Advancing Diversity and Inclusion at Syracuse University

A Status Report on the Short-Term Recommendations Made by the Chancellor's Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion

Friday, May 12, 2017

The University has released its latest status report detailing progress on recommendations by the University-wide Chancellor's Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion to create a more welcoming, inclusive campus.

In the fall of 2015, Chancellor Kent Syverud announced the creation of a new University-wide Chancellor's Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion.

The Chancellor's Workgroup, co-chaired by Francine D'Amico, associate professor in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, and Barry L. Wells, special assistant to the Chancellor, was tasked with developing solutions on how to further create a more diverse and inclusive climate at the University.

In March 2016, the Chancellor's Workgroup provided recommendations directly to Chancellor Syverud, who shared them with the campus community. Implementation of those recommendations by University leadership continues.

The recommendations and the status of each are as follows:

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.
   Responsible: Dolan Evanovich, Bea Gonzalez, Barry L. Wells, and Michele G. Wheatly

   Status: Complete

The Chancellor appointed a University-wide Council on Diversity and Inclusion on November 29, 2016. The SU Council on Diversity and Inclusion will be the primary advisory committee to the Chancellor on matters of diversity and inclusion. The council will also serve as a resource to academic and administrative units. The priorities of the council will be to review and advise on critical diversity and inclusion matters, including but not limited to issues related to campus climate, implementation of recommendations from the Chancellor's Workgroup on Diversity and Inclusion, and additional steps related to increasing the diversity of students, faculty and staff.

2. Establish an Ombuds Office and official ombudsperson whose mandate is to serve as an informal, confidential resource for all faculty, staff and students.
   Responsible: Michele G. Wheatly

   Status: In Process

   The Office of the Provost has reviewed the International Ombudsman Association (IOA) Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and is currently investigating best practices for ombudsperson services at peer universities. The office made a preliminary recommendation in fall 2016. Further vetting of the recommendation continued in spring 2017 and will continue into summer 2017, including discussion with key members of the University Senate, the Office of Graduate Studies and a representative of the Graduate Student Organization. Final recommendations will be submitted by June 30, 2017.

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.
   Responsible: Dolan Evanovich and Michele G. Wheatly

   Status: In Process

   The Office of the Provost and the Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience are currently following the recommendations of the Workgroup on Internationalization of the Academic Strategic Plan and Oversight Committee (ASPIOC). The workgroup's recommendations entail multiple leadership and staffing proposals. These proposals include strengthening staffing of the Slutzker Center to enhance the University's capacity to recruit and welcome international faculty and staff. The Office of the Provost continues its analysis of staffing needs in consultation with the leaders of the Slutzker Center, SU

Abroad and the Workgroup on Internationalization. The office will complete this analysis and initiate new searches prior to November 1, 2016.

The University has funded a graduate student to support the assistant director of the Native Student Program during the 2016-2017 academic year in order to avoid disruption of critical supportive services to Native students. The student assistant will work closely with the assistant director to provide academic support, programming and counseling for students in the program. Additional data collection and analysis will be completed by the Office of the Provost and the Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience to address staffing needs for 2017-2018.

The Office of the Provost will follow the Academic Strategic Plan by enhancing the scope and reach of the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) as recommended by the research and discovery workgroup of ASPIOC. Following a need analysis in September 2016 and preparation of a job description, the office will establish new senior staffing at the Graduate School by October 31, 2016, to work in partnership with the vice president for research. Responsibilities for new OVPR staff include planning, coordinating and executing pipeline success programs for women and historically underrepresented students across scholarly disciplines.

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

   Status: In Process

   The Provost has followed the Academic Strategic Plan and established a method for campuswide provision of academic success programming. Specifically, the University has launched the Center for Learning and Student Success (CLASS), operating in Bird Library and directed by Margaret Usdansky. CLASS offers such academic support services as individual tutoring, group tutoring and assistance with study skills. Free group tutoring offerings will be expanded during the 2017–2018 academic year and a set of free one-on-one tutoring options for designated historically difficult courses will be launched for fall 2018. Visit class.syr.edu for additional information.

5. Adopt a Universitywide 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.
Responsible: Andrew R. Gordon and Michele G. Wheatly

Status: In Process

Following a review of the draft policy by the Provost and the senior vice president and chief human resources officer (CHRO), the IT Accessibility Task Force hosted a series of forums and discussions throughout the spring 2017 semester to discuss the proposed policy. The fourth and final ICT Open Forum was held at the end of February 2017. Modifications to the draft policy were made based on feedback provided at the forums and submitted online. Additionally, the task force recommended that the University's chief information officer (CIO) and ADA coordinator be designated as co-chairs of the ICT Accessibility Compliance Committee, the administrative body established to grant or deny requests for exceptions to the policy. The updated policy has been reviewed by the Provost and SVP and CHRO and it has been submitted to the Office of University Counsel to proceed with formal approvals.

Although many areas of comment have been addressed in the final draft, the cost for full implementation of the policy will be high. They include costs for ensuring that all electronic materials, courses, websites and programs are fully accessible, and CART and ASL are available at every activity regardless of size, request or established need. The task force has recommended and the Provost and SVP and CHRO agree that proceeding with implementation of the policy outweighs waiting to allocate all necessary funds to comply with the new policy. In addition, upon recommendation of the task force, the Provost has agreed to pilot a Course Design Seed Grants program in the amount of $50,000 that would allow five faculty to receive financial support to convert their course materials to full accessibility.

As noted in previous updates, ITS has a dedicated person handling technology accessibility matters. In addition, the Division of Libraries has recently hired a dedicated technology support staff to directly assist with library-based technology accessibility matters.

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.

Responsible: Andrew R. Gordon, Amir Rahnamay-Azar and Michele G. Wheatly

Status: Complete

A central University fund was established in September 2016 to assist sponsoring schools, colleges, other responsibility centers and administrative support units to pay for faculty or staff accommodations that are identified as reasonable and necessary under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for such funding:

1. The University's ADA coordinator will make a determination that a reasonable accommodation is required for the faculty or staff member.
2. The cumulative accommodation expense incurred for each center or support unit must exceed an annual dollar threshold of $2,000.
3. Any request for expenses in excess of $20,000, will be reported by the ADA coordinator to Andrew R. Gordon, Amir Rahnamay-Azar and Michele G. Wheatly for joint consideration and approval before the expense is incurred.

The Office of Budget and Planning is tracking total expenses charged to the central funding source during fiscal year 2017 to establish the baseline recurring budget for fiscal years 2018 and beyond.

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).
Responsible: Michele G. Wheatly

Status: Complete

The SU-ADVANCE program has been funded since 2010 by the National Science Foundation and has remaining funding to be expended during fiscal year 2017. As federal funding winds down, the best practices of the ADVANCE project for faculty professional development will be disseminated across campus under the direction of the Office of the Provost. Some activities of WISE pertain mainly to women faculty in STEM fields. The Office of the Provost will undertake these functions starting in 2017. Additional activities of WISE pertain to women students in the University's STEM

educational programs. The Office of the Vice President of Research will undertake a campuswide effort to foster persistence for women and historically underrepresented students through an emphasis on research, professional development and programming to build strong communities and social networks.

The staff of SU-ADVANCE will move into the Office of Faculty Affairs and will continue to focus on the issues that have been a cornerstone of the program since its inception and will broaden its reach to enhance professional development programming and opportunities for all faculty. The associate provost for faculty affairs has met with the leaders of WISE and will continue to support the mission of the initiative through ongoing programming within the Provost's Office.

8. 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.
   Responsible: Andrew R. Gordon and Michele G. Wheatly

   Status: In Process

   Developing new processes/criteria for personnel evaluations differs greatly between faculty versus staff. In fall 2016, the Provost initiated discussions with the Senate Committee on Diversity, the Senate Committee on Appointment and Promotions, and other Senate committees concerning diversity and inclusion criteria for tenure and promotion. Following robust discussion, the stakeholders agreed that the Provost's Office will revise the annual CV update form to include a question inviting faculty members to share how they have included attention to diversity and inclusion issues in their teaching, research, and service. Continued attention will be paid to the issue to include future discussion about incorporating diversity and inclusion in reviews of faculty performance. The Provost's Office will complete its work on this initiative by June 1, 2017.

   The Office of Human Resources prepared a short set of guidelines for distribution by schools, colleges and units that were distributed in the fall of this academic year. Moreover, the senior HR business partners have been providing advice and counsel to each of the schools, colleges and units about incorporating diversity and inclusion efforts in the normal course of their daily work and operations. In addition to informal discussion groups on diversity and inclusion in staff, departmental and leadership meetings, a number of

formal training programs were established to emphasize the importance of diversity and inclusion. Some of these efforts include a series of formal training sessions led by the Office of Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Resolution Services (EOIRS) on Managing Bias, Cultural Communication and the Value of Variety; supervisor training on Performance Partnership led by Human Resources with a placed emphasis on diversity and inclusion competence: and "Implicit Bias" training conducted by Bryant Marks, professor of psychology and director of the Program for Research on Black Male Achievement at Morehouse College, for a full day for officers of the Department of Public Safety and a separate, several-hour faculty development program sponsored by the Office of Faculty Affairs.

9. 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.
Responsible: Dolan Evanovich and Andrew R. Gordon

Status: Complete

The STOP BIAS effort and reporting system has received significant attention and promotion throughout the academic year. The STOP BIAS reporting system is prominently displayed on a number of redesigned websites, including the University, the Advancing Diversity and Inclusion, and the Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Resolution Services websites. In addition, the Office of Residence Life and Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities promotes the STOP Bias reporting systems throughout the academic year.

In a series of 14 training workshops being led by the Office of Equal Opportunity, Inclusion and Resolutions Services, first piloted in the fall semester, the STOP BIAS reporting system was prominently discussed and promoted throughout the spring semester.

Moreover, recommendations to address gaps in awareness and understanding have been included in the Recommendations of the Syracuse University Climate Assessment Planning Committee and will be implemented by the start of the 2017-2018 academic year.

10. 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.
Responsible: Dolan Evanovich, Daniel J. French and Michele G. Wheatly

Status: In Process

Partly in response to this recommendation, the Office of First-Year and Transfer Programs and the Slutzker Center for International Services partnered last year to enhance orientation for incoming fall 2016 undergraduate international students. These programming improvements were made possible by $10,000 allocated from the Division of Student Affairs to hire a full-time graduate student during summer 2016. An optional pre-orientation program has already been established to allow international student early arrivals to attend orientation sessions prior to Syracuse Welcome. Half of the incoming international first-year class (250 students) is now currently participating in this new option. In addition, international students spend more time in on-campus facilities, such as the Schine Student Center, which is the hub of Syracuse Welcome activity.

The Slutzker Center for International Services will offer a summer pre-orientation mentoring program for first-year and transfer students, an online summer pre-arrival video, and web-based orientation programs. Daily small group encounters and new student arrival seminars will be modified to provide additional language support for those who need it. As of August 1, the Office of First-Year and Transfer Programs will implement recommendations of the Internationalization Council to further enhance orientation for international students.

11. 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.
Responsible: Dolan Evanovich and Michele G. Wheatly

Status: In Process

Starting in September 2017, the Office of Learning Communities will pilot a diversity reading program for first-year students in association with learning

communities programming. During this pilot activity, the Office of Learning Communities will conduct student learning outcomes assessment to establish evidence of the effectiveness of the program. At the close of academic year 2017–2018, leaders from the Office of the Provost and the Office of Residence Life will convene to examine this evidence and consider how to expand and sustain the program. In the long term, and in the line with the Academic Strategic Plan, this approach will dovetail with other curriculum enhancement efforts such as the Syracuse Core 4+4.

12. Conduct a comprehensive accessibility audit of University spaces and update the Campus Access Map, including all-gender bathrooms.
Responsible: Andrew R. Gordon, Amir Rahnamay-Azar, and Peter E. Sala

Status: In Process

The accessibility audit is currently underway with an anticipated completion date of June 15, 2017. All 9 million square feet of University buildings will be included in the University's Overall Campus Facilities Conditions Assessment. This assessment is expected to identify any and all physicals barriers to access in University buildings and on its grounds. Staff in Campus Planning, Design and Construction (CPDC) and EOIRS, have identified an external company that will use the data gathered to develop a Physical Access Plan.

13. 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.
Responsible: Dolan Evanovich, Kevin Quinn, and Peter E. Sala

Status: Complete

CPDC has installed the Haudenosaunee flag in the Carrier Dome and has dedicated one of three flag poles at Manley to permanently fly it as well. Physical Plant has installed new flag poles at Hendricks Chapel, Physical Plant, the Carriage House, Goldstein Student Center and the Skytop Office building.

An appropriate statement was developed on May 6, 2016, which acknowledges that Syracuse University sits on Native land. It has been disseminated to relevant event organizers for use at major public events on

campus (e.g., Commencement, Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Dinner). Chancellor Syverud used this statement during his welcoming comments at New Student Convocation on August, 25, 2016.

14. Institute Indigenous Peoples Day as a campus initiative to honor Indigenous history and culture on the second Monday of October.
Responsible: Bea Gonzalez and Candace Campbell Jackson

Status: In Process

Columbus Day is not a Syracuse University recognized holiday nor does it appear on the Academic Calendar. The indigenous students of Syracuse University have been celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day on campus for several years. A request for institutional support and recognition honoring the history and culture of indigenous people, with particular interest in the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and our location on the ancestral lands of the Onondaga, was submitted to the SU administration. The Indigenous Students at Syracuse (ISAS) and the Indigenous Graduate Students (IGS) will be planning and sponsoring events, raising awareness and creating dialogue on campus to continue discussions around indigenous worldviews, cultures and histories. Syracuse University will work with ISAS and IGS to outline a process for a campuswide dialogue, modeled after the process at Brown University, to build awareness of and support for adding Indigenous Peoples' Day to the academic and University calendar and to develop an institutional practice of recognizing Indigenous Peoples' Day on calendars published on campus. The University will support ISAS and IGS in their planning efforts for Indigenous Peoples' Day events being planned for October 9, 2017.

15. 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.
Responsible: Bea Gonzalez, Kevin Quinn, and Barry L. Wells

Status: Complete

This recommendation has been followed. The Advancing Diversity and Inclusion website will provide a portal to the curricular and co-curricular programs, activities, services, offices, groups and other resources available to advance and sustain a richly diverse and inclusive learning environment at Syracuse. The 90-plus page site will feature information from schools,

colleges and administrative units along with research, reports, upcoming lectures, videos, current news and events with a link to the central University calendar. This website is designed to support and implement the recommendations of the Express Yourself Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Senate Committee on Diversity, and others. The Advancing Diversity and Inclusion at Syracuse website, which can be found at diversity.syr.edu, was launched on September 1, 2016.

16. 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.
Responsible: Michele G. Wheatly

Status: Complete

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Policy Task Force, in collaboration with Information Technology Services (ITS), completed the review and assessment of the 34 most commonly used University event spaces (excluding the Carrier Dome) and concluded that 12 of those spaces already have technology infrastructure that will support CART services, and the remaining 22 spaces (15 categorized as Registrar, and 7 as captive) require technology infrastructure upgrades to support CART services. Some of those upgrades will be included as part of planned (capital) space improvement projects, and the remainder will be addressed through separate coordinated project efforts.

The task force is working with members of the Chancellor's Executive Team to finalize and implement the proposed policy and subsidiary recommendations. Of particular importance is the creation of a University-wide process to communicate the new policy to key campus stakeholders and ensure broad implementation and compliance over the long-term.

17. Offer transportation to La Casita and other community sites to give students physical and curricular access to important aspects of the Syracuse community.
Responsible: Bea Gonzalez and Amir Rahnamay-Azar

Status: Complete

La Casita will become a recognized stop on the Connective Corridor on the first day of classes for the fall 2017 semester. The Division of Enrollment and the Student Experience will work with the Mary Ann Shaw Center for Public

and Community Service, Parking and Transit Services, and the Department of Public Safety to determine other sites within the community, which would benefit from transportation services.

18. 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.
    Responsible: Amir Rahnamay-Azar

    Status: Complete

    Kosher, vegetarian and halal food is offered through University Catering and served at various events when requested by the event organizers. SU Food Services implemented an internal policy instructing the event planners in Catering to inquire as to whether attendees of the event have special dietary needs, such as vegan, vegetarian, halal, kosher, etc.

    Major University events, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Dinner, Admissions Event, Commencement Brunch and other major University functions, offer inclusive foods.