



**Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion Strategic Plan**  
**Spring 2022**

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## Introduction

Queens originated as an all-women's college in 1857, providing women access to higher education at a time when those opportunities were rare. As a part of the evolution to becoming Queens University of Charlotte, a comprehensive masters granting institution, the student body continued to diversify throughout the years. Queens recognized, and continues to recognize, this is especially important as educational research consistently shows that experiences in diverse environments lead to increases in cognitive development and positive learning outcomes as well as to increases in student satisfaction and students' leadership abilities.<sup>1</sup> Following the Queens Task Force on the History of Slavery and its Legacies Final Report in Spring 2021, President Lugo put forward a strategic framework with a pillar devoted to leading in diversity, equity and inclusion as a part of a plan to transform Queens into the national comprehensive private university of Charlotte. To facilitate the process of charting the next portion of Queens' journey in the realm of diversity, equity and inclusion, President Lugo created a task force and identified Shelton Professor of Political Science Maggie Commins and Vice President of Student Engagement and Dean of Students Maria del Carmen Flores as co-chairs with strategic support from Assistant Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, LeAnna Rice.<sup>2</sup> The membership of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force included faculty, staff, and students.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Taskforce Membership

#### Co-Chairs:

- Shelton Professor of Political Science Maggie Commins
- Vice President of Student Engagement & Dean of Students Maria del Carmen Flores

#### Students:

- Allison Blackwell, '22, Creative Writing
- Mike Fowler, '21, Business Administration
- Kalpaka Pradip, '22, Exercise and Sports Science
- Matilde Sanchez, '22, Psychology
- Peyton Byrd, '21, '23 (Graduate Student), Business Administration

#### Faculty Administration:

- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Sarah Fatherly

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<sup>1</sup> Benefits and Challenges of Diversity in Academic Settings." University of Wisconsin Madison. Online: <https://>

<sup>2</sup> See Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force charge in Appendix

- Director of Stan Greenspon Center for Holocaust Education and Social Justice, Professor Judy Schindler of Philosophy and Religion

Faculty:

- Professor Jeffrey Thomas of Biology
- Professor Shawn Bowers of English
- Professor Will Sparks of Business
- Professor Yvette Clifton of Chemistry
- Professor Carole Isom of Communication

Staff:

- Associate Dean of DICE, Darryl White Sr.
- Director of Student Accessibility Services, Jess Capobianco
- Director of Human Resources, Jeannine Sargent
- Director of Vandiver Center, Angela Tsuei-Strause (Vandiver Center)
- Former Head Basketball Coach, Bart Lundy (Athletics)
- Assistant Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Director of Charlotte Talent Initiative, LeAnna Rice

### **DEI Taskforce Approach**

President Lugo sent the charge of the task force [2] and convened the group on August 30, 2021. Thereafter, the group identified Dar Mayweather, a lecturer in leadership studies at the University of North Carolina – Wilmington to facilitate a workshop to build consensus on language and the status of DEI work at the institutional level. The process grounded the group in similar nomenclature and provided a framework for assessing the progress and trajectory of diversity, equity and inclusion across the institution.

The task force met throughout the fall semester working in small and large groups to identify common themes related to the charge, identify a set of goals, and pinpoint relevant data points to share with the broader campus community for reaction, comment and review. At the beginning of the spring semester the membership of the task force worked in small groups to meet or solicit feedback from constituents across Queens, faculty, staff, alumni and students in a wide variety of settings and gatherings including surveys, in person gatherings or virtual meetings. The task force talked with coaches, student athletes, commuter students, staff, faculty and student organizations across multiple social identities. The group reconvened to identify commonalities and themes we missed as a task force, incorporating all the feedback and data to create our report. We sought to incorporate the multitude of voices and perspectives, but organize the input to create a broad, cohesive path forward. The task force envisions this report as the framework for guiding Queens forward in leading in diversity, equity and inclusion. The group also sees valuable overlap to other areas of the institution’s Strategic Framework, including holistic health and wellness, serving as an engine of social mobility in Charlotte, and becoming a

destination employer, and cultivating multidisciplinary perspectives, collaboration, and scholarship. There will likely be other synergies identified as the granular levels of detail come to fruition.

It should be noted that the DEI Task Force sees this as a multiyear endeavor, allowing broader input and identification of resources to identify the priorities outlined in this plan. In addition, each division of Queens will need to create its own individual plans and priorities, using this report as a guide to individual endeavors. This report envisions the next phase of collaborative decision making to identify the necessary resources (human and financial) and create a timeline to both elevate the importance of the work as well as to create accountability for accomplishing the work. A newly created leadership position, the Assistant Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, LeAnna Rice, has been identified to ensure the beginning of plan implementation. In the first few months of that leader's tenure, an initial plan for adoption, along with a more nuanced timeline and identification of first priorities will be established to ensure accountability and forward movement as quickly as possible. In the first three months of plan approval and adoption, early priorities will be shared, and implementation will begin, with a more comprehensive plan developed within six months. Additionally, the Fall semester will be used to widely share and socialize the plan with the Queens community. A top identified priority in the plan is creating a dashboard to document the progress to hold implementation progress accountable to the University. Lastly, work can, and will begin as priorities are being established as soon as the plan is approved and adopted.

The task force also wrestled with positing communication as its own goal within the report. The issue permeates many aspects of the goals, but the group determined that it didn't rise to the level of its own goal but rather needed institutional attention at all levels as the work moves forward. We heard again and again from a variety of constituents about the depth, breadth and impact of the programming of the Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (DICE) office and offices, yet others were completely oblivious of those efforts and opportunities indicating a need for more relevant and streamlined communication. The group also identified activities and initiatives that could dovetail and enhance one another. A lack of effective communication leaves many with an antiquated or outdated understanding of who Queens is as an institution today, therefore, also requiring additional communication to outside constituents including philanthropists and prospective students and families who require an accurate and celebrated view of who we are as an institution. We need to communicate who we are clearly and proudly so that prospective students, their families, and potential donors understand our commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion at this university. Centering proactive and clear communication will be a strategy reflected throughout the plan as it is one Queens must privilege to be successful our endeavors.

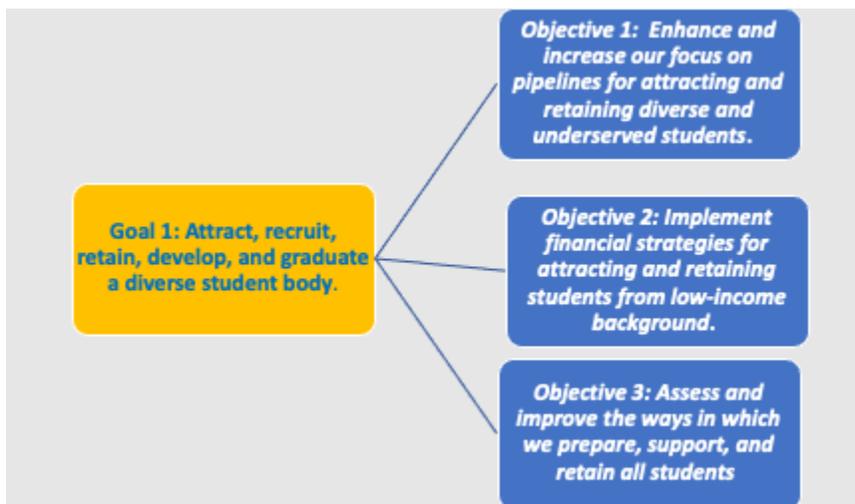
## DEI Plan Overview

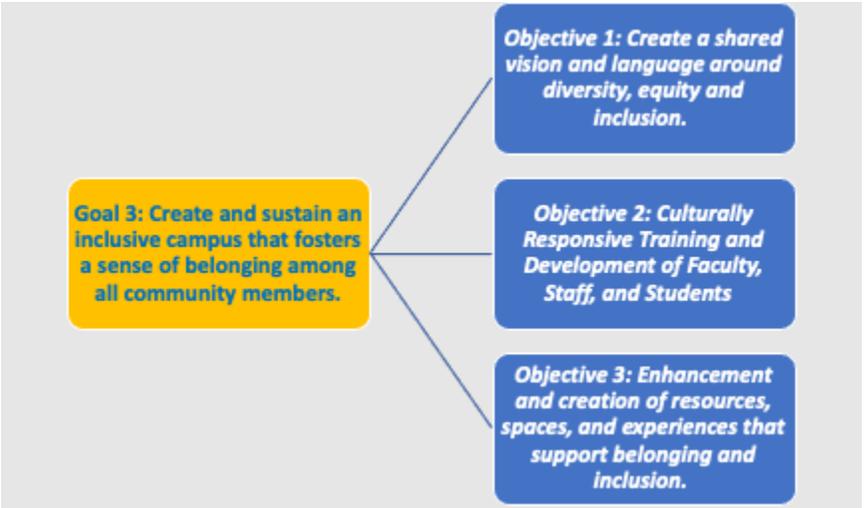
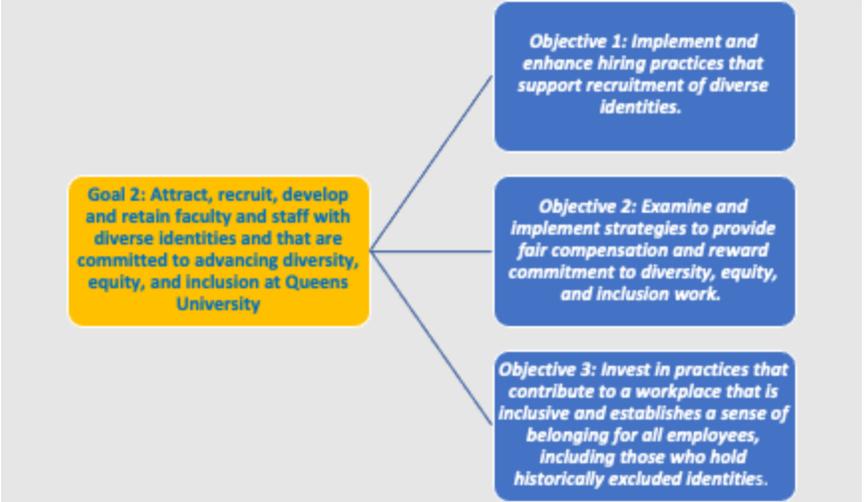
The DEI plan is broken into seven main goals listed below:

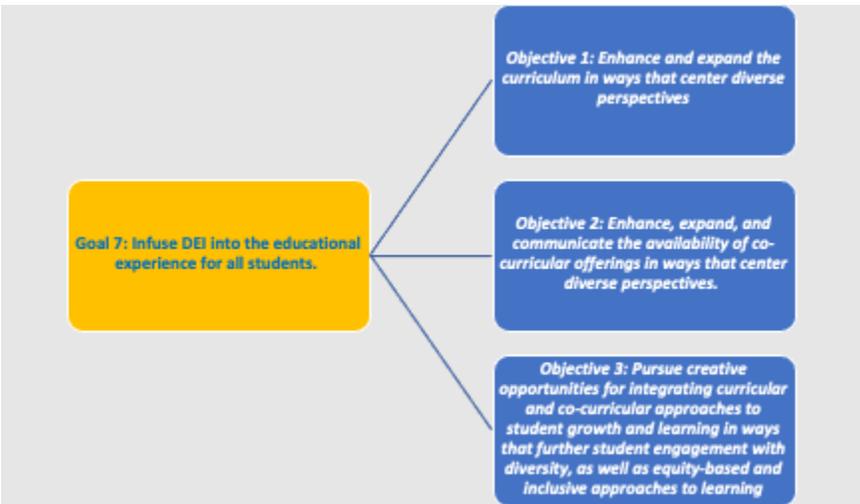
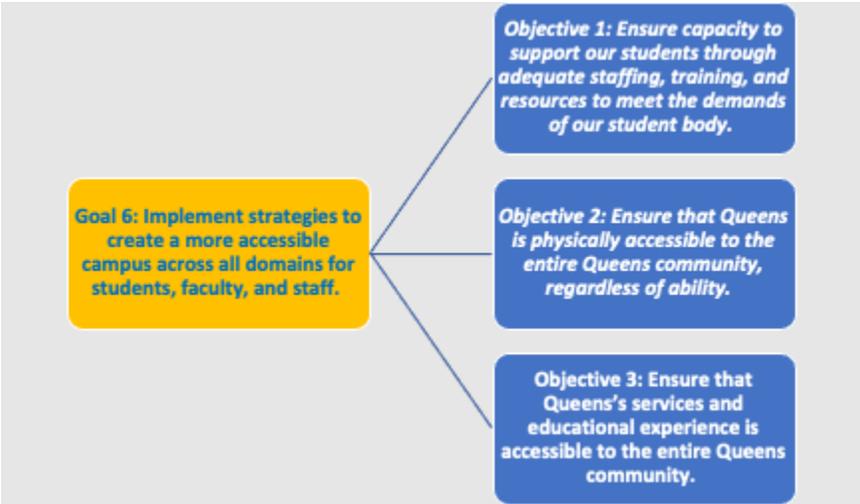
### The Seven Goals of the DEI Plan

1. Attract, recruit, retain, develop, and graduate a diverse student body.
2. Attract, recruit, develop and retain faculty and staff with diverse identities and that are committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at Queens University.
3. Create and sustain an inclusive campus that fosters a sense of belonging among all community members.
4. Establish and ensure accountability measures to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices throughout the university.
5. Identify and establish a sustainable staffing structure and resources to drive change and ensure accountability to DEI work.
6. Infuse DEI into the educational experience for all students.
7. Implement strategies to create a more accessible campus across multiple domains for students, faculty, and staff.

Each of these seven goals is broken into objectives with supporting strategies for each objective. The written plan is organized using that taxonomy. A brief overview is illustrated below.







**Goal 1: Attract, recruit, retain, develop, and graduate a diverse student body.**

**Community Feedback and Supporting Data (What We Heard and What We Observed)**

- Efforts and resources are needed to retain diverse students, specifically when identities intersect with lower socio-economic status.
- Other groups mentioned frequently that students mentioned/perceived as hard to retain were Black women, citing that they felt many of their friends who are Black are leaving or have left the institution.
- Students often cited financial reasons as a top concern for why their peers have left the institution or why they have considered it.
- Resources and support are needed for post traditional students (advising, flexible hours for services and programs, lounge/space).
- Need for more identity-focused scholarships and financial support.
- Need to build more relationships with high schools that do not have as many resources.
- Data suggests work is needed in helping all students attain 4-year graduation.
- Data suggests a low enrollment rate of Indigenous/Native American students and Asian-American students comparatively to other demographics.

**Recommended Strategies**

***Objective 1: Enhance and increase our focus on pipelines for attracting and retaining diverse and underserved students.***

- Assess our current pipeline programs for efficacy and impact, expanding, investing, and making changes where necessary in those programs (i.e. the Queens Commitment, Royal Up, CTI).
- Identify and increase pipelines for diverse and underserved students nationally and within the Charlotte community through intentional partnerships with underserved high schools, community agencies/nonprofits, and other potential partners.

***Objective 2: Implement financial strategies for attracting and retaining students from low-income background.***

- Identify strategies to support current students from low-income backgrounds and with financial challenges informed by current Queens data and national best practices.
- Identify new streams of funding sources for scholarships to support undergraduate and graduate students of diverse identities.
- Restructure work study and on campus employment to include high impact practices that allow students to gain valuable and relevant professional skills, while earning a competitive and adequate salary in addition to the flexibility of staying on campus to work.

***Objective 3: Assess and improve the ways in which we prepare, support, and retain all students***

- Assess current new student orientation practices for efficacy in preparing students for their educational journey, making changes where necessary to increase enrollment and retention of first year, transfer, and graduate students with historically underrepresented identities.
- Using current data and ongoing assessment as outlined in goal four, invest in best practices and resources for students who are most likely to leave the university or fail to persist into graduation, including mentorship, bridge programming, support for non-traditional students, and co-curricular experiences.
- Establish and facilitate a formalized transition process for sharing information about the incoming class regarding needs for additional support outside of the classroom between Admissions and Student Life to ensure adequate access to resources and appropriate planning for the class.
- Utilize current alumni and friend networks and create affinity alumni groups with direct connections to current students. Those strategic partnerships would develop and engage students in career and personal development and expand their social networks.

**Goal Sponsors: Division of Enrollment and Marketing, Division of Academic Affairs, Division of Student Life, Division of Advancement**

**Goal 2: Attract, recruit, develop and retain faculty and staff with diverse identities and that are committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at Queens University.**

**Community Feedback and Supporting Data (What We Heard and What We Observed)**

- Representation of the faculty and staff has lingered behind the diversification of our student body, particularly in race and ethnicity. This was brought up by students, faculty, and staff, and the data supports this assertion. (i.e., "I do NOT feel represented!!! I'm disheartened to see minimal numbers of African Americans in the staff/faculty population but significant numbers in cafeteria and cleaning services." ... African American female student)
- A lack of clear, transparent, and consistent search practices impacts our ability to identify and recruit diverse staff and faculty.
- A lack of competitive compensation packages impacts our ability to recruit and retain diverse staff in many domains, specifically with low socio-economic backgrounds or people of color.
- A lack of consistent opportunities for professional development negatively impacts on our ability to retain staff.
- Faculty and staff who hold marginalized identities experience burnout as they disproportionately provide mentorship and emotional support to students and/or junior colleagues who share similar identities.
- Need for more on-campus support of staff and faculty with underrepresented identities.
- The perception that staff have fewer benefits and less representation within the university.
- Queens' turnover rates are steadily increasing over the years, with 2021 being our highest in five years.

**Recommended Strategies**

***Objective 1: Implement and enhance hiring practices that support recruitment of diverse identities.***

- Identify, implement, and invest in evidence-based practices that seek to increase the number of faculty and staff with underrepresented identities, holding each hiring department accountable to following articulated best practices. This could include researching recruitment strategies, affirmative action practices, and investment in training and resources for human resources.
- Establish a common set of equity-minded hiring practices and invest in training for search committees that reflects these practices.

***Objective 2: Examine and implement strategies to provide fair compensation and reward commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion work.***

- Conduct a compensation analysis for all staff and faculty, adjusting as appropriate to provide fair and equitable wages and salaries.

- Establish a professional development fund and an equitable distribution method to allow faculty and staff to engage in activities that promote scholarship and learning and invest in further development.
- Incentivize learning and engaging in DEI through consideration of that work for promotions, tenure, and merit increases.
- Prioritize equitable space and time for faculty and staff to engage in professional training and education opportunities across the University.

***Objective 3: Invest in practices that contribute to a workplace that is inclusive and establishes a sense of belonging for all employees, including those who hold historically excluded identities.***

- Establish and invest financially in employee resources or affinity groups.
- Create and adopt a branding initiative reflective of the diversity and reality of the Queens experience.

**Goal Sponsors: Division of Strategy and Planning, Division of Academic Affairs, Division of Administration**

### **Goal 3: Create and sustain an inclusive campus that fosters a sense of belonging among all community members.**

#### Community Feedback and Supporting Data (What We Heard and What We Observed)

- International students felt very positively about their experiences with the Myrta Pulliam Center for International Education, and many campus members wondered how to scale the Center's practices to increase inclusivity in other populations.
- D.I.C.E., The Chapel and its interfaith work, and Athletics were all noted as places with impactful practices and programming to address DEI as well, and campus members also wondered how to scale these office's practices to benefit more students.
- The division between student athletes and students who are not athletes was noted extensively by students. Student athletes noted limited time to participate in activities that promote DEI themes outside of Athletics and students who were not athletes noted a perception of athletic privilege with financial funding and access to campus resources.
- Community members felt that to truly transform Queens' image, we need to embed DEI work throughout our mission, statement, and values.
- Students noted a lack of support and programming specific to LGBTQIA communities. One comment noted "It feels like Queer people are tolerated, not uplifted and celebrated."
- Further feedback about support to LGBTQIA communities included a need for widespread pronoun and preferred name usage in the Learning Management System, on official documents, and in everyday practice.
- A need for a shift in quotas to meet diversity goals and a real effort at inclusion and belonging, solidified in practical, strategic steps.
- Many community members felt that financial needs for low socio-economic students are not considered when programs, class projects, and events are scheduled as many students work off-campus to support their education and families.
- There was a desire for living/learning communities in Residence Halls that are specific to celebrating and exploring identities of students, specifically noting Black students and other students of color.
- A need for resources that support our post-traditional students, including resources/groups/programming for older students, caretakers, commuters, parents
- Increased loneliness among students, especially given the impact of COVID, was brought up several times. Data suggested there is less satisfaction among the students noted in the bullet above in services and programming by these groups.
- While interfaith efforts were widely noted as being positive, many students and employees still felt that people who held minoritized religious or non-religious beliefs were not celebrated and supported in the same ways as Christian students (i.e., no dedicated full time spiritual leader, symbols on campus, less sense of inclusion on campus, no institutional recognition of certain holidays)

- Many felt it was hard to find events and spaces that were inclusive of or celebrated their diverse identities due to lack of adequate communication or not being connected to someone who was knowledgeable about events.
- A need for more multilingual staff as our campus includes students and families who speak many different native languages.
- A need for more training and programming for students, faculty, and staff to help community members better engage across difference effectively in their respective areas and departments.
- Student voices are missing in decision-making processes.
- Some feedback indicated that our campus feels exclusive and not welcoming in terms of appearances of wealth, structures, restricted access to spaces, and symbols that do not reflect the experiences of our Queens community.

### Recommended Strategies

#### ***Objective 1: Create a shared vision and language around diversity, equity and inclusion.***

- Examine and align our mission and vision statements to reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion values to be used across the University.
- Acknowledge the history of Indigenous and forced labor in the Charlotte area by adopting a Land Acknowledgement statement, seeking input from local Native American communities to be used before programs and in outward facing materials, such as the website.
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#### ***Objective 2: Culturally Responsive Training and Development of Faculty, Staff, and Students***

- Provide quality and ongoing training to faculty, staff, and students on DEI issues that directly impact our campus community, i.e., pronoun usage, cross cultural communication, culturally responsive supervision, and trauma-informed practices. Incentivize participation and require training where appropriate.
- Invest in resources and additional staffing for the Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Center, the Myrta Pulliam Center for International Education, and the Belk Chapel to help scale their programming and reach more students, faculty, and staff, including formally examining the structure and models for these centers and updating as appropriate to meet the needs and identities of our students.
- Design living and learning communities that focus on exploring, celebrating, and educating about diverse identities, i.e., race/ethnicity, LGBTQIA, veteran, first generation, etc.

#### ***Objective 3: Enhancement and creation of resources, spaces, and experiences that support belonging and inclusion.***

- Invest resources in commuter, post-traditional, and graduate students' co-curricular experiences, including designated student space, specific programming, and create a plan to engage these populations in the Queens community, responsive to their needs.
- Provide gender-inclusive bathroom spaces on campus.
- Explore and implement ways to allow for pronouns and preferred names to be noted in learning and data management systems and other forms of technology for campus community members.
- Seek and identify opportunities for students to participate in decision making processes; for example, utilizing advisory boards for specific areas, inviting students to participate in interviews for staff and faculty roles, or consulting with the student government association on key initiatives.
- Invest in resources and staffing that supports our LGBTQIA community and their intersecting identities.
- Evaluate public spaces for symbols and physical manifestations of inclusion (art, monuments, pictures) and create spaces that are reflective of the diverse identities on campus.
- Implement recommendations from prior reports and committees such as the Queens Task Force on the History of Slavery and its Legacies, the Charlotte Racial Justice Consortium, and the Retention Committee that seek to increase belonging and inclusion on our campus.
- Enhance communication and marketing strategies about resources, programs, current institutional data, and services that support diversity, equity, and inclusion work. Specific strategies included investment in digital advertising, apps, and central marketing location for such resources.

**Goal Sponsor: Division of Student Life, Division of Academic Affairs, Division of Strategy and Planning, Division of Administration, Athletics**

**Goal 4: Establish and ensure accountability measures to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices throughout the university.**

Community Feedback and Supporting Data (What We Heard and What We Observed)

- A constant theme was the need for consistent training for faculty and staff from all parts of the university to help us reach our goals.
- Although many faculty, staff, and students expressed optimism about a plan focused on DEI, there was widespread concern about the plan being another thing that is not executed or implemented but is performative.
- There is a need for a consistent gauge on the climate and progress on key indicators outlined in this plan. Additionally, it is important to expand assessment to include a broader range of demographic data and other key indicators.
- The committee noted some misinformation, misinterpretation, or lack of knowledge about data and trends related to DEI at Queens.
- The Queens community expressed a desire for accountability at all levels of the University (department, division, and university wide).
- Climate needs to be assessed across the institution and understood from the different perspectives of our community members.
- The community expressed consistently the desire for transparency and regular updates in ways that were accessible and specific to the needs of the population (i.e., students may need information delivered differently than employees, which could be different for alumni).
- It was noted across the University that DEI work is often an add-on responsibility to people, particularly BIPOC and other members of the community who hold historically marginalized identities that are not compensated or rewarded. It was also noted that it is not a widespread practice to require all faculty and staff to take ownership of progressing DEI goals.

Recommended Strategies

***Objective 1: Create avenues for transparency and community wide accountability to diversity, equity and inclusion.***

- Establish and regularly update a public dashboard to track progress and metrics on goals outlined in the plan.
- Publish and present (to faculty, staff, and students) an annual DEI transparency report to the community regarding our progress on the implementation of the DEI strategic plan, considering a multi prong approach to delivering the information to make a reasonable attempt to reach as many people in our community as possible.

- Require each division to create a roadmap, outlining plans to align with components of the DEI strategies and objectives in their areas. This should include departmental specific goals and initiatives as appropriate.
- Select or create a campus climate survey, in addition to the NSSE and SSI, for all students, faculty, and staff, to be assessed on a regular schedule i.e., every two- three years to monitor our progress and help prioritize the needs of our Queens community. Survey results will be disseminated in multiple ways to the Queens community.

***Objective 2: Provide mechanisms to incentivize and encourage participation in activities that strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion at Queens.***

- Require performance and tenure and promotion evaluations to reflect practice and engagement in DEI work for all faculty and staff.
- Provide resources, including financial, training/education, and consultative support to reward and support the work that individuals and units are working towards in support of the plan.

**Goal 5: Identify and establish a sustainable staffing structure and resources to drive change and ensure accountability to DEI work.**

**Community Feedback and Supporting Data (What We Heard and What We Observed)**

- The need for institutional leadership on the president’s cabinet or senior leadership team was echoed throughout feedback sessions and reflected as best practices in other institutions who are leading in DEI work.
- There is a need for specific roles to focus on parts of DEI to build a team across the university supporting DEI work. Examples include positions such as an affirmative action officer, chief diversity officer, and roles within specific divisions, such as curriculum focused or training roles.
- More resources are needed for offices that are engaging in work that supports DEI – i.e., DICE, the Myrta Pulliam Center, the Belk Chapel.

**Recommend Strategies**

- Research, identify, and implement a staffing structure best suited for Queens to lead, organize, and support institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion work.
- Examine the staffing structure of departments and areas that are providing services that support diversity, equity, and inclusion work and develop a plan to address and expand the staffing structure, as necessary.
- Support and position Queens to become an active and contributing member of the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education.

**Goal 6: Implement strategies to create a more accessible campus across all domains for students, faculty, and staff.**

### **Community Feedback and Supporting Data (What We Heard and What We Observed)**

- Our physical campus is not accessible to people with mobility challenges, including offices in which students may seek community or instruction (i.e., Student Life, Academic buildings), programs/events, or services (due to location, lack of support for hearing or visual impairments, etc.).
- There is a lack of elevators, activation switches on doors, and other helpful tools to allow access to key buildings and floors.
- There is a lack of a variety of dining options for those with dietary restrictions related to medical conditions, which prohibits members of our community from accessing meals and building community with others.
- Anxiety and other mental health disorders account for most diagnoses that students seek accessibility services for and can require complex support and more community and public health responses.
- Accessibility Services is understaffed to meet the demand of students seeking support, with increasing numbers of students using those services.
- Students do not feel that their identities, specifically in terms of socioeconomic and post traditional student status, are considered when assigning projects and work outside of class.

### **Recommended Strategies**

***Objective 1: Ensure capacity to support our students through adequate staffing, training, and resources to meet the demands of our student body.***

- Increase staffing and available resources for student accessibility services.
- Expand training to faculty, staff, and students to help everyone understand better how to support efforts to increase accessibility in a variety of ways.

***Objective 2: Ensure that Queens is physically accessible to the entire Queens community, regardless of ability.***

- Conduct a campus-wide physical accessibility audit that includes a strategic plan to identify and address short and long-term strategies to increase physical access to campus.
- Evaluate and expand current dining options available for those with dietary restrictions due to medical conditions and religious practices.
- Evaluate and invest in tools and technologies that promote accessibility for different physical, cognitive, and mental abilities reflected at Queens.

- Implement regular practices and publish a guide for meetings and gatherings that consider the accessibility of our community (i.e., closed captioning, asking about accommodations prior to required meetings, choosing rooms that are accessible, requiring widespread microphone usage, providing font and size guidelines for slides, etc.).

**Objective 3: Ensure that Queens’s services and educational experience is accessible to the entire Queens community.**

- Evaluate the accessibility of campus programming, services, and in-class instruction for students with neurodiverse abilities and other disabilities, identifying short and long-term strategies to increase accessibility.
- Expand best practices, resources, and staffing of mental health practitioners that address the mental health needs of our student body.

## **Goal 7: Infuse DEI into the educational experience for all students.**

### **Community Feedback and Supporting Data (What We Heard and What We Observed)**

- A desire for majors and programs that focus on multicultural academic disciplines such as Women's Studies, Latinx Studies, Queer Studies, Black Studies, and Accessibility Studies.
- A desire for more inclusive and representative texts, educational videos, materials, discussions, and perspectives within the classroom and with co-curricular activities.
- The need for more inclusive learning environments and education to help support faculty and staff in building those environments within the curricular and co-curricular environments.
- The community feels that we do better with engagement around religious diversity than around other kinds of diversity.
- DICE was consistently highlighted for outstanding programming and service to campus.
- Resource mapping needed for all university DEI activities; understanding of how resources can be used without reinventing the wheel.
- First year experience where DEI is an important theme.
- Students are inundated with diversity-related discussions in class, but feel they are sugar coated and not real.
- Perception that Business students are favored, and presidential scholars are primarily white males.

### **Recommended Strategies**

#### ***Objective 1: Enhance and expand the curriculum in ways that center diverse perspectives.***

- Investigate expanding curricular offerings to include more courses and programs that center identity and intersectional-focused disciplines such as Women's Studies, Queer Studies, Black or Latino Studies.
- Enhance new and existing courses by intentionally integrating course materials (texts, videos, speakers, community partners, etc.) reflective of diverse perspectives and identities.
- Invest in resources that support this objective; to include, but not limited to, faculty training through the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFE), expansion of on-demand library resources, and opportunities for training and professional development for faculty and staff.

#### ***Objective 2: Enhance, expand, and communicate the availability of co-curricular offerings in ways that center diverse perspectives.***

- Conduct a formal assessment of the university's co-curricular experiences, programs, traditions, and services to ensure that these are consistent with values and practices that support diversity,

equity, and inclusion, making changes as necessary to better serve and include students of all identities.

- Create a resource map of diversity, equity, and inclusion resources and regular activities to help assist the Queens community in easily identifying resources that can serve different populations, while also allowing us to have an inventory of offerings for future planning.
- Find effective means to communicate curricular and co-curricular activities to the campus body.

***Objective 3: Pursue creative opportunities for integrating curricular and co-curricular approaches to student growth and learning in ways that further student engagement with diversity, as well as equity-based and inclusive approaches to learning.***

- Promote creative thinking about how to structure educational experiences in ways that create opportunities for students to engage with and learn from people with diverse perspectives.
- Incentivize collaboration between faculty and student life staff in the pursuit of these educational experiences. (e.g., Living Learning Communities with a curricular component)
- Leverage Queens' location in a diverse city to create opportunities for students to engage with diversity in and out of the classroom.

## **Anticipated Challenges and Mitigating Strategies**

The DEI Taskforce was asked to provide potential barriers and to offer strategies to mitigate those barriers. The Taskforce identified three main challenges:

1. Community Buy-In
2. Individual Bandwidth
3. Financial Resources

### **Community Buy-In**

The DEI Taskforce conceptualizes issues with community buy-in in two distinctive ways. Throughout the feedback sessions and even within the Taskforce, Queens community members voiced their concerns about this just being “another report” or that the plan will not be taken seriously and implemented. Some people expressed hesitation in becoming too excited about the potential of the DEI Plan and others fatigue in advocating for changes after feeling there had been little progress in the past at Queens or at other places where they have worked.

The second issue with community buy-in was conceptualized as a lack of understanding the importance of prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion work in the ways that the plan outlines or as a plan at all. This could include people who are uncomfortable with a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, feel that we have already achieved enough in this area, or do not see how this relates to their role within the university or how the work aligns with the university’s mission.

### **Strategies**

- Clear, consistent, and responsive communication about the DEI plan -- its contents and meaning, and how it benefits all individuals, departments, units, and the University -- is essential in engendering support for the plan across the whole Queens community.
- Beginning work on the plan quickly after adoption and ensuring transparency and accountability to the community through use of strategies outlined in goal number four.
- Incentivizing people to participate in and support parts of the diversity, equity, and inclusion plan and leveraging relationships with early adopters of goals and strategies within the plan.
- Leaders will need to communicate frequently and clearly with their constituents about changes affecting them and provide support for their staff as they navigate the change.
- The university should clearly communicate the ways in which our DEI work intersects with and amplifies the University’s goals, priorities, and strategic initiatives.

### **Individual Bandwidth**

The DEI taskforce recognizes there is a concern regarding human power to complete the ambitious plan outlined. Many departments have had significant turnover with small teams of staff and faculty, who already hold multiple job functions. Additionally, the past couple of years have brought unprecedented challenges and changes that have left employees feeling burned out or exhausted. For example, it could

be daunting for faculty and staff to figure out new ways to expand their curriculum or services to meet the needs of the DEI Plan, even more so if they must learn new information to do so.

Additionally, as our recommendations indicate, many employees voiced concerns that there is an uneven distribution of labor when it comes to diversity, equity, and inclusion work, that it falls to a smaller number of employees who hold historically marginalized identities and/or expertise relative to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Some departments that engage in this work are small and would rely on one or two full-time staff to expand the extensive work they are already doing.

### **Strategies**

- Identify leadership roles to begin early implementation of the DEI Plan.
- Identify ways to relieve current employees from responsibilities to help meet the needs of the DEI Plan (i.e., reassigning teaching load, shifting work priorities to include parts of the plan).
- Provide resources for easy adoption into curricular and co-curricular programs and services through existing structures, such as the library, CAFE, existing professional development structures in units or divisions, consultation with employees with more expertise, and through development of new structures such as a website for materials.
- Invest in an adequate staffing model as goal number five indicates as a long-term investment in the plan.
- Provide financial incentives for employees that take on responsibilities of the DEI Plan in addition to their current workload.
- Explore creative avenues that also create opportunities for engagement with our students for plan implementation, including work-study, graduate assistantship, practicum, and internship opportunities.
- Explore other partnerships that can help advance our plan, such as alumni networks and community partners.
- Invest in technology that can help alleviate some of the administrative load needed to complete certain strategies, such as project management tools, mentoring technology, and other software.

### **Financial Resources**

The DEI Taskforce acknowledges that there are several components of the DEI Plan that will require an investment of financial resources. Some of these components include salary lines, professional training, technology, physical space, and programming. We recognize that financial resources are limited.

### **Strategies**

- In conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer, explore and identify a near-total cost of the DEI plan to set reasonable goals for implementation and budgeting.
- Prioritize and set realistic deadlines for the strategies outlined in the plan.
- Explore varied avenues of funding such as grants and donations.

- Build relationships with potential donors and connect them with the impact of work through storytelling and engagement with our students and campus.

## Appendix

### A. Taskforce Charge

Queens University of Charlotte  
Presidential Task Force on  
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

#### Charge:

As stated in the College's Mission, Vision, and Values: Queens provides transformative educational experiences that nurture intellectual curiosity, promote global understanding, encourage ethical living and prepare individuals for purposeful and fulfilling lives. Our intellectual endeavors require diverse perspectives to facilitate growth, challenge existing knowledge and catalyze unique and effective problem solving. Queens also values a sense of caring and community, buttressed with integrity and respect that seeks to cultivate creativity and innovation while serving society, in turn promoting diversity and respect for all people. To that end, the University is committed to fostering a fully inclusive community, enriched by persons of different races, gender identities, ethnicities, nationalities, economic backgrounds, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, political beliefs, and spiritual values. In order to create transformative educational experiences inside and outside the classroom to prepare our students for purposeful and fulfilling lives, Queens must institutionally cultivate an environment that provides rigorous opportunities to explore and assess varied perspectives within a culture that is inherently civil and respectful. While we have made admirable progress in several important areas related to diversity, (student recruitment, curricular offerings, interfaith exploration and internationalization), there is still much to do to bridge the gap between our aspirations and our current practices. Clearly, the time has come to reaffirm our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion as core values central to Queens's intellectual and social mission.

The Presidential Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is charged with reviewing, assessing, and recommending strategies/strategic initiatives to build a culture of excellence grounded in principles of equity, social justice, and mutual respect at all levels of our community life: academic, social, administrative; a culture that affirms the complexity and richness of multiple/intersectional identities, belief systems, and cultural practices.

As a result, the task force is charged with convening a representative group of faculty, staff and student leaders by appointment of the President to: a) review and assess our current efforts and practices, b) seek out and consider best practices elsewhere, and c) develop and deliver a diversity action plan suggesting specific actions and recommendations to enhance and improve Queens's current efforts to diversify its community and offerings.

Areas for Task Force review should include:

- Student Recruitment, Support and Retention
- Faculty and Staff Recruitment, Support and Retention
- Campus Climate and efforts to maintain a welcoming and affirming campus environment
- Community engagement broadly throughout the entirety of the institution.
- The curriculum as it supports diversity, equity and inclusion on campus including the collaboration of curricular and co-curricular experiences.
- The sufficiency of existing dedicated resources for diversity and inclusion

The diversity action plan should:

- Articulate a series of campus diversity goals and the resources and support needed to achieve them
- Identify issues or obstacles that could impede progress in pursuing diversity goals and suggest strategies overcome these