Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Planning Process

Background

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are important values to the Emory community. How we practice these values and interweave them into the very fabric and infrastructure of the Emory enterprise will take vision, community participation and guidance, and a resolute commitment to actualize this work.

This endeavor has taken a number of iterations at Emory, including the Advisory Council on Community and Diversity, Emory’s Commission on Racial and Social Justice, the Transforming Community Project, and the Committee on Class and Labor.

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been a stalwart champion of this work as it is committed to promoting a fair, equitable, and accessible campus environment for the university community through collaboration with its university partners.

In August 2019, Carol E. Henderson became the vice provost for diversity and inclusion, chief diversity officer, and adviser to the president. As Emory’s inaugural chief diversity officer, Henderson has built upon the work already being done, helping Emory to realize its vision for DEI in partnership with campus leaders, key stakeholders, and organizational units.

Part of realizing this vision is to establish common-ground principles and values that guide this work. Institutional definitions for DEI and equity-mindedness were adopted by campus leadership in November 2020, as was an institutional statement for diversity. These concepts, as well Emory’s mission and motto, and a number of other resources, frame the DEI strategic planning process.

In beginning this process, Henderson worked with the Office of the Provost, engaging the provost’s leadership team and Council of Deans, which resulted in the recommendation to begin the process by utilizing existing governance structures.

In January 2021, Henderson shared the following charge document with seven Strategic Planning Communities (SPCs).

Charge

The SPCs will serve in an advisory capacity to Henderson. These communities (Faculty; Undergraduate Students; Graduate and Professional Students; Staff; Post-Doctorates; Alumni; Community [external]) will help to create a draft of institutional strategic goals for DEI that will be shared with the Emory community. These goals will allow for charting, implementing, and measuring progress toward achieving the vision for DEI at Emory.

To develop their strategic goals, the SPCs will:

- inventory what exists for each assigned community to the best of their knowledge;
- develop specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-specific (S.M.A.R.T) short-, mid-, and long-term goals for achieving DEI goals in the three thematic areas listed below for each of the seven communities;
• evaluate the goals listed in the charge below; modify, expand, or deprioritize them based on conversations and solicited input from campus partners, key stakeholders, and community members from the Oxford and Atlanta campuses;
• create DEI goals that align with Emory’s institutional mission and values, as well as best or promising practices in the field;
• consider other relevant resources, experts, and archival materials that assist each community in building upon, evaluating, or strengthening goals already activated.

Themes

In order to make this process manageable and have it work in concert with other strategic-planning processes ongoing in our campus community, the activities of the SPCs will focus on the three themes that have been consistent in the many conversations with key stakeholders and community members at Emory that occurred from August to December 2019 and continue to find resonance in the community’s continuing conversations on DEI.

These themes were consistent with concerns related to, but not exclusive to, recruiting, retention, mentoring, access, career progression, promotion and tenure, salary equity, professional development, curricular diversity and inclusion, intercultural fluency, communication, time to degree, advising, and persistence to graduation.

Other themes may arise that may deserve immediate focus in this process, but these matters should be housed within the specified theme areas:

Professional Development, Education, and Awareness—advanced learning opportunities for administrators, faculty, staff, and students, both formal and informal, that utilize various modes of engagement that enhance knowledge, proficiency, skills, and effectiveness in implementing and practicing the principles and values of DEI.

Goals to consider:

• To make available to the Emory enterprise and campus community learning opportunities that will encourage intercultural fluency around the principles of DEI. In short, define what diversity, equity, equity-mindedness, and inclusion mean and how one puts those principles into practice;

• To create opportunities for self-discovery and perspective-taking that allows one to understand their communal impact on others and perceive how their own diversity helps to shape community practices, work and learning engagement, environment, and culture;

• To acknowledge that the different dimensions of diversity create a dynamic and complex campus community and enterprise that requires continuous learning, reflection, and examination of practices, policies, cross-cultural principles, and institutional infrastructures so that those practices promote and ensure the common good and the success of all regardless of title, position, status, or station;

• To strengthen organizational diversity competencies in ways that interrogate and
remedy systemic barriers that promote inequities and/or hostile work and learning environments;

• To maintain and provide an institutional web of care for all employees, students, faculty, and staff that promotes cultural literacy in ways that collaboratively build a community of excellence centered on the holistic well-being of others, their dignity, traditions, histories, and cultures (i.e., celebration of affinity months and other cultural, social, and institutional milestones);

• To develop a system of accountability that assesses diversity and intercultural learning opportunities and their import.

Climate and Culture reflects the collective attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and principles of faculty, staff, students, and administrators. Culture is demonstrated in our collective community of engagement, expressed in the values of community members and the ways they interact with and among each other, felt in the sense of belonging and the true investment in the well-being of each other. It is our authentic human connection. It is the ability to thrive and bring our whole selves with us each day in order to realize our truest and highest potential as individuals and as a collective.

Goals to consider:

• To foster an inclusive, equitable, and diverse campus community that promotes intellectual engagement, learning, and working in productive and impactful ways;

• To evaluate, correct, and eradicate systemic issues, barriers, and/or practices that impede fairness, access, equity, and equality embedded in institutional policies, practices, protocols, and procedures;

• To advocate for equal employment opportunity for all employees and applicants without regard to race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, genetic information, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran’s status, or any other factor that is a prohibited consideration under applicable law. Discrimination and harassment are also antithetical to Emory’s values and principles of inclusion;

• To promote and advocate for the recruitment and retention of accomplished and talented faculty, staff, undergraduate, graduate and professional students, and employees from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities to fulfill our institutional mission to “create, preserve, teach, and apply knowledge in the service of humanity.”

Accountability—taking responsibility and action for identifying and eliminating persistent patterns of inequity that impede the ability to fulfill institutional mission and goals for education rooted in the university’s DEI principles and values.

Goals to consider:
• To conduct prompt, unbiased review and adjudication of discrimination and harassment complaints;

• To ensure that students, faculty, and staff learn, work, and thrive in a campus community free from sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, by any university employee, other students, or a non-employee third party;

• To assure reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities and provide a wide variety of Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action/Title IX/Disability educational programs and training;

• To assess, track, and trend access, as well as remedy or create interventions for promotion/career ladders at all levels for staff and faculty; promotion-and-tenure guidelines that capture public scholarship as a worthy evaluative category; mentoring of historically underrepresented and underserved students, first-generation students, and students in general.

Co-chairs of Strategic Planning Communities

Faculty: Giacomo Negro and Tim Holbrook
Staff: Sabrina Burnett and Teresa Fosque
Undergraduate Students: Candice M. Williams and Malcolm J. Robinson
Graduate and Professional Students: Lasha Clarke and Annabella Cockerell (Amanda James, ex-officio)
Post-doctorates: Laramie D. Lemon and Jasmine Miller-Kleinhenz (Amanda James, ex-officio)
Alumni: Munir Meghjani 08Ox 10C and Isabel M. Garcia 99L
Community: Alan Anderson and Ciannat Howett

Tara Bartelt, project manager, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Timeline

• **January to September 2021:** each SPC will meet monthly, led by the co-chairs. Henderson will serve in an ex-officio capacity for each of the communities to ensure continuity and minimize redundancy in efforts.

• **September 30, 2021:** a report from the seven SPCs will be due to Henderson.

• **November 2021:** Materials will be collated and a draft report shared online for comments with the strategic planning partners and the Emory community.

• **January 2022:** Based on comments from the community, the draft will be revised and a final report submitted to the Office of the President.