



RUTGERS

Student Affairs

Diversity Strategic Plan

October 2023

There's a **U** in Rutgers

Process Overview

As the broader university initiated the university-wide diversity strategic planning efforts, Student Affairs formed a Diversity Strategic Plan Working Group to spearhead the strategic planning process for the division. The working group utilized key university documents (including University Equity Audit, University-wide Diversity Strategic Planning Toolkit, and the divisional Multicultural Competence in Student Affairs Organizations survey results) to guide the process in a phased approach. The five priorities identified for the university provided the working group with strategic direction to enable divisional alignment with institutional goals.

The five priorities guiding the university's diversity strategic planning process:

- Recruit, retain, and develop a diverse community.
- Promote inclusive scholarship and teaching.
- Define sustainable and substantive community engagement.
- Build the capacity of leaders to create inclusive climates.
- Develop an institutional infrastructure to drive change.

Diversity Strategic Plan Working Group Members:

- Ji Lee, Co-Chair
Executive Director – Intercultural Engagement & Inclusion Initiatives
- Neela Patel, Co-Chair
Interim Executive Director – Student Centers & Activities
- Francesca Maresca
Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Health & Wellness
- Laura Randolph
Associate Dean of Students/Director – New Student Orientation & Family Programs
 - Krystyne Sevarese
Former Senior Director – Residence Life for Campus Communities
 - Darnell Thompson
Assistant Director of Education – Center for Social Justice Education & LGBT Communities
- Dayna Weintraub
Executive Director – Student Affairs Planning and Strategic Initiatives,
Former Director of Assessment
- Kerri Willson
Associate Dean of Students/Director – Off-campus Living & Community Partnerships

University Goal: Recruit, Retain, and Develop a Diverse Community

UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVE

Build and retain a university community that more closely reflects the state of New Jersey, paying particular attention to access and equity gaps in the success of underrepresented populations among students, faculty, and staff.

SA Subgoal #1: Review current Student Affairs recruitment practices for professional staff to identify areas of bias and develop baseline recruitment and hiring practices for consistency across all Student Affairs areas.

ACTION STEPS

- Develop a diversity statement/expectation for all job descriptions.
- Develop a job description review process for departments and individual staff to ensure inclusive language and elimination of bias, accurate reflections of job responsibilities, and consistency with other comparable positions within the university.
- Benchmark marketing strategies for recruitment from peer institutions and determine key organizations and advertising sites.
- Develop budget and allocate funds to promote positions to diverse communities.
- Develop training for search committee and interviewers on expectations and implicit bias.
- Develop standardized rubric/template for reviewing candidates prior to review of resumes.
- Develop training on recruitment and hiring practices and expectations for hiring managers and search committee chairs inclusive of communication strategies, making hiring offers and negotiating requests.
- Revisit current intranet systems and consider developing a user-friendly, efficient internal divisional HR platform that includes recruitment policies, procedures, checklists and resources.

SA Subgoal #2: Develop a systematic exit interview process for Student Affairs professionals leaving their current position.

ACTION STEPS

- Benchmark exit interview processes of peer institutions and comparable organizations outside of student affairs.
- Develop list of exit interview topics and questions for universal consideration.
- Develop timeline and process for exit interview protocols (staff responsible for conducting in each unit, timeframe, etc.)
- Identify a divisional team to come together quarterly to review key themes surfacing across exit interview processes and recommend strategies for improvement or response.

SA Subgoal #3: Develop and implement a new employee on-boarding process for Student Affairs staff to instill connectedness to the division and department.

ACTION STEPS

- Periodically review, modify and update the new employee welcome letter sent from the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs.
- Create a sequence of communications during the new employee welcome process, ranging from messages from key leaders to logistical onboarding information.
- Create a webpage with universal information for new Student Affairs employees.
- Develop a list of manager requirements for onboarding new staff (some examples include conducting initial one-on-one, reviewing the job description and performance evaluation documentation, scheduling meetings with key partners and stakeholders, etc.).
- Develop a list of year one activities for all new Student Affairs employees.
- Create a required central training for new Student Affairs employees to learn about required trainings (COI, Title IX), policies/procedures, organizational structure, university acronyms and language, RU traditions, navigating campus geography, and key divisional initiatives/opportunities.
- Develop a new staff handbook (Divisional and Department information)

University Goal: Build the Capacity to Engage and Lead

UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVE

Equip leaders with the cultural competencies necessary to engage with others in ways that foster dialogue, enable understanding, and promote resilience when conflict occurs, attending especially to the role of leadership.

SA Subgoal #1: Provide training and education for all divisional staff to support effective leadership and supervisory relationships in order to create an inclusive workplace culture.

ACTION STEPS

- Develop education and training curriculum tailored to different audiences (student staff, professional staff).
- Create tabletop tool kits for students and staff to have on-going discussions.
- Construct a growth inventory for employees, which consists of an optional map and pathway to the employee's individual growth.

SA Subgoal #2: Develop and commit to a DEI philosophy process for your department/unit that connects to shared core values of Student Affairs.

ACTION STEPS

- Utilize the Student Affairs Diversity Statement and each of its key elements – Diversity, Inclusion & Responsibility – to create statements that address unique purposes of each department within Student Affairs.

- Create a tool kit for departments that includes the following information and resources: DEI statement development exercise and actions and behaviors that demonstrate how to actualize the statement.
- Partner with University Human Resources to standardize ways to incorporate the DEI philosophy in hiring and retention processes.

University Goal: Serve the Public Good and Expand University-Community Partnerships

UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVE

Marshall the university's core activities of teaching, research, and engagement in service of the public good promoting the institutional commitment to the community on and off-campus.

SA Subgoal #1: Cultivate a culture around “the Art of Neighboring” for all Rutgers community members.

ACTION STEPS

- Create messaging around the “art of neighboring”, which includes respecting the diversity of our communities, and implement it with all first-year students.
- Implement an educational program for students considering and/or planning to move off campus into the surrounding communities.
- Cultivate relationships with local property owners, businesses, and residents to create a sense of connection and community between the greater New Brunswick community and Rutgers students.

SA Subgoal #2: Create and/or strengthen opportunities for students to participate in community service in the city of New Brunswick and surrounding communities.

ACTION STEPS

- Define what community service looks like within the Division of Student Affairs.
- Outline expectations for meaningful community service engagement.
- Create the Office of Volunteer Engagement within Student Centers and Activities
- Implement platform to assist students with finding community service and engagement opportunities.
- Creation opportunities for student organizations to receive pre-service education and post-service reflection in order to deepen their experience.

University Goal: Refine Systems, Policies and Procedures

UNIVERSITY OBJECTIVE

Ensure that university systems, policies, and procedures promote equity, facilitate diversity goals, improve clarity, provide transparency and enhance accountability.

SA Subgoal #1: Implement a Divisional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council

ACTION STEPS

- Create and relaunch a Student Affairs DEI Council charged with oversight of the varying workgroups appointed to address the Student Affairs Diversity Strategic Plan initiatives.
- Assign an ex officio representative from the DEI Council to each of the workgroups to ensure effective flow of communication across the initiatives.
- Determine a regular cycle of communication between the DEI Council and different levels of divisional leadership as well as to the entire Division to foster transparency across initiatives and the organization.
- Develop a process for the DEI Council to regularly review the charge of the council, and the needs of our staff, students, and division.

SA Subgoal #2: Develop a review process regarding policies and procedures

ACTION STEPS

- Appoint a workgroup to develop centralized procedures and governance standards for Student Affairs.
- Inventory, review and develop Student Affairs core policies and standards to ensure fairness among policies and awareness of policies among staff.
- Develop standards for intentional policy design (gender-neutral language, accessibility, brand guidelines, etc.) that can be utilized by individuals, committees, and working groups who create and update departmental policies.
- Create a template and training materials regarding accessible universal design for high-use documents (screen-reader friendly structure, appropriate creation of tables, etc.)
- Develop standards and processes to support successful transitions for staff at all levels.

SA Subgoal #3: Develop and Implement Marketing and Communication Protocols

ACTION STEPS

- Develop a guiding rubric all units can use in reviewing their websites, marketing materials, etc. for inclusive marketing and communications.
- Conduct a review of all websites for gender-neutral language, accessibility, brand guidelines, and other compliance indicators.
- Develop and share inclusive standards and best practices for DEI-mindful communication and marketing practices across websites, e-mail, videos, and social media.
- Draft a policy governing appropriate communication practices and protocols for issuing statements through email, on websites, and through social media platforms . This can include seeking input from departments with expertise as appropriate on matters for which a statement is being issued.

SA Subgoal #4: Develop a divisional recognition process to highlight individuals and department efforts that promote the spirit of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

ACTION STEPS

- Create an award granted at the Student Affairs Year End Celebration that highlights an individual, team, or effort that promotes the spirit of intended divisional DEI outcomes.
- Develop an equitable awards process with publicly available timeline, rubrics, and logistics to foster a transparent nomination and selection process.
- Develop communication strategies to highlight university, community and professional association awards relevant to DEI.