

University of Denver

Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence

Convocation at the University of Denver is a community event that brings together faculty and staff each fall to celebrate the past year's achievements, reflect on accomplishments, understand current institutional priorities and chart the year ahead. During Convocation 2007, Chancellor Coombe publically articulated specific campus themes that continue to guide University planning and development. In this 2007 Convocation address, Chancellor Coombe affirmed the University's commitment to Inclusive Excellence when he stated, "DU will be a university where diversity, inclusion and excellence mold leaders for a changing America." This theme was expanded upon in the University's Diversity Statement (www.du.edu/chancellor/DiversityStatment.html) and this statement will form the basis of much of this strategic plan. In this plan, we outline goals, objectives and suggested actions that will give the University of Denver tools to live its commitment to diversity more fully. The adoption, support, and implementation of the objectives and action steps by the University should enable us to become the leading academic community that the Chancellor seeks for us to embody. It should be noted that this document is conceptualized as "Stage One" in that it lays out many of the goals, objectives, and suggested action steps but does not provide detailed guidelines for implementation of the actions. For this plan to come alive, we will need to develop a "Stage Two" that addresses implementation.

Inclusive Excellence focuses on (1) increasing compositional diversity, with a particular emphasis on historically underrepresented groups, (2) creating a positive campus climate where all persons are treated with respect, and (3) embedding the first two within University policies and practices so that they become part of the very fabric of the University. While the University understands diversity as encompassing "race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, religion, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, age, socio-economic background and other salient social dimensions" this document will address compositional diversity by focusing primarily on historically underrepresented groups—racial and ethnic minorities and women—for which data have been collected to meet federal reporting requirements. Going forward, we must also address additional identity groups whose federal reporting and/or internal tracking may be different and/or non-existent.

While focusing on compositional diversity for racial and ethnic minorities and women, this strategic plan addresses all groups relative to establishing a positive and welcoming climate based on respect and equity for all. Our expectation is that, as the University

moves forward, we will go beyond the limits of this document and demonstrate the value we place on the wealth of human identities and experiences.

It should be noted that over the past decade, the University has made substantial progress in these areas. Between 2001 and 2010, domestic minorities have increased as a percentage of our entering traditional undergraduates, from 10.2 to 20.3%, and international students have increased from 4.0 to 7.5% as a percentage of the entering undergraduate class. Among graduate students, the percentage of domestic minorities increased from 7.3 to 15.0%, and international students increased from 9.2 to 12.3%. In terms of faculty, between 2001 and 2009, the percentage of full-time instructional faculty who were domestic minorities increased from 9.3 to 14.2%, and international faculty increased from 1.8 to 2.8%. In 2001, 35.3% of full-time instructional faculty members were women; by 2009, that number had increased to 42.0%. For full-time staff and administrators, the percentage of domestic minorities increased from 14.0% to 21.0% during this same time period. (Additional University diversity-related data are published annually in *Profiles* – www.du.edu/ir/profiles.html). In addition, the University has implemented a wide range of programs and efforts to impact the campus climate for diversity.

Although this progress is to be applauded, our overall goal is to have a truly diverse campus community by continuing to strive to advance Inclusive Excellence. This approach is in line with a growing body of work that establishes that diversity and educational quality are positively connected. For example, Milem (2003) found that the benefits of Inclusive Excellence include improved academic outcomes, as evidenced in higher educational aspirations, improved motivation and self-confidence, heightened creativity and innovation, and enhancement of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, inclusive excellence improves civic outcomes, including higher levels of civic engagement and the advancement of an informed citizenry. After reviewing much of this literature, the U.S. Supreme Court stated that “diversity in the student body furthers the broad educational mission of institutions of higher education by building students’ new knowledge, advancing their existing knowledge, and preparing them to better serve society as workers, citizens, and leaders” (cited in Milem, J. F., Chang, M. J., & Antonio, A. L., 2005). (See appendix A for additional references.)

There was much discussion within the Chancellor-appointed Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board regarding the conditions on which this plan relies. First and foremost, progress depends on the commitment of the central administration to using its power and influence to advance change. This entails repeatedly setting the proper tone, providing resources for initiatives, setting clear objectives and accountability, and encouraging cross campus collaboration. While the role of the central administration is essential to enhancing change, it is also imperative that everyone—whether faculty, staff or student—model respectful behavior. Respect is a core, underlying quality that must be present in

all our interactions and communications. For the plan to lead to success, its principles and stipulations must permeate all areas of our campus. For this reason, the board recommends that the scope of responsibilities and authority for the Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence be formulated to include collaborative work across areas such as admissions, human resources, faculty development, marketing and communication, academic deans, curricula, and institutional advancement in an effort to enhance diversity across the institution. To be effective, this position must have access to and influence on both the academic and business sides of the University. Furthermore, the person in this position should participate in the “Executive Cabinet” to ensure visibility, access, and impact on budget allocations, new initiatives, and future priorities of the institution. Finally, progress requires time but not endless, unidentifiable time. We urge the central administration to establish and communicate a multi-year commitment with identified resources to fund initiatives, specific individuals with precise responsibilities, and a timeline against which progress can be measured.

Overarching Goals

Each of these four goals depends on the achievement of the others; none of them can exist independently. For example, the existence of a supportive climate for all people will contribute greatly to building a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. Likewise, having a diverse community will contribute to a positive climate for all. The four goals are:

- **Building a Diverse Community**
- **Creating a Supportive Climate for Diversity**
- **Structuring for Change**
- **Serving the Public Good by Positively Effecting Diversity beyond the University**

In the section below, we expand on each of these equally important and interdependent goals and provide some key objectives. We also outline several suggested action steps to guide efforts and measure success in achieving them. While the goals apply to the entire DU community, the specific objectives and action steps will vary by campus unit. It should also be noted that the suggested action steps are not meant to be an inclusive list of all that is possible, but rather a stimulus to generate further steps.

Goal I. Building a Diverse Intellectual Community

University Diversity Statement:

“One mark of a leading university is its commitment to diversity and the concomitant practice of recognizing and valuing the rich experiences and world views of individuals and groups. [...] By achieving and maintaining a multicultural constituency of administrators, faculty, students and staff, an institution successfully connects with the demographic reality of society. [...] The University of Denver community is strongly committed to the pursuit of excellence by including and integrating individuals who represent different groups as defined by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, age, disability, national origin and religion. [...] The University's commitment to diversity in particular requires that we attract members of historically under-represented racial and ethnic groups.”

This goal aims to increase the presence and success of members of historically underrepresented groups within all segments of our DU community, including our undergraduate student population, graduate and professional student body, faculty, and staff and administrative personnel based on our annual University Affirmative Action Plans and other University data analysis. All of these efforts should focus on specific strategies by schools, colleges, and divisions, and include timelines, budgets, and the identification of accountable parties. Efforts should be monitored, with results published in a University Annual Report on Diversity.

Objective A. Recruit and retain a diverse undergraduate and graduate student body

Suggested Action Steps:

- Conduct an annual review of recruitment and retention data, identify areas for improvement, and create collaborative teams to draft annual action plans for strategies.
- Promote the availability of financial aid programs and private scholarships so that the cost of attending DU is not a barrier for any academically qualified students.
- Develop and/or enhance highly focused recruitment strategies aimed at Colorado high-school students of color.
- Partner with community colleges to attract transfer students of color.
- Engage our student body to assist with recruitment of students of color and to contribute to retention of students of color.
- Establish specific strategies for each school and college to assist in recruitment and graduation of students of color.
- Increase funding for pre-collegiate programs to support skills development and transition support for first-generation and low-income students.
- Consolidate existing programs geared toward retention of students of color.

- Establish and enhance positive relationships with other Colorado institutions of higher education in order to attract more graduate students of color.
- Increase faculty contact with prospective students, with special outreach to members of underrepresented groups.
- Develop strategies to diversify the international student body.
- Expand exchanges with partner universities around the world.
- Encourage interdisciplinary graduate joint programs with selected overseas partner universities.
- Increase funding and seek outside support for graduate Inclusive Excellence Fellowships.
- Establish a McNair program to prepare DU undergraduate students from underrepresented groups for graduate education.
- Revitalize and create partnerships with HBCUs and National Hispanic Universities.
- Engage our graduate student body to assist with recruitment of students of color and to contribute to retention.
- Explore potential for ‘grow-your-own’ graduate student population by recruiting DU undergraduates into DU graduate programs.
- Establish specific strategies for Graduate Studies and for each school and college to assist in recruitment and success of graduate students of color.
- Provide networking and mentoring support efforts to increase retention and success of graduate students.

Objective B. Recruit and retain a diverse faculty

Suggested Action Steps:

- Ensure competitive, equitable compensation.
- Utilize talent management approaches to assist with all faculty searches.
- Provide diversity-positive recruitment by tapping the local, regional, national and global markets.
- Incorporate diversity training within tenure review committees.
- Provide incentives for ‘grow-your-own’ programs.
- Create robust professional development and mentoring opportunities in each division.
- Expand finalist candidate as well as exit interview processes to identify opportunities for improvement.
- Establish partner/spousal/familial support avenues such as assistance in searching for employment in the Denver area, linking them with local community resources and networks, support in screening local school districts, etc.
- Ensure that the University provides support to families through services such as elder care and childcare.
- Partner with regional universities to deliver the National Summer Institute for the Recruitment of Diverse Faculty.

Objective C. Recruit and retain a diverse staff at all levels within the institution

Suggested Action Steps:

- Ensure competitive, equitable compensation.
- Incorporate talent management in order to provide extensive professional and mentoring opportunities within each division.
- Encourage participation in inclusive campus events.
- Provide diversity-positive recruitment by tapping the local, regional, national and global market.
- Incorporate diversity training for hiring managers across the University.
- Engage staff members of color in recruitment and professional development at all levels.
- Enhance staff development opportunities and succession strategies that improve upward mobility across the campus at all levels.
- Support release time for staff to participate in classes, committee work, and campus events, as long as business operational needs are met.
- Extend staff recruitment efforts by building community partnerships and enhancing communication with nontraditional networks.
- Provide ongoing support and encourage the formation and successful existence of affinity groups such as Staff and Faculty of Color Association, Women’s Coalition, Queer University Employees, etc.
- Utilize exit interview process to identify opportunities for improved retention.
- Ensure that the University provides support to families through flextime, reduced workweeks, elder care and childcare.

Goal II. Creating a Supportive Climate for Diversity

University Diversity Statement:

“We also believe that in order to achieve our goals, we must create a campus climate with an ethos of respect, understanding and appreciation of individual and group differences. [...] A positive campus climate requires the University’s sincere willingness to include all its diverse stakeholders in the decision-making process. No individual or group can be marginalized or systematically excluded.”

This goal is to ensure that all members of our communities feel valued and to emphasize that an open atmosphere contributes to the vibrancy of our academic community. We contribute to this through the statements of our high-level leadership, actions at all levels of our institution, rituals through which we express our community, and the attention we show to ways in which persons of different backgrounds interact.

Objective A. Systematically monitor diversity climate

Suggested Action Steps:

- Establish a regular schedule for assessing campus-wide climate for diversity (e.g., campus climate survey).
- Establish Bias Incident Response Team.
- Centrally support ongoing bias incident response structure/protocol, including annual report of incidents and catalog of resources/responses.

Objective B: Expand awareness of and dialogue regarding Inclusiveness Excellence

Suggested Action Steps:

- Expand diversity forums, information exchange, arts programs and community interaction.
- Expand Intergroup Dialogue programs.
- Promote dialogue between international students and a diverse range of domestic students.
- Expand residence hall diversity training to create inclusive and welcoming living environments for all students.
- Develop intergroup dialogue programs between diverse groups such as traditional undergraduate students and student veterans.
- Develop workshops for domestic students of color that prepare them for study abroad.
- Provide unit/school/division level web links outlining ways that students, staff, faculty and alumni can engage in IE, such as provide examples of successful IE implementation, information about existing groups/efforts individuals can join, training that exists, efforts needing individuals to lead, etc.
- Develop orientations for international students, staff, and faculty.
- Check Interfaith Calendars to minimize schedule conflicts with religious holidays.
- Expand training for faculty and other University groups/departments/communities regarding disability issues, including the federal laws governing accommodations and best practices.
- Incorporate disability awareness (federal laws, University policies and procedures and best practices) into all IE trainings.
- Establish campus-wide standards for creating/modifying physical environments to best convey inclusiveness.

Objective C: Infuse diversity content throughout the curricula

Suggested Action Steps:

- Encourage broader participation in diversity-related academic courses.

- Work with faculty and departments to examine the curriculum, course content and methods, classroom climate and teaching styles to enhance the education of all students.
- Deliver training sessions for faculty on creating classrooms that are inclusive of international students (considering not just language barriers, but classroom culture as well).
- Promote the internationalization of the curriculum and its relationship to domestic multicultural issues.
- Add items on the course evaluation that allow for the assessment of progress made toward making course content, methods and climate more inclusive.

Goal III. Structuring for Change

University Diversity Statement:

“Our commitment must entail the creation of initiatives and programs designed to capitalize on the benefits of diversity in education, research and service.”

This goal aims to embed achievement and assessment of Inclusive Excellence goals into our administrative structures, curricular offerings, and research. Compositional diversity can only be achieved and maintained when structures promoting inclusiveness are embedded into the structures of our institution. These include policies and procedures for communication, financial and hiring practices; they encompass the curriculum we offer and the knowledge that we create in our scholarly endeavors.

Objective A. Review campus policies, procedures and publications and modify to reflect inclusiveness

Suggested Action Steps:

- Assess the University’s practices and use of community-based and diverse/minority vendors and/or suppliers.
- Provide incentives and/or resources to encourage interdepartmental collaborations to support inclusiveness practices, such as the IE Fellows Program for graduate students through the Morgridge College of Education.
- Implement systemic review of and policy for holding vendors and third-party partners to University’s high standards of non-discrimination. For example, restricting our business relationships to companies that share our commitment to a broad definition of diversity, much as some schools have done (re: sweatshop labor, sustainability, lending discrimination, etc.).
- Adjust practices or policies that have negative impacts or create barriers for particular populations.
- Enhance and publicize policies and procedures that address harassment and discrimination.
- Institute obligatory search committee training for all chairs of search committees including searches for staff, faculty and adjunct faculty.

- Fund faculty and staff to attend workshops and conferences that will enable them to serve as informal liaisons or official facilitators of search committee training on campus.
- Establish annual marketing plans to help educate all DU constituents on the DU IE culture.
- Ensure that orientation for new faculty, staff and students addresses cultural norms, climate, services, resources and other diversity-oriented topics.
- Create clear lines of accountability for improvements in diversity.
- Establish measures for reporting on performance relative to diversity objectives.
- Ensure that administrator evaluations, course evaluations, and PEDS reports include reporting on accomplishments and challenges in reaching our institutional diversity goals.
- Evaluate and monitor the extent to which the business side of the institution engages in practices and operations that promote Inclusive Excellence.
- Create an ongoing, central “suggestion box” for affiliates offering additional ideas or calls for improvement (could be part of overall continuous improvement efforts, beyond but also including diversity).

Objective B. Support the diversification of DU curricular offerings and research

Suggested Action Steps:

- Expand training for faculty related to Inclusive Excellence.
- Report on curricular offerings that transmit knowledge on diverse human identities and experiences.
- Provide financial support for undergraduate and graduate courses and programs that transmit expertise on the diversity of human identities and experiences.
- Support inter-divisional and inter-school faculty hiring in areas where such hiring can contribute to compositional and curricular diversity.
- Identify funding sources that support research and scholarship on diversity.
- Explore the creation of an institute for diversity that would establish the University as a national leader in an emerging interdisciplinary field with significant opportunities for both academic recognition and external funding.
- Establish seed grants for the purpose of promoting the interdisciplinary study of diversity issues.
- Create opportunities for University-wide research programs focused on multicultural issues.
- Examine how colleges and units prepare students to function effectively in a culturally diverse community and a global society by infusing principles of diversity and equity throughout the curriculum.
- Identify incentives for Faculty to broaden the perspective of current courses to include unaddressed issues and/or populations related to diversity.
- Embed principles of IE in all courses.

- Include introduction of principles of IE in First Year Seminars to help incoming students gain basic knowledge of privilege, systems of power, and values of inclusiveness as a means to excellence.

Goal IV. Serving the Public Good by Positively Effecting Diversity beyond the University

University Diversity Statement:

“We must encourage the pursuit of social justice within and outside the institution. We aim for change within the University and ultimately, beyond the University. We seek to be leaders in the creation of a more inclusive and just world.”

This goal is to ensure that our commitment to and actions in support of inclusiveness extend to local, regional, national, and international communities. To be a truly great private university dedicated to the public good, we must influence those beyond our campus borders, including ways inclusiveness and diversity impact our neighboring communities. Relationships with our neighbors must be based on respect for their knowledge and experiences, a dedication to mutually beneficial partnerships, and support the expansion of inclusiveness practices and increased value of diversity in all industries.

Objective A. Encourage the creation of new relationships and strengthen existing connections with local communities of historically underrepresented groups

Suggested Action Steps:

- Establish and coordinate K-12 outreach efforts in low-achieving school districts in order to more deeply connect our academic community with the many communities of Denver.
- Host an annual gathering of corporate, nonprofit, and other industry Diversity Officers to share best practices and encourage expansion of efforts across industries.
- Create a resource bank for nonprofits to use faculty, student and staff volunteers to address some of their needs (e.g. professional development, etc.).
- Collaborate with Chief Diversity Officers of neighbor institutions on programming and resource sharing.

Objective B. Encourage corporate and government partners to expand inclusiveness efforts

Suggested action steps:

- Leverage University resources to support other organizations in expanding inclusiveness practices.

- Include industry partners in annual Diversity Summit to link students to inclusiveness practices in the places where they will eventually work.
- Partner with regional organizations (professional and otherwise) with dedicated efforts to inclusiveness.

Objective C. Ensure that academic units support community-based partnership as a part of the learning and research experience

Suggested action steps:

- Conduct a review of current community-based partnerships to assess the diversity of reach/engagement based on wide range of criteria.
- Provide resources that will allow campus units to collaborate with community-led organizations and individuals to respond to issues and events related to equity, access and social justice..
- Encourage academic units to consider community-based work/research in the portfolio of faculty being considered for tenure.
- Identify incentives for faculty to partner and collaborate with community organizations to conduct research throughout the University and the broader community related to diversity.
- Identify incentives that promote community collaborations and partnerships that support academic and social preparation for success in higher education.
- Encourage community and civic engagement both in our local communities and abroad, and encourage students, faculty, and staff to make connections between global and local issues.

Appendix A: Benefits of Diversity – Selected References

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