THE UB BLUEPRINT:
PUTTING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AT THE
CORE OF OUR MISSION

University at Buffalo
Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Plan

October 2016

Prepared in consultation with the Vice Provost for Equity & Inclusion,
Equity & Inclusion Advisory Council, and Strategic Planning Committee of the
Equity & Inclusion Advisory Council
“As a chemical engineer, I expect to contribute significantly to the search for more sustainable energy sources by challenging the outdated norms in the industry.”

Abdul-Malik Davies, Junior
Chemical Engineering

“In order to be an effective change agent, you need to be passionate, driven and able to work with a diverse amount of people who all have different views of the world.”

Jenna Bower, Senior
Graphic Design
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I. THE INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK

In its 2012 report, the UB Commission on Academic Excellence and Equity recommended the University at Buffalo with establishing a senior leadership office supported by an advisory committee that would “design the mission for diversity and inclusion strategies at UB, and initiate university-wide strategic planning.” Three years later, in 2015, the SUNY Board of Trustees charged every campus with developing a comprehensive strategic plan for diversity and inclusion, addressing issues such as student recruitment, retention, and completion strategies; for administrative, faculty, and staff recruitment and retention strategies; and that incorporate an evaluation/assessment component.

In October 2015, Provost Zukoski charged UB’s inaugural Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council with a host of duties, among them, creating the strategic equity and inclusion plan for UB. The focus of our planning for a more diverse, equitable and inclusive UB has coalesced around the challenge of leveraging the research expertise, expansive curriculum, and diversity of the University at Buffalo to build an academic community that puts inclusive excellence at the core of its mission. In doing so, UB will achieve excellence in teaching and learning, scholarship, student/faculty/staff development, institutional functioning, local and global community engagement, workforce development, and more. This challenges UB to move beyond a mere theoretical understanding of inclusive excellence, and to employ the principle as a strategic framework for actively examining whether UB’s practices, policies and procedures iterate inclusive excellence in every aspect of its operations.

What is inclusive excellence and why is it so important that we put it at the center of UB’s mission? UB holds as axiomatic that building and sustaining a diverse and inclusive community is an essential foundation for achieving excellence and success. Historically, university diversity initiatives responded to calls from business and community leaders to strengthen workforce diversity, the desire to redress past societal inequities, or a general feeling that making the student body more diverse is the “right thing” to do. These motives led to various initiatives aimed at increasing the racial or ethnic diversity of the student population, but did not necessarily address the broader diversity of the campus community (faculty, staff, administrators), the multiple social identities of students (including gender, class, sexual identity, national origin, religion, ability status), the campus climate that determines whether diversity is sustainable, and the importance of curricular transformation to include differing perspectives and modes of inquiry previously neglected or missing.¹ Inclusive excellence is a comprehensive approach that responds to new research on cognitive diversity, which demonstrates that diverse teams solve complex problems faster and better, making the academic enterprise more rigorous and robust.²

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¹ Damon Williams, Joseph B. Berger, and Shederick A. McClendon, Toward a Model of Inclusive Excellence and Change in Postsecondary Institutions, Association of American Colleges and Universities (2005).
FOCUS ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND EVALUATIVE PROCESSES (PENDING)
ORGANIZATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN:

In Section I, we present the framework for inclusive excellence, which describes why inclusive excellence is the right strategy for increasing diversity, equity and inclusion at UB; and how we intend to accelerate achieving inclusive excellence at UB through the Center for Inclusive Excellence.

Section II describes our mission of embedding inclusive excellence in every aspect of UB’s operations through program- and process-building initiatives across five broad areas that define inclusive excellence.

Section III lays out our compelling vision of diversity and inclusion at UB, after which, in Section IV, we articulate six goals that bridge our current campus reality with our vision of inclusive excellence at UB.

In Section V, we recount a brief history of UB’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, followed by, Section VI, an extensive assessment of UB’s current campus diversity, including a demographic profile of the institution, as well as policies, practices, and initiatives – current and proposed – to address diversity, equity and inclusion.

Section VII presents the various strategies UB will employ to achieve the goals articulated in Section VI.

Section VIII describes in greater detail the Inclusive Excellence Center and the processes that will embed inclusive excellence into every aspect of UB’s operations, on both the academic and administrative sides; and

Finally, Section X ties together and summarizes the ambitions of this strategic plan, followed by Appendices (referred to in the body of the strategic plan).
II. MISSION AND VISION

THE UB BLUEPRINT: PUTTING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AT THE CORE OF OUR MISSION

The University at Buffalo is a diverse, inclusive scholarly community dedicated to bringing the benefits of its research, scholarship and creative activity, and educational excellence to global and local communities in ways that impact and positively change the world. – University at Buffalo Mission Statement

UB recognizes that diversity and inclusion are central to its mission and are essential elements of educational excellence and success – a concept known as “inclusive excellence.” Our mission is to achieve inclusive excellence at UB in a deliberate, intentional and coordinated fashion, embedding it in every aspect of UB’s operations. We aspire to foster a healthy, productive, ethical, fair, and affirming campus community to allow all students, faculty and staff to thrive and realize their full potential.

We have set ambitious institutional goals. To ensure that progress toward these goals is monitored, UB will establish a Inclusive Excellence Center that will define and model inclusive excellence for the university, and create transparent processes for continuous improvement to ensure that benchmarks and goals are set and progress toward them is monitored. In this way, the center will transform the culture of diversity, equity and inclusion at UB. Under the leadership of the Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion, the Inclusive Excellence Center will design and facilitate the planning processes, conversations, program initiatives, educational strategies, and research inquires that shape goals, actions, and advancement of inclusive excellence at UB. These efforts will be undertaken across five broad areas that define inclusive excellence:

- **Access, Equity and Success** – promote access to all of the resources of the UB community for students, faculty and staff, enabling all UB community members to have an equal ability to reach their highest potential in choosing to enroll or work at UB
- **Inclusive Climate and Culture** – recommend practices and inculcate values that enhance existing diversity and inclusion efforts, and promote mutual respect for all others within the living, learning, working and recreating environments of the university
- **Innovation** – engage members of the UB community in identifying, proposing and piloting innovative approaches to embedding inclusive excellence in all aspects of university operations, and promoting diversity and inclusion as a source of creative and innovative teaching, learning, research, workforce and administrative excellence
- **Data Collection** - Create a comprehensive, data-driven, and robust analytical infrastructure for tracking progress toward diversity and inclusion goals
- **Assessment Processes** – implement a cycle of transparent evaluation, and continuous improvement to ensure that we remain accountable for achieving the goals we have committed to achieve in our diversity and inclusion plan.
III. INSTITUTIONAL GOALS

GOAL #1: Create and sustain a welcoming climate in which all members of the UB community feel valued, respected, and empowered to achieve their highest potential.

GOAL #2: Attract, retain, and graduate a diverse and culturally competent student body.

GOAL #3: Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and culturally competent faculty and staff.

GOAL #4: Provide leadership and communicate commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence across all academic and administrative units.

GOAL #5: Collect, monitor and improve the reporting of data on UB’s progress toward inclusive excellence.

GOAL #6: To provide the central motivating infrastructure, UB will create an Inclusive Excellence Center that will transformation of the culture and practices at UB by coordinating existing diversity and inclusion assets, and continuously assessing UB’s progress toward inclusive excellence.
IV. OUR PATH TO INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE:
A BRIEF HISTORY OF UB’s COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Founded in 1846, the University at Buffalo joined the SUNY system in 1962, and in doing so, committed to providing access to high quality education to all of the people of New York State, with all segments of the population being fully represented. In 1962, issues of diversity arose in a very different context than they do today. While many of the issues are the same, campus diversity efforts have widened, and now include attention to age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, religion, socio-economic status, veteran status, and the needs of international, first-generation, transfer, and returning students.

Seasoned administrators observe that race still dominates as an issue. It is no longer, however, as “black and white” as it may have seemed earlier. Latino and Asian American students are represented in greater numbers in higher education and are increasingly articulating their own concerns and influencing diversity initiatives. The cultural and language issues of immigrant communities and international students are requiring universities to rethink how they include and engage these groups. Universities are recognizing the need to partner with communities and school districts to ensure that students are college-ready. Rising tuition is requiring new approaches to financial aid and scholarships for low-income students. At the same time, higher education is struggling to understand that diversity is not a euphemism for assimilation or a box to be checked, but rather a challenge to transform institutional values and culture in order to achieve the “inclusive excellence” that is essential to institutional success.

In the past decade, higher education leaders have begun to promote inclusive excellence as a response to these new demographic conditions and strategic imperatives. They now move beyond a sole focus on numbers and instead strive for a comprehensive application of diversity that is embedded throughout every aspect of the organization. As one diversity leader within his institution’s senior leadership recognized, “making excellence inclusive is only truly actualized when our students’ lived experiences . . . exemplify diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout daily interactions.”

ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT PROGRAMS

UB was a pioneer in the establishment of ethnic and gender studies programs nationally. The (then) Department of Black Studies was among the first of its kind when it was founded in 1969, and Women’s Studies followed soon thereafter. Both became leaders in their fields. By the 1970s, Black Studies had established itself as an innovative program centered in the arts and humanities, and boasted a core of prominent public intellectuals. UB’s Department of Women’s Studies was one of the first programs to

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4 Ibid.
launch a PhD in the discipline. An allied department, American Studies, included one of
the most renowned Native American Studies programs in North America. In 2010,
challenged by declining student enrollment in the individual department, then Dean of
the College of Arts & Sciences (CAS), Bruce McCombe assembled the three departments
under one umbrella and converted them to a single department a year later – the
Department of Transnational Studies (TNS).

TNS now supports a host of programs: two PhDs (Global Gender Studies [GGS] and
American Studies [AMS]), three MA programs (GGS, AMS, Canadian Studies), three BAs
(African American Studies [AAS], GGS, AMS) and five undergraduate minors (AAS, GGS,
AMS, Latino Studies and Polish Studies). That number of programs, of course, creates
unique challenges for the department. Its mission is to maintain its degree programs in
its constituent fields, but it can have the result of stretching some faculty members too
thin in a context of dwindling resources. Also, the disparate natures of the programs in
accordance with the disciplinary standards can make it more difficult to service the needs
of their respective students.

That challenge is of paramount significance to the institution as a whole. Research
demonstrates undeniable benefits of ethnic and gender studies programs for
underrepresented students and the entire campus community. Stanford researcher
Thomas Dee observed that overall academic performance of at-risk students taking
ethnic studies courses improved relative to their peers for two reasons. First, the ethnic
studies instruction students received corresponded with their “out-of-school”
experiences. This was directly relevant to their backgrounds, and their experiences in the
world. Thus, the students were more actively academically engaged. Their attendance
increased by 21%, and their GPA climbed an average of 1.4 points.5

Second, stereotype threat – or underperformance due to negative stereotypes that raise
anxiety and inhibit superior performance – was lessened by the ethnic studies
curriculum. Students of color perform better when their personal histories “resonate”
within the academy. They feel a sense of belonging and confidence, rather than feeling
vulnerable, unsure and marginalized.6 Additionally, research establishes that ethnic
studies programs benefit the broader population of white students by teaching them to
think critically, and equipping them with the skills to work effectively in an increasingly
diverse and global workplace. Gender studies courses similarly not only benefit female
students, but all students.

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Analysis: http://cepa.stanford.edu/wp16-01

Education Association Research Department)
Considering the clear benefit of robust racial, ethnic and gender studies to underrepresented students, and to the entire campus – resonance, inclusion, cultural competence – we need to re-think and re-work our approach to supporting and expanding racial, ethnic and gender studies programs at UB.

**Cora P. Maloney College Academic Excellence Programs (CPMC)** help facilitate academic excellence, access, equity, and achievement for a diverse student population. CPMC promotes academic achievement and excellence through advising and student support, collaborative learning workshops, mentoring to prepare for graduate studies and professional schools, summer bridge programs for entering freshmen and transfer students, and scholarships. These programs include the Daniel Acker Scholars Program, Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program, Student Support Services (SSS) Program, SUNY Empire State Diversity Honors Scholarship and the Collegiate Science Technology Entry Program (CSTEP), Access to College Excellence (ACE) Program, the Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) as well as UB’s Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (UB-STEM) programs including the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation Program (LSAMP), UB’s Bridge to the Doctorate, and the National Science Foundation Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (NSF S-STEM).

The **Arthur O. Eve Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)**, the largest program within the CPMC, is a multifaceted academic and student enrichment program for talented students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who are inadmissible for general admissions. Consistent with SUNY’s access mission, UB offers to students who—through no fault of their own—did not have access to rigorous, effective primary and secondary instruction, an opportunity to accelerate their learning, and succeed at UB with the help of academic advisement, cohort programs, and other supports. Established in 1970, UB EOP operates like a “college within a college,” administering innovative programs and offering an array of courses and services to students from first-generation, low-income families and underrepresented minority communities. All EOP students enter UB having demonstrated grit, resilience and the potential to succeed and graduate from UB. More importantly, the program acts as a channel to other undergraduate units such as the Academies, Advanced Honors, CSTEP, LSAMP, McNair, and Student Support Services. It currently serves 925 students.

**STRATEGIC PLANS**

**UB 2020 (2007)**, the University at Buffalo’s strategic plan, acknowledged the importance of a culture of diversity and inclusive excellence in the university’s effort to become one of the very best public universities in this country. Our current mission statement, based on this plan, emphasizes our aspiration to become stronger as a diverse, inclusive scholarly community dedicated to bringing the benefits of our research, scholarship and creative activity to global and local communities to positively impact the world. One of
the seven stated strategic goals\(^7\) indicates our desire to further enhance our faculty and student diversity through focused enrollment and hiring strategies and the implementation of best practices that strengthen the campus climate and ensure that all students achieve the objectives that brought them to the university community.

**Realizing UB 2020: Achieving Academic Excellence (2013)** developed implementation strategies for the goals identified in UB 2020. UB aspired to accomplish those goals by building interdisciplinary communities of faculty, staff and students to engage complex issues facing humankind and its environment in thematic areas; restructuring the curriculum to better prepare students for lifelong learning; and coordinating a program of community engagement to create new student learning opportunities and produce more impactful research. **Realizing UB 2020 broadened UB 2020’s commitment to faculty, student and staff diversity, and introduced the principle of inclusion while recognizing its “inextricable link” to equity and excellence.**\(^8\) It acknowledged the importance of enhancing the quality of life in the local community to UB’s core missions, and created several initiatives to expand the civic and cultural competence of UB students.

Between the completion of the UB 2020 Strategic Plan and the development of the implementation plan, President Tripathi (then, Provost Tripathi) charged the **Commission on Academic Excellence and Equity** with identifying barriers to faculty success, and making recommendations to ensure that faculty members could flourish, without regard to gender, race or ethnicity. Led by UB School of Law Professor Athena Mutua, the commission made a number of findings that were published in a 2012 report entitled, “In Pursuit of Academic Excellence: Equity Across Diversity.” The commission made several recommendations, many of which have already been implemented. They include:

- Establishing a vice presidential (or vice provostal) office supported by a Diversity Advisory Committee, to design the mission for diversity and inclusion strategies at UB, and initiate university-wide strategic planning
- Making department chairs and search committee chairs aware of best practices for recruiting minority faculty members
- Making standards and expectations for tenure clear from the beginning and coupling them with consistent, constructive feedback and mentoring
- Developing more systematic and centralized data collection on hires and institute exit interviews to better understand why faculty leave before tenure evaluation
- Being proactive in diversifying UB’s leadership, and creating pipelines and succession plans to maintain a diverse body of leaders.

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\(^7\) Among the strategic goals articulated in the UB 2020 Strategic Plan to guide UB in further enhancing its university’s stature and impact, UB commits to “enhancing faculty, staff and student diversity via focused enrollment and hiring strategies that implement best practices regarding recruitment and retention.” UB 2020 Strategic Plan, http://www.buffalo.edu/ub2020/about1/goals.html

\(^8\) Realizing UB 2020: Achieving Academic Excellence, p.10
After the commission report, an Implementation Team considered the findings of the commission and produced a list of recommendations for action in 2013. While the team’s findings were based upon the commission’s recommendations, it explicitly broadened the scope of its work to include students and staff, in addition to faculty. Inclusion objectives were also expanded to go beyond issues of gender and race alone, so as to reflect the diversity of the UB community more broadly, in such areas as (but not limited to) sexual orientation, disabilities, and veteran status. Provost Zukoski appointed a new Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion, Teresa A. Miller, in March, 2014, and an Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council was charged to advise and support her in October 2015.

In preparation for re-accreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), UB engaged in a self-study process resulting in the 2014 report Framework for Excellence. In the report, UB identified as a strategic goal for the immediate future “enhanc[ing] its faculty and student diversity through focused enrollment and hiring strategies and implementation of best practices with regard to recruitment and retention.” The report identified other goals related to diversity, equity and inclusion as well, such as deepening UB’s impact and outreach in the community; strengthening programs and partnerships contributing to the social, cultural and economic vitality of the region; improving health-care outcomes for the region; and preparing students to live and lead in a global world.

On January 27, 2015 UB joined a host of Buffalo businesses and organizations in signing the City of Buffalo Mayor’s Opportunity Pledge (2015). The pledge was created to demonstrate a commitment to advancing new business, job and educational opportunities resulting from the university’s growth in downtown Buffalo and from the city’s economic renaissance, and to ensure that the new opportunities being created in Buffalo are available to all. In signing the pledge, President Tripathi reaffirmed UB’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in the hiring of faculty and staff, in the enrollment of students and in creating a safe and welcoming campus environment for all people.

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9 University at Buffalo, Framework for Excellence: A Self-Study Submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (February 1, 2014).
V. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT CAMPUS DIVERSITY/PENDING

This section presents the current and projected demographics of our campus population, as well as a brief overview of the outcomes and impact of current diversity and inclusion initiatives, programs and events. UB’s faculty, staff and student populations are distinct and reflect distinctly different demographic trends and constraints.

CURRENT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROFILE

In contrast to the earlier recounting of UB’s increasing adoption of diversity and inclusion strategies and efforts in the Brief History section, this section describes (1) UB’s current diversity and inclusion Leadership, (2) the current/recent diversity and inclusion task forces and working groups that have been developed, and (3) the current campus climate and concerns expressed during a series of interviews conducted for this study.

UB currently has in place policies relating to discrimination and harassment, reasonable accommodation, religious accommodation and expression, recruitment, and nepotism.

Campus programs to enhance diversity and inclusion have historically been decentralized, and not coordinated with related programs. Recently, however, more organizations and offices are initiating and fostering diversity and inclusion programs than in the past. For example, both UB’s Faculty Senate and Professional Staff Senate now have committees to address issues pertaining to equity, diversity and inclusion; and more faculty and administrators carry diversity-, equity- and inclusion-related titles than ever in the history of the university.

Campus communications may be produced either centrally by UB’s Office of University Communications or by individual academic and administrative departments and units. There is no existing survey of diversity and inclusion in campus communications. However, a review of all academic department websites reveals an inconsistent practice of stating departmental commitment to diversity and inclusion prominently on landing pages. While most decanal units have this practice, it is varies dramatically at the department level.
Diversity and Inclusion Leadership

*Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion (VPEI)*
President Tripathi and Provost Zukoski’s creation of the Office of the Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion in 2014, and the addition of the VPEI to the President’s Cabinet in 2015, demonstrates UB’s commitment to diversity and inclusion leadership at the highest levels of university administration. The VPEI functions as UB’s Chief Diversity Officer, with responsibility for UB’s diversity and inclusion strategies and policies, and transformation of the campus culture. The VPEI works within university leadership to create strategies that empower members of the campus community – whether faculty, students or staff – to achieve their full potential, unburdened by barriers to access and advancement based on stereotypes and bias. She is a strong advocate for access, diversity, inclusion and equity in educational and employment policies and practices.

*Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):*
Reporting to the President, EDI is the university’s compliance office for matters involving discrimination and harassment. EDI investigates reports of discrimination, and also provides confidential assistance and advice to members of the UB community who are concerned about situations that could be harassment or discrimination. EDI has chaired or co-chaired proactive activities relating to accessibility, transgender inclusion, and Title IX compliance relating to sexual assault.

*Intercultural and Diversity Center (IDC):*
Situated within Student Affairs, the IDC offers high quality programs, events and activities that celebrate UB’s diversity and educate our community on topics such as appreciating our commonalities and differences, the role identity plays in our lives and how to be an advocate. The IDC’s mission is to support all students in their personal development, create a sense of belonging, celebrate diversity, and discuss issues that broaden a student’s perspective.

*Department of Athletics:*
The Division of Athletics has been particularly proactive in initiating programs and developing policies to support diversity and inclusion among student athletes and across the university through its Gender Equity and Diversity & Inclusion Offices. These efforts include production of the “You Can Play” video (LGBTQ inclusion), mandatory town hall meetings on sexual consent and sexual violence, highly visible diversity and inclusion messaging on UB Athletics websites, annual National Women and Girls in Sports Day events (inclusion of women in sports), and annual assessments of the effectiveness of its diversity and inclusion efforts.
Faculty Diversity Leaders Across Campus

Fortunately, across UB, university leaders are increasingly vocal about the importance of diversity and inclusion and are placing greater emphasis on these issues. This is demonstrated in public statements about the importance of diversity and inclusion in addresses to the community by senior leadership, including the president’s commencement and State of the University addresses; increased training and education of faculty and staff; and the appointment of administrators to focus on equity and inclusion issues. Currently, four of UB’s twelve decanal units have created administrative positions for faculty members that include responsibilities related to diversity, equity and/or inclusion. They are:

- Rajan Batta, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and SUNY Distinguished Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering
- Margarita Dubocovich, SUNY Distinguished Professor; Senior Associate Dean for Inclusion and Cultural Enhancement; Chair of Pharmacology and Toxicology
- Margaret Moss, Associate Professor of Nursing; Assistant Dean for Diversity and Inclusion
- Heather Orom, Associate Professor of Community Health and Health Behavior, Assistant Dean for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Ultimately, the engagement of faculty depends upon leadership at the departmental and decanal levels to voice support for diversity and to implement practices that make inclusion a reality. Notable efforts in that regard include:

- UB’s strong commitment to diverse leadership, whereby five of its twelve deans are women, including the dean of UB’s largest academic unit, the College of Arts and Sciences, and one of the twelve is Asian American
- The School of Engineering and Applied Sciences (SEAS) offering diversity training from a nationally known diversity trainer for all of its faculty and staff (Fall 2015), and appointing both an associate dean and a program director to coordinate diversity and inclusion in STEM disciplines and programs
- The School of Social Work bringing a representative from the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity to UB to train all interested faculty members on effective mentoring, particularly with regard to women and underrepresented minority faculty
- The Jacobs School of Medicine and Biological Sciences (JSMBS) regularly conducting live search committee training and sponsoring external speakers on diversity in the sciences

It is increasingly clear that, moving forward, cultural competency and a demonstrated commitment to equity and inclusion should also be made an essential qualification for any leadership position at the university.

Current/Recent Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives
Faculty-Oriented Initiatives:

- **Faculty Mentoring**
  In 2015, the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (VPFAC) surveyed faculty members regarding their experiences with mentoring, and found that underrepresented minorities (URM) and women were less satisfied with mentoring than their counterparts. Subsequently the VPFAC initiated a yearlong program, pairing URM and female faculty members with mentors who agree to participate in activities designed to produce more effective mentoring. The program began in September 2016, with a mentoring workshop given by the National Center for Faculty Development & Diversity.

- **Chairs Leadership Workshop**
  In 2015, the VPFAC designed and implemented an annual retreat and year-long workshop to develop the leadership capabilities of department chairs. Diversity leadership is the topic of one of the monthly lunchtime workshops held throughout the academic year.

- **Modified Duties for Faculty**
  The Faculty Senate Tenure, Promotion and Privileges Committee recently proposed a resolution on faculty teaching obligations following a critical life events (ex. birth/adoption of a child). While there has been a proposal for a policy, the constraints of the current collective bargaining contract for faculty, prohibit the university from requiring the academic units to do more than support flexible work schedules when critical life events occur.

- **Academic Freedom and Inclusion**
  In May 2015, the Faculty Senate Academic Planning and Assessment Committee proposed, and the Faculty Senate passed, a resolution on academic freedom, freedom of expression, artistic freedom, diversity and inclusion.

- **Faculty Search Committees**
  With the help of a SUNY ODEI Explorations in Inclusive Excellence and Diversity Grant, UB is actively developing online modules for faculty search committees to learn best practices for developing diverse applicant pools and to understand the role that implicit bias can play in the selection process.
### Student-Oriented Initiatives:

- **The International Student Inclusion and Engagement Task Force**, charged by the Provost in Fall 2014 to investigate, analyze and report on challenges UB faces in regard to the rapidly increasing international student population at UB, issued a report in May 2016. In the report, the task force identified the need to incorporate the inclusion and engagement of international students as a “priority in UB core goals” and made key recommendations that include:
  
  - Creating spaces and activities that foster meaningful intercultural interactions between domestic and international students, both inside and outside the classroom;
  - Providing welcoming spaces and facilities for international students that are centrally located, attractive, and accessible; and
  - Ensuring that responsibility for welcoming, supporting and integrating international students is shared by the entire university community, particularly those programs enrolling international students in large numbers.

- **Diversity Learning Requirement**
  UB has instituted a Diversity Learning (DL) requirement as part of its new general education curriculum. DL courses serve to equip students with cultural knowledge and awareness necessary to live, work and thrive among the diverse groups that characterize the United States. Currently close to 100 courses are being offered that satisfy the DL requirement; however, they are concentrated in a few social science disciplines. Ultimately, the goal is to have diversity learning across the disciplines, and throughout the UB Curriculum.

- **Alcohol, Sexual Assault and Inter-personal Violence Training**
  In addition to the DL academic requirement, incoming students receive mandatory online and in-person training on the topics of alcohol use and Title IX, including sexual assault and interpersonal violence. Students are also offered a number of workshops related to diversity and inclusion topics, including bystander intervention, how to support a sexual assault survivor, Diversity Zone training, how to be a transgender advocate, and global competency.

Like colleges and universities nationwide, UB is extremely concerned with the prevention of, and effective response to, sexual assault. In 2006, UB formed its Violence Prevention Team, a subcommittee of the Personal Safety Committee, which is dedicated to forming strategies to promote awareness of sexual assault, the importance of affirmative consent, strategies for bystander intervention, and the effectiveness of support and reporting resources. By proactively seeking to combat campus sexual assault through a research-based public health perspective, UB has become a nationwide leader in sexual assault prevention and response. The 2014 SUNY Board of Trustees resolution against
sexual assault and New York State’s *Enough is Enough* legislation have incorporated policies initially developed at the University at Buffalo. These include the Students’ Bill of Rights and the Options for Confidentially Disclosing Sexual Violence (originally UB’s Confidentiality and Reporting Protocol). These policies have sought to clarify for students their options for reporting and support, as well as their rights under Title IX.

At the same time, UB understands that we must continue to explore additional strategies to promote the safety of students. In fall of 2016, UB will be one of five schools to pilot the **SUNY (Sexual Violence) Campus Climate Survey**. Feedback from this survey will allow us to understand the extent to which sexual assault is underreported; how well students understand the university offices and resources devoted to response, support and prevention; and areas where we can bolster our sexual assault prevention efforts.

- **Transfer Students**
  In 2004, UB created an Office of Transfer Services to improve the ease and success of students transferring to UB from other schools. Programs and services offered to transfer students include Transfer Student Orientation; the Transfer Ambassador Program that connects arriving transfer students with students who successfully navigated the transfer experience; and Transfer Tuesdays, a weekly social gathering of transfer students.

- **Military Students**
  In 2015, UB earned a “Military Friendly School” designation from Victory Media, an independent assessor. Our Office of Veterans Services provides assistance and support to returning veterans who are initiating or resuming an academic career. Services and support include assistance with educational benefits and a UB Veterans’ Lounge for group studying, socializing and relaxing.

**Staff-Oriented Initiatives:**

- **Professional Staff Senate**
  UB’s shared governance organizations have increased their focus on diversity and inclusion. The Professional Staff Senate has an active Diversity Committee that has sponsored social events and speakers on topics including Title IX/Sexual Assault, transgender issues, and disability-related issues (including accommodations and autistic students).

- **Pregnancy Accommodation**
  UB has been publicizing the availability of pregnancy accommodations to students, and has designated lactation rooms for staff.
• **Unlawful Harassment**
The university offers an online *Unlawful Harassment Prevention Training* for employees that can be mandated by unit managers and supervisors. About fifty percent of staff have had this training, primarily because managers and supervisors have mandated it. However, less than ten percent of faculty take this training. UB has recently adopted a new online training program that will replace the Unlawful Harassment Prevention training, and which will address not only harassment but also topics such as micro-aggressions, cultural competence and Title IX.

_Campus-Wide Initiatives:_

• **Accessible IT Working Group**
The *Accessible IT Working Group* was formed to develop policies and practices that will promote the accessibility of university websites, online courses, email communications, videos, and other electronic information. Efforts include an Accessibility Web Portal with information about how to procure and create accessible hardware and software, an accessible IT policy, and benchmarking university peers to determine best practices in IT accessibility.

• **Transgendered staff, faculty and students**
UB’s *Working Group for Transgender Inclusion* is currently examining and creating policies and practices to support the university’s transgender community. This includes the designation of all-gender facilities. Similarly, the university has been engaging in increased efforts to promote physical and electronic accessibility for students with sensory, mobility, and cognitive impairments.

• **Difficult Conversations**
UB’s *Difficult Conversations Series* develops the skills of faculty, staff and students to communicate about controversial and emotionally fueled topics while fostering norms of civil discourse. By acknowledging the tension between freedom of expression and the desire of our community members to feel included and welcomed, the DIFCON series fosters a culture in which UB community members can unpack and process diversity and inclusion crises – whether it is derogatory display by a student organization, or offensive graffiti targeting a specific population. The DIFCON series is an active, ongoing effort to build cultural competence university-wide.
VI. INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

**GOAL #1:** Create and sustain a welcoming climate in which all members of the UB community are valued, respected, and empowered to achieve to their highest potential.

**Strategies:**
1. Conduct a campus climate survey of faculty, staff, administrators and students to assess attitudes, behaviors and standards concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities and potential at UB
2. Engage the UB community in developing a statement of principles of community that is widely endorsed by all campus constituents and at all levels. Embed understanding and acceptance of the statement in faculty, staff and student orientations, trainings and convocations
3. Engage, foster and empower collaborative groups of faculty, staff and students to work in innovative ways to inspire change and promote dialogue on diversity and inclusion
4. Develop a communications strategy to ensure that the centrality of diversity and inclusion to UB’s mission is clear and messaged effectively
5. Promote the development and adoption of inclusive pedagogical strategies in the academic units

**GOAL #2:** Attract, retain, and graduate a diverse and culturally competent student body.

**Strategies:**
1. Strengthen pipeline programs, and create new ones where appropriate, to provide access to degree programs for groups that are systemically underrepresented, such as women in STEM fields and underrepresented minority students
2. Implement campus-wide holistic admission review consistent with our inclusive excellence mission and federal and state laws

**GOAL #3:** Recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and culturally competent faculty and staff.

**Strategies:**
1. Require all faculty and staff search committee members to be trained in reducing barriers to diversity in faculty or staff searches, including combatting implicit bias and using best practices
2. Create or join a Higher Education Recruitment Consortium to expand and diversify applicant pools and to facilitate the hiring of dual career couples
3. Enhance the culture of mentoring to more effectively support faculty and staff achievement and excellence at all levels
4. Develop toolkits for faculty and staff search committees with resources to assist them in conducting fair, unbiased searches that yield culturally competent hires
GOAL #4: Provide leadership and communicate commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence across all academic and administrative units.

Strategies:
(1) Integrate diversity and inclusive excellence goals, targets and benchmarks into the evaluation of senior academic leaders (including deans and department chairs) and administrative leaders alike, and reward success
(2) Establish an Inclusive Excellence Award Program for units and individuals making extraordinary contributions to inclusive excellence at UB
(3) Create a Diversity Leadership Workshop to develop and advance sophisticated leadership, problem-solving approaches and inquiry about diversity and inclusion at UB
(4) Develop a university statement on diversity, equity and inclusive excellence and prominently display it on UB’s website
(5) Encourage the broadening of Diversity Learning within the UB Curriculum to reflect diversity learning across the disciplines

GOAL #5: Collect, monitor and improve the reporting of data on UB’s progress toward inclusive excellence.

Strategies:
(1) Develop metrics such as an Inclusive Excellence Scorecard and a Dashboard of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Indicators to assess and monitor progress toward closing the gap between the ideal of inclusive excellence and the reality across the university
(2) Work with the UB Regional Institute and its partners to develop and refine racial equity measures for UB

GOAL #6: To provide the central motivating infrastructure needed to ensure that progress toward these strategic goals is monitored, UB will create an Inclusive Excellence Center to transform the culture and practices at UB through the promotion of access, equity and success; fostering of innovation; and processes of continuous evaluation and improvement.

Strategies:
(1) Appoint an Implementation Team to develop a comprehensive plan for an Inclusive Excellence Center
VII. INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE CENTER (PENDING)

A key principle of this strategic plan is that inclusive excellence belongs at the core of UB’s mission. As a world-class public research institution, we have a commitment to investigate and solve problems, address the greatest challenges of our time, engage our community, and transform lives. A second key principle is that responsibility for inclusive excellence rests in every office and individual at UB. An Inclusive Excellence Center would operationalize these two key principles by providing:

- A **structure** to ensure that UB’s many equity and inclusion resources are coordinated and linked
- A **process** by which UB’s progress toward achieving inclusive excellence is continuously assessed and improved

**THE IEC SHOULD CONSIST OF THE FOLLOWING COMPONENTS:**

**Steering Committee**
- composed of a diverse group of faculty, staff and students that includes members of the UB community charged with diversity and inclusion oversight (either administratively, or through committees or governance structures)
- responsible for coordinating communication between the various equity and inclusion offices and programs, and for serving on the subcommittees below

**Subcommittees**
- **Campus Climate and Culture** – charged with developing and administering a psychological and behavioral climate survey of all students, faculty and staff, monitoring and reporting the results, and translating findings into strategic recommendations to address any issues
- **Access and Equity** – charged with monitoring and making recommendations regarding enhancing compositional diversity (recruitment and retention), reducing barriers to participation, and achieving equitable success levels across groups, including faculty, students and staff
- **Curriculum and Professional Development** – charged with monitoring active engagement with diversity and inclusion in formal and informal curricula and in faculty and staff professional development programs, paying particular attention to the learning and development that comes from intercultural interaction and engagement
- **Accountability and Assessment** – charged with collecting and monitoring data on UB’s progress toward inclusive excellence, including producing an IEC annual report, as well as dashboards and other metrics
- **Leadership** – charged with developing diversity leadership and identifying pathways for the development of diverse academic and administrative leadership
Councils

- **Deans’ Advisory Council** – a group composed of decanal leaders and steering committee members that engages in an iterative process of identifying barriers to inclusive excellence, designing evidence-based solutions, benchmarking, goal-setting and monitoring progress toward goals and benchmarks, with the goal of achieving inclusive excellence in all aspects of UB’s academic operations.

- **Administrative Advisory Council** – a group composed of administrative leaders and steering committee members that engages in an iterative process of identifying barriers to inclusive excellence, designing evidence-based solutions, benchmarking, goal-setting and monitoring progress toward goals and benchmarks, with the goal of achieving inclusive excellence in all aspects of UB’s administrative operations.
CAMPUS CLIMATE SURVEY

UB has never had a uniform climate survey in which faculty, staff and students are asked the same questions, thereby making it possible to compare answers across these three distinct populations. Doing so would make it possible to draw meaningful conclusions from survey data without having to compare questions from widely varying survey instruments, such as the National Survey Student Engagement (NESSE), Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education (COACHE) Survey, and the SUNY Student Opinion Survey.

Comprehensive campus climate surveys administered by an outside firm are generally more trusted, and therefore more reliable.

IX. CONCLUDING STATEMENT (PENDING)