internationalization and adding to cultural diversity of the campus. In its final year, the Power of Fredonia Plan, along with many other efforts on the campus, weave together Fredonia’s commitment toward inclusive excellence.



Fredonia's Understanding of Diversity

Fredonia values and encourages a broad range of experience, talent, and knowledge in support of inclusive excellence. At Fredonia, diversity is broadly defined to include all identities, experiences, and backgrounds. The University is committed to fostering a diverse community of outstanding faculty, staff, and students, as well as ensuring equal educational opportunity, employment, and access to services, programs, and activities.

Why Does Diversity Matter at Fredonia?

Diversity planning can vary depending on location, population, resources, and climate. Often the complaint is that diversity initiatives are not well integrated into the core structures of the institution. It has been debated that until diversity becomes a central feature of strategic planning efforts, little will change substantively with regard to campus diversity, and these initiatives will remain marginal. At Fredonia, a growing diverse population, as well as a campus commitment to inclusive excellence are driving forces toward ensuring that diversity matters. This plan allows for a focused effort that will not be diluted in other initiatives, and it can stand alone.

Fredonia's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is evident by the formation of the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) in 2013, the hiring of a Chief Diversity Officer, the continued support for the Center for Multicultural Affairs (CMA) and other multicultural student groups (Brother2Brother, Sister Circle, Black Student Union, Latinos Unidos, Pride Alliance, Native American Student Union, Caribbean Student Union, Asian Student Union, Korean International Student Society – to name a few). Many of these student organizations and offices conduct a wide array of programming designed to increase awareness as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Moreover, the publishing of the Handbook on Appointment, Reappointment, and Promotion ([HARP](#)) in 2015, solidified strong commitments to ensuring the placement of diverse efforts within the University. Specifically, the handbook identified the parameter of incorporating global and cultural diversity as part of the faculty review process. Guidelines regarding recruitment were also emphasized, allowing for the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Human Resources to uphold inclusive hiring practices.

Researchers suggest that issues of diversity permeate all aspects of a campus environment and each aspect is interconnected. Simply recruiting a more diverse



student body without attending to other aspects of campus diversity, including such issues as intergroup relations, curricular change, faculty and staff professional development, and diversifying faculty and staff, can result in difficulties for traditionally underrepresented students. Additionally, this can minimize the potential positive educational outcomes that a diverse environment can bring to all students (Hurtado et. al., 1999). In order to effectively create a supportive environment for nurturing diversity, and to demonstrate its strong and visible commitment, it is paramount that Fredonia drafts, publishes, and implements solid strategies and tactics to guide changes in campus policies and procedures. Fredonia's comprehensive diversity plan provides forward thinking recommendations to reach the desired outcomes. Fredonia's diversity plan provides the means to help those on campus who feel marginalized to voice their concerns and gain a better sense of belonging within the community.





Recommendations of Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

At the center of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan are the goals that ensure not only Fredonia's commitment to the plan, but help to realize the depth and longevity needed to sustain these efforts. The four goals are defined and include multiple strategies, each with their own various tactics to help initiate their completion. The tactics and strategies represent current needs of the institution; however, there is an expectation that these may evolve to meet the future needs of the campus community.

GOAL 1: COMMUNICATION – Improve communication to ensure the campus and larger community understands Fredonia's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Throughout the process of soliciting feedback from the campus, it was clear that many individuals might not know about the current efforts to sustain diversity at Fredonia. Moreover, previous commitments that have helped initiate change were easily removed from institutional memory. Efforts regarding programming, events, speakers, or other initiatives may become lost among other worthwhile endeavors. Additionally, some individuals identified concerns about bringing forward issues of bias and discrimination, particularly not knowing about the process or options. This goal helps the campus to communicate about inclusive initiatives, as well as determine appropriate approaches to educating and publicizing about bias related incidents and supports on campus.

Strategy 1.A – Publicize the campus commitment to inclusive initiatives.

Tactic 1.A.1 – Chief Diversity Officer presents and publishes information about DEI Strategic Plan and campus initiatives once a semester.



Tactic 1.A.2 - Create a mechanism through Creative Design and Marketing to highlight diverse activities and events on a regular basis.

Tactic 1.A.3 - Utilize social media platforms to spread awareness.

Strategy 1.B - Improve mechanisms for reporting incidents of bias and discrimination.

Tactic 1.B.1 - Provide an anonymous tool for reporting incidents of bias or discrimination.

Tactic 1.B.2 - Engage campus stakeholders and frontline students, faculty, and staff to provide training and collaboration regarding bias incidents.

Strategy 1.C - Increase awareness of incidents of bias and the campus response to concerns.

Tactic 1.C.1 - Develop protocols as to when and how incidents and responses are shared with the campus.

Tactic 1.C.2 - Debrief the campus, when necessary in order to inform, advise, and identify change.

Tactic 1.C.3 - Provide forums and/or safe spaces for students, faculty, and staff to gather and dialogue about diversity related concerns.



GOAL 2: ASSESSMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION – Assess Fredonia’s efforts toward diversity, equity, and inclusion to develop best practices in support of inclusive excellence.

Ensuring that the goals are measurable and able to be assessed during the ongoing efforts will help to keep the campus on target and moving forward with implementation of this plan. This goal is rooted in the campus making a commitment to developing an inclusive climate and devising approaches to assess and measure growth. Additionally, this goal points toward a sustainable process to ensure inclusive efforts.

Strategy 2.A - Commit to and develop an inclusive campus climate.

Tactic 2.A.1 - Identify a partner or resource to complete a campus climate assessment within the first year of the strategic plan, and subsequent cycle for future deployment.

Tactic 2.A.2 - Based upon measures identified in the assessment, develop outcomes for growth and to address needs.

Strategy 2.B - Develop assessment strategies of learning and growth from participation in diverse activities and events.

Tactic 2.B.1 - Create a mechanism for assessment of diversity related events.

Tactic 2.B.2- Establish learning outcomes and assessment of diversity training initiatives for students, faculty, and staff.



Strategy 2.C - Establish mechanisms for measuring success and hold faculty, staff, and administration accountable.

Tactic 2.C.1 - Following appropriate HARP and/or collective bargaining agreement protocols, ensure the mission driven values of diversity and inclusion are reflected in the evaluation of faculty and staff.

Tactic 2.C.2 - Create a diversity dashboard to monitor campus growth and improvement.

Strategy 2.D - Develop approaches to sustain campus inclusivity efforts.

Tactic 2.D.1 - Charge the DEI Advisory Council, consisting of students, faculty, and staff, to shepherd the campus commitment to continued growth of the plan.

Tactic 2.D.2 - Support an accessibility assessment in all settings of the University, and address any needs.

Tactic 2.D.3 - Create a “Diversity Champion” award for students and employees to be given each year in recognition of inclusive commitments and advocacy.

Tactic 2.D.4 - Explore pathways for funding opportunities with the University Foundation and outside agencies to develop a sustainable pathway to support inclusive campus efforts.



GOAL 3: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - Improve recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty and staff to parallel the changing demographics and needs of the University.

The changing demographics of prospective students to higher education, and specifically at Fredonia, are well documented; however, this goal will not address the recruitment and retention needs of students. Fredonia is currently committed to a Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan, which launched in the fall of 2016. The SEM plan was based upon a yearlong planning process as a response to the campus' current enrollment situation. The SEM plan addressed needs for the recruitment and retention of students, and specifically identified key indicators central to underrepresented populations, particularly students of color. Key to the success of the SEM process is a clear link to the DEI Strategic Plan. The current steering committee for the SEM plan includes the Chief Diversity Officer, which helps to create a synergistic approach in aligning both plans.

Due to the SEM process, this goal focuses exclusively on the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff. Increases in students from underrepresented identities and ethnicities have not been met by similar growth within the faculty and staff. Over the last five years, the rate of racial minorities among the faculty and staff has remained fairly constant at nearly 10% of the population. Several best practices have already been implemented on the campus related to this goal, including broadening applicant pools and investigating reasons why employees leave. The continued focus on recruitment and retention will help to see positive strides in aligning the faculty and staff more closely with state and student demographics.



Strategy 3.A – Increase employee hiring from underrepresented populations.

Tactic 3.A.1 – Research and implement best practices for advertising positions to diverse audiences to expand applicant pools.

Tactic 3.A.2 – Expand training opportunities for search committees related to implicit bias and inclusivity.

Tactic 3.A.3 – Submit candidates for the SUNY Faculty Diversity program.

Tactic 3.A.4 – Ensure compliance with a yearly Affirmative Action Plan, including meeting goals for recruitment and promotion.

Tactic 3.A.5 – Assess current efforts and institutionalize support of dual career couple relocation.

Tactic 3.A.6 – Develop consistent methods to ensure applicants are assessed on their commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Strategy 3.B – Increase retention of underrepresented employees.

Tactic 3.A.1 – Expand the Minority Faculty and Staff Retention Working Group to a full committee, increasing scope and resources.

Tactic 3.A.2 – Assess ongoing efforts through the Professional Development Center and individual departments regarding mentorship of new faculty and staff.

Tactic 3.A.3 – Assess the need and reinvigorate or develop affinity groups for employees to connect.



GOAL 4: ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION - Create opportunities to engage and educate the campus and greater community on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The learning that takes place in a college community encompasses skills, information, and strategies that are obtained within the classroom and co-curricular environment. This goal demonstrates Fredonia's commitment to the broader range of educational opportunities for the institution and the potential impact upon the surrounding community as a whole. Learning is a lifelong process and it is crucial that the Fredonia community remain educated on topics of diversity to raise cultural competency. As such, it is crucial that the campus commit to curricular transformation to infuse inclusive excellence into all aspects of the curriculum and student experience.

Strategy 4.A - Educate students, faculty, and staff on areas of inclusive excellence and cultural competency.

Tactic 4.A.1 - Educate the campus community on a semester basis about forms of bias and discrimination and how to report.

Tactic 4.A.2 - Develop programmatic efforts that occur on a semester basis that engage the campus on topics of diversity and inclusion.

Tactic 4.A.3 - Assess cultural competency trainings for students and employees, with particular emphasis on non-traditional populations and address gaps and/or needs.



Strategy 4.B – Strategically connect within the community and pipeline for enrollment.

Tactic 4.B.1 – Identify partnerships with local organizations and K-12 schools to share resources for DEI training.

Tactic 4.B.2 – Create a yearly campus and community forum related to diversity needs and initiatives.

Tactic 4.B.3 – Work with local business owners, leaders, and elected officials to assess inclusivity and address any gaps.

Tactic 4.B.4 – Reach out to and connect with local organizations and community members who are committed to diversity.

Strategy 4.C – Engage in curricular transformation to be inclusive of diverse learning styles, identities, and cultural points of view in the formal and informal educational experience.

Tactic 4.C.1 – Support more debriefing opportunities related to large-scale diversity events and concerns.

Tactic 4.C.2 – Following appropriate curricular change protocols, ensure all First Year Seminars identify learning outcomes related to diversity and inclusion.

Tactic 4.C.3 – Following appropriate curricular change protocols, develop a diversity component to the general education curriculum.

Tactic 4.C.4 – Establish forms of assessment to monitor co-curricular engagement with diversity and inclusion, expanding efforts as needed.



Assignment of Responsibility and Implementation

Since the DEI Strategic Plan connects all members of the campus community, it is the responsibility of all to ensure its success. The commitment to shared governance at Fredonia will help to ensure that this living plan will continue to reach all members of the community, ensuring valuable input and traction forward. Despite the responsibilities of meeting the goals, strategies, and tactics being decentralized, a centralized group must be convened to shepherd the plan through its infancy and ultimate completion. This plan calls for the currently existing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Advisory Council to be charged with steering the efforts forward with the plan. Led by the Chief Diversity Officer, the DEI Advisory Council was created in 2014 and replaced the campus's longstanding Affirmative Action Committee. This Council serves as an affiliate committee of the University Senate and consists of students, faculty, and staff. The group informs the work of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and serves as a compass toward understanding complex diversity issues to support inclusive initiatives.

Due to the size of the DEI Advisory Council, it is recommended that a smaller subcommittee of students, faculty, and staff be organized from the membership, starting in January of 2017. This subcommittee must meet regularly to ensure implementation of the plan. It is suggested that this group also connect with various administrators, departments, and groups to keep the plan active. This group should inform the Chief Diversity Officer, who may also hold a seat on the subcommittee. The Chief Diversity Officer will be tasked with keeping the President, the Cabinet, and the campus community notified of regular progress.

This plan will support growth in inclusive excellence for the next five years (January 2017 – December 2021). Five years will allow for a reasonable amount of time to pass to see measurable growth of the goals, action items completed, and the impact of programs and new tactics. This amount of time will also help to not lose sight of the plan, keeping it at the forefront. The DEI Advisory Council Subcommittee should develop their own timeline for action, keeping in mind current needs of the campus as well as tactics in which specific terms are identified. Although the subcommittee will oversee the DEI Strategic Plan, successful centering of the campus in inclusive excellence requires all members of the community to take action, participate, and champion the plan.

Fiscal resources are allocated on a yearly basis to support a diverse community. Funding is critical to the sustainability of strategic planning. Some funding is already earmarked in various student scholarships, faculty funded programs, programming



funds, and other areas. The DEI Advisory Council Subcommittee should work with institutional leadership to seek further monetary opportunities to strengthen support of the plan's goals.

Assessment and Evaluation

The DEI Strategic plan will not be effective without assessment to measure the tactics developed to support each strategy, and therefore helping to sustain the four overarching goals. **The Association of American Colleges and Universities detailed that:**

On many campuses, the breadth and depth of efforts needed to make excellence inclusive are bypassed by a narrow focus on the compositional diversity of the student body. Although this aspect is critical, inclusive excellence is more than simply “improving the numbers” and “getting more students of color on campus”. Colleges and Universities must move away from this kind of narrow organization outcome to embrace comprehensive performance measurements linked to goals, objectives, strategies, indicators, and evidence (Williams, Berger, McClendon, 2005, p. 19).

Performance indicators should be developed by the DEI Advisory Council Subcommittee to determine if the institution has met, made progress toward, or not met each tactic. Some performance indicators, such as the faculty recruitment data, can be established immediately, whereas some information may need to unfold as the plan is enacted. At the end of each spring semester, every Division (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, University Advancement, Finance & Administration, Engagement & Economic Development, and the President's Office) will be responsible to report to the subcommittee on their progress of the indicators and overall plan. Each report will help to create what Williams refers to as the “diversity story”, in which a more complex view can be aligned to tell the overall commitment of the institution (Williams, 2013, p. 256).

Goal two of the plan ensures a commitment to assessment and measuring progress. Within this goal, the tactic of implementing a campus climate survey is recommended. This survey will create an opportunity for baseline information to be established within the first year to not only help lead the programmatic and other efforts of the plan, but support the creation of other key performance indicators. These indicators will also help the campus determine the current climate regarding an overall understanding and commitment to inclusive excellence.



Accountability for meeting the goals will rest with the University leadership, with movement towards their completion resting with the DEI Advisory Council Subcommittee, and ultimately the campus community at large. As this document, and its strategies and tactics are considered fluid, there may be an instance in which a component is not met, or the institution determines a different approach is necessary. Through consultation with institutional leadership, tactics and strategies may be altered based upon the needs of the institution, or if priorities change. As Williams identified, “diversity assessments also help to meet the cries for proof by both the courts and a skeptical public that diversity ‘works’” (2013, p. 388). The work of assessment is critical to the success of the DEI Strategic Plan. Ultimately, this will help to ensure that the campus and community are able to see progress toward inclusive excellence.

Closing Summary

The DEI Strategic Plan was not created overnight. Rather, it was carefully drafted through a yearlong process wherein a task force worked to ensure that the plan represented an institution centered in inclusive excellence.

Members of this task force included:

Dr. William Boerner, Chief Diversity Officer

Bridget Doyle, Student

Dr. Linda Hall, Professor of Accounting

Rhianna Kelley, Residence Hall Director

Czerton Lim, Assistant Professor of Theatre and Dance

Burgandi Rakoska, Student

David White, Director of the Educational Development Program

To seek feedback on the plan, the task force held two open forums and presented to each divisional directors group, the University Senate, the Student Association, the Center for Multicultural Affairs, Human Resources, and the President’s Cabinet. These meetings helped to finalize the goals, strategies, and tactics, as well as spark an institutional commitment to the plan. Movement forward will not be an easy or direct path, but with support by SUNY system led initiatives and all students, faculty, and staff, Fredonia can support a sustained, visible, and purposeful change — centered in inclusive excellence.



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