Alfred State
Diversity Strategic Plan

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Introduction

With the demographics of those attending college changing to include more traditionally underrepresented populations, an intentional focus on diversity and inclusion is now on what the Association of American Universities refers to as an “inclusive experience.” This recognizes that “An academic institution can only reach the highest levels of excellence when it is inclusive.”

Alfred State used the past seventeen months (April 2015 to September 2016) to develop a new, comprehensive strategic plan complete with updated institutional vision, mission, and core values. The inclusive planning process, anchored in the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) Integrated Planning Framework, identified six key strategic priorities that would guide subsequent development of overarching goals, strategic approaches, actions/tactics, and the measurable objectives to quantify progress. One of Alfred State’s six critical strategic priorities is Diversity and Inclusion. This prominence in the new college strategic plan – titled Alfred State Roadmap to 2020, places greater emphasis on diversity and inclusion as a primary focus of the institution for the next three years.

The development of the strategic plan purposefully integrated external influences and regulatory or legal mandates. By creating transparent linkages between all goals irrespective of source, Alfred State has ensured that effort required to achieve the goals is not left locked in a silo or relegated to an office shelf. Rather than create an independent or standalone set of objectives around diversity, the college used the full reach, power, and visibility of its campus-wide strategic planning to ensure diversity and inclusion was a strategic priority. Using the new strategic plan, Alfred State commits to the discipline, collaboration and focus necessary to create and sustain a campus that values diversity, inclusion and equity.

Assessment of Current Campus Diversity

Alfred State’s 2015-16 school year indicate that we have 19.73% of our students are underrepresented minorities, that include American Indian/Alaskan, black, Hispanic, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and other underrepresented multi race/ethnicities. Less than two percent of our student body are international students (1.6%). Thirty-eight percent of our students come from rural counties and 37.6% of them are first-generation college students. On the Alfred campus 47.6% of our students are female, and 54.3% are male. (This demographic does not take into consideration trans+ or non-gender binary individuals).

Alfred State also has a satellite campus, The School of Applied Technology, located in Wellsville, NY. Because of the vocational trades offered on that campus, the student body is largely male (88.7%) with only 11.3% females.

Our faculty and staff breakdown for diversity is as follows, for faculty: 7 Asian, 2 black, 2 Hispanic, and 213 white. The staff demographics were: 5 American Indian/Alaskan, 1 Asian, 8 black, 3 Hispanic and 366 white.
In looking at the disparity between our changing racial and ethnic demographics of the student body, we recognize and address in our strategic plan the need to recruit and retain more faculty/staff of diverse backgrounds and identities.

We also recognize that as the demographics of the student body shift, so will their needs in support, campus amenities/services and programming. We also acknowledge that evolving needs of our students and have also prioritized these in our strategic plan.

Finally, one of our biggest challenges in recruiting and retaining, primarily faculty/staff from diverse backgrounds, but also students, is our rural location. While some are drawn to Alfred because of its remote location, others find it difficult to find a community, social scene or entertainment, particularly younger professionals. We have also addressed this, and suggestions on how to acclimate new additions to the Alfred community.

**Alfred State Vision and Mission Statements**

Alfred State recognizes the importance of diversity and inclusion in their mission and vision statement. With demographics in the nation, and on campus changing, the emphasis of accepting and embracing diversity in the classroom, and in the workforce is critical. The college strives to provide our students with hands-on, real life experiences that prepare them to enter the workforce as culturally competent employees in a global society.

**Vision Statement:**

*Alfred State will be THE premier regional college of technology, creating opportunity for our students to achieve successful careers and purposeful lives.*

**Mission Statement:**

*Alfred State delivers outstanding associate and baccalaureate degree programs through hands-on learning, preparing in-demand and involved students in a caring community.*

**Strategic Plan – Diversity & Inclusion (Strategic Priority)**

To be consistent with the Chancellor’s goal of becoming the most inclusive system of higher education in the country, Alfred State established the following overarching goal in the strategic plan (Goal 2):

*Alfred State will intensify efforts to recruit, welcome, include, and retain a diverse community that is considered an example of success across the state.*

To support the goal, Alfred State established four supporting strategies with supporting actions:

**Strategy 2A:** Broaden recruiting efforts for faculty and staff to increase diversity on Wellsville campus and Alfred Campus.
Actions/Tactics:

- Develop an active initiative in advertising, recruiting and tracking for academic positions at Alfred State with a strong emphasis on diversity as defined by SUNY
  External Cross Check: SUNY Policy on Diversity
- Enhance efforts to include visually-identifiable diversity in collateral marketing and online materials
  External Cross Check: SUNY Policy on Diversity
- Develop a program for faculty and staff families to become involved in campus events, finding employment, feeling welcomed, and networking among the broader county community
  External Cross Check: SUNY Policy on Diversity
- Better communication to employees about upcoming activities via a centralized community calendar
  External Cross-Check: internal policy

Strategy 2B: Intensify recruiting effort to welcome all students focusing on under-served areas, as defined by SUNY but also including: at-risk and high-needs students, First Nation students, and international students; while focusing retention efforts across campus to increase participation and involvement among all populations to celebrate culture and diversity within the caring community for which Alfred State is known.

Actions/Tactics:

- Prioritize a greater emphasis on the physical accessibility of our campus both in buildings and in outdoor environments
  External Cross-Check: US Department of Education (pending)
- Develop environmentally-conscious, low-cost means of transportation to campus to involve student and alumni families—especially parents and siblings—in on-campus events
  External Cross-Check: internal policies
- Develop criteria for a needs-based grant initiative that will enhance diversity in selected curricula
  External Cross-Check: internal policies
- Create an online showcase of student accomplishments and projects that highlights a diverse student population and reinforces a message of engagement and welcome among the Alfred State College community
  External Cross-Check: Middle States, section 13, Recommendation 1
- Perform an annual “diversity audit” to identify areas for ongoing improvement
  External Cross-Check: SUNY Policy on Diversity, Middle States, section 13-Recommendation 1
Strategy 2C: Nurture the existing Alfred State caring community to cultivate greater cultural competency and understanding across the region.

Actions/Tactics:

- Provide periodic trainings to college campus regarding cultural competency and privilege
  External Cross-Check: SUNY Excels 3, SUNY Policy on Diversity
- Create opportunities for dialogue between all parts of campus to understand and appreciate difference and similarity
  External Cross-Check: SUNY Excels 3, SUNY Policy on Diversity
- Through ongoing campus dialogue, examine language in the code of conduct and consider revisions to promote Alfred State as an inclusive and civil learning environment
  External Cross-Check: SUNY Excels 3
- Create and implement a comprehensive campus diversity strategic plan
  External Cross Check: SUNY Policy on Diversity

Strategy 2D: Implement universal design principles across new or renovated campus digital and physical environments

Actions/Tactics:

- Perform a review to reconcile new campus construction projects with universal design, moving beyond ADA requirements
  External Cross-Check: internal (ED Pending)
- Develop criteria and complete an audit of our digital environments to ensure baseline accessibility requirements
  External Cross-Check: internal policies
- Perform a walkability study to identify enhanced safety and multi-modal movement on campus
  External Cross-Check: internal policies (ED Pending)

Diversity Plan Expected Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate the knowledge and skills needed to lead in a global society upon completion from Alfred State
2. Regular campus climate surveys will reveal Alfred State to be a leader in student success and satisfaction in regards to diversity and inclusion
3. Increase the number of faculty and staff members of diverse identities on campus
4. Continue to increase the number of students with diverse identities on campus and their completion rate
Summary:

Alfred State continues to increase efforts around diversity and inclusion. Our numbers of under-represented students continues to grow – not only in terms of race and ethnicity, but also in LGBTQ+ population, faith-based organizations, and other groups who identify differently than a cultural majority. This is evidenced in our new gender inclusive housing area that is full and has a wait list, as well as the growing number of students attending Rainbow Union meetings and events. Our faith-based students now have started five faith-based organizations.

Alfred State has moved ahead of mandates: the College established new premier physical space for students in the form of a new Center for Cultural Exploration. The Center is located in the Student Leadership Center and includes an interfaith prayer space. In the Student Leadership Center, we also have a Veteran’s Resource Center, that is open to all of our veteran and military-identified students, faculty and staff. Alfred State has both advanced a Chief Diversity Officer and also added a new fulltime professional position: Coordinator for Intercultural Student Support. Giving diversity and inclusion prominent positioning in the new strategic plan is important; moving the strategic plan forward is equally important. The College has scheduled its Leadership Group (67 of the top decision-makers at the college) for a November 1st, 2016 work session titled “A Dialogue on Cultural Competence: Advancing the Strategic Plan” utilizing an external facilitator to help Alfred State make its written plan come to life.

By making diversity and inclusion one of the top strategic priorities in the college’s new strategic plan, Alfred State is modeling its commitment to producing culturally competent graduates, ready to enter a globally conscious workforce. We also acknowledge how beneficial diversity is in higher education, for all members of our community to learn from those of diverse backgrounds, both inside and outside of the classroom. By increasing our efforts to retain and recruit more diverse backgrounds, providing the support that is needed for those valued members, monitoring our campus climate, and ensuring our facilities are accommodating to all abilities, we will cumulatively enrich our campus environment.