Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan

Submitted by:
Members of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (2016-2017)

Submitted to:
Dr. Belinda Miles
President, Westchester Community College
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Executive Summary** ................................................................................................................................................. 2

**Introduction** ................................................................................................................................................................. 3

- Definitions ................................................................................................................................................................. 3
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Vision and Mission Statements ................................................................. 4
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee: Composition and Responsibilities ........................................ 5

**Where are we Now: Current Campus Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment** ......................... 6

- Student Diversity ....................................................................................................................................................... 7
- Faculty Diversity ......................................................................................................................................................... 7
- Diversity Among Administrators/Managers/Staff ............................................................................................ 5
- Campus Culture .......................................................................................................................................................... 5
- Identifying Gaps in Educational Attainment ..................................................................................................... 5
- Summary ................................................................................................................................................................. 5

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Goals and Action Plan** .......................................................................................... 5

- Areas of Focus .......................................................................................................................................................... 5
- Strategic Goals, Action Plans and Timeline ....................................................................................................... 5
- Roles and Responsibilities: Assessment and Evaluation .................................................................................. 5
- Sharing the Vision: DEI Communication Plan .................................................................................................. 5
- Roles and Responsibilities: Assessment and Evaluation .................................................................................. 5

**Summative Statement** .................................................................................................................................................. 6
Introduction

Westchester Community College has an outstanding record of fostering an atmosphere of cultural diversity and its mission of the college focuses on providing accessible, high quality and affordable education to meet the needs of our diverse community. The college continues to attract students from diverse cultures, ethnic groups and socio-economic backgrounds. Being an inclusive community is integral to the college’s mission, and as the first SUNY institution to receive the federal designation of Hispanic Serving Institution (HIS), the conversations around accessibility, inclusion, cultural competency and civic engagement have permeated dialogues across campus.

Following SUNY’s lead to establish a bold vision for becoming the most diverse and inclusive higher education system in the U.S., Westchester Community College has committed to the development and implementation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan that will draw upon collaboration from all stakeholders within the college community in order to identify diversity and inclusion gaps, propose solution, evaluate outcomes and promote transparent communication that can support a self-sustaining inclusive campus environment. The first step in this process took place during fall 2015 when the former Affirmative Action Committee was re-structured and expanded to form the Westchester Community College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEIC). Comprised of faculty, staff and administrators, the DEIC is fully representative of all segments of the college. In spring 2016, the committee received its charge from President Belinda Miles and began its work to advance the college’s mission of diversity, establish diversity goals, propose strategies for advancing diversity and inclusion, and propose action plans designed to weave the principles of diversity and inclusion into all aspects of college life. The design and implementation of the college’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan is the shared responsibility of the entire college community and will ultimately result in an improved educational environment for every student.
Definitions

The definitions presented below, framed within the college’s mission, provide common language and a foundation for the development of the specific mission, vision and strategic goals.

Diversity: Westchester Community College recognizes and values differences in age, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, political perspective, socioeconomic status, citizenship, military status, status as an individual with a disability and first-generation students which enrich our learning and working environment. It is the goal of the college to mirror the diversity of the communities in which we live and serve.

Equity: Westchester Community College fully embraces the core components of equity—fairness, impartiality and objectivity—in all areas of governance requiring decision-making, problem solving and dispute resolution. The college is committed to respect individuality, human dignity and equality.

Inclusion: Westchester Community College intentionally strives to foster a culture that affords an opportunity for all constituents to contribute to the overall success of the college. A climate of openness, trust, engagement and celebration of differences lies at the core of WCC.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Vision and Mission Statement

Vision: A campus community whose faculty, staff and administration, courses of study and co-curricular activities reflect and advocate local, national and international issues that mirror the college's core values of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Mission: To expand the potential of a broadly inclusive community of learners in an atmosphere of mutual respect, inclusiveness, acceptance, fundamental fairness and social justice.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Institutional Values (DRAFT)

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Values

- We recognize and respect differences in individuals, cultures, languages, political beliefs, and ideologies.
• We recognize that diversity of faculty and staff and the diversity of the student body are mutually reinforcing.
• We understand that diversity and inclusion go hand-in-hand
• We are ready to prepare our students to thrive in a diverse, global environment

Therefore, the college is committed to the following:

• Provide the highest quality educational experience that is fully representative of the college community’s diversity.
• Provide institutional leadership that integrates diversity, equity and inclusion in all aspects of the college’s operations and strategic goals.
• Fulfill relevant legal standards related to civil rights and affirmative action.
• Recognize the changing demographics of the student population and thus the importance of diversifying the faculty and other employee groups.
• Meet diversity needs through affirmative action and cultural competence.
• Provide equitable opportunity and access through innovative recruiting, professional development and education programs that enrich the total academic experience and enhance the quality of life.
• Support a culture that is free from prejudice, discrimination and hate campus-wide.
• Infuse multiculturalism, pluralism, and global awareness into the college’s educational curricula.

**Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee: Goals and Composition**

The College’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEI) members are representative of the campus community and are committed to carry out SUNY’s diversity vision through authentic engagement in a broad dialogue to create strategies that will help to diffuse equity and inclusion principles through creativity, innovation, civic engagement and cultural competency principles.

The figure below represents the current composition of the DEIC, with between 15 and 17 members.
The committee meets at least twice each semester, but additional meetings are added as needed to complete the work related to the college’s Diversity Strategic Plan. The members are dedicated to support this transformational through meaningful dialogues and responsive engagement. The DEIC goal statement is as follows: “The Committee provides coordination and evaluation of the college’s diversity, equity and inclusion activities; manages and tracks implementation of the Strategic Plan for Diversity and provides oversight to ensure implementation of the college’s affirmative action guidelines.” Responsibilities of the DEIC include the following:

- Identify, monitor and make recommendations on recruitment, retention and achievement strategies for students. Engage appropriate stakeholders.
- Develop and implement Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. Make recommendation to the Office of the President.
• Collaborate with all areas of the college in Programs and Activities aimed to meet the college’s diversity goals.
• Coordinate efforts to cultivate diversity and promote equity and inclusion. Design and implement communication plan to disseminate information related to college’s Diversity Strategic Plan.
• Members participate in search Committees as AA representatives.

Where are we now: Current Campus Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment

Student Body: The college’s student body represents a wide spectrum of cultures and ethnicities. Diversity among the student body has grown significantly and the college has the highest percentage of minority students, the highest percentage of Hispanic students and the second highest percentage of Black students in the State University of New York system. As of Fall 2015, 53.9% of the student population identified as Black or Hispanic and with an approximately 60% minority in our student body.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>655</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>2,693</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>2,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3,229</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>4,219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi Race</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1,028</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6,149</td>
<td>44.3%</td>
<td>4,270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Enrollment</td>
<td>13,893</td>
<td></td>
<td>12,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Minority</td>
<td>6,673</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>7,712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At a glance, it’s evident the demographics of the student body has significantly shifted during the past 6 years.
Strategic Goals (DRAFT)

Overarching theme A: Increase Diversity Among Faculty, staff and administrators.

The rationale for faculty diversity is as compelling as the arguments for student diversity, which also extend beyond the obvious reasons of equity. Faculty diversification contributes directly to educational quality. A lack of racial and ethnic diversity among our faculty makes it difficult to prepare students for an increasingly diverse world. Additionally, a faculty diversity representative of the student body contributes to a more congruent cultural environment that promotes and anchors key connections, particularly with students from underrepresented groups. Recognizing the value of diversity among the faculty and the status at the college, the goals below were developed.

Key Goals:

A.1. Increase diversity among teaching faculty by:

   I. Creating effective pathways between diverse adjunct faculty pool and full time faculty position.
   II. Creating diversity line for faculty in departments where critical needs are identified.
   III. Support faculty who want to attend and/or present at conferences of minority-specific network/discipline groups.
   IV. Improve the recruitment of diverse faculty by ensuring commitment to diversity through the search process.
   V. Engage in active outreach with discipline specific professional organizations, graduate degree granting colleges/universities and student or professional organizations that serve traditionally underserved groups to increase diversity of applicant pool.

Overarching theme B: Cultural Sensitivity and Competence

B.1. Increase visibility of inclusion, diversity and equity mission and vision and its relationship to the College’s overall mission and vision.

B.2. Develop and implement a communication plan that can support a shared understanding of inclusion, diversity and equity.
B.3. Develop a mutually respectful college climate with a sustainable process for resolving issues through open and transparent conversations among students/faculty/staff/administration.

B.4. Create a multicultural center (please see Appendix A).

B.5. Support faculty research and engagement related to diversity goals.

B.6. Connect all curricular, co-curricular activities to construct a holistic and intentional opportunity to advance the diversity, equity and inclusion goals of the College.

B.7. Develop and implement activities and programs designed to enhance the College climate for students, faculty and staff that are aligned with the College’s mission.
Appendix A: Multicultural Center

A campus multicultural center can serve as a focal point for activities and programming connected to this proposal. This facility provides solutions for several of the concerns discussed in the interviews. Two of the parameters defining student success are retention and completion. Student enrollment and retention rate hinge on whether a student finds a sense of inclusion and membership on campus (Patton 25). Multicultural centers at The Ohio State University and Lane Community College demonstrate outstanding models on large and small-scale multicultural centers respectively. Several learning outcomes have been gathered from these models.

Vision

- Promote student success through a cultural, academic and social framework in collaboration with college and community partners (lanec.edu)
- To facilitate the inclusive shared learning experiences of students where all can engage in dialogue, challenge barriers, and build collaborative relationships (multiculturalcenterosu.edu)

Learning Outcomes

- Understand the relationship and responsibility between self, others and the community
- Understand oppressive systems
- Exercise leadership in different cultural contexts
- Develop competency in navigating institutional systems
- Develop an honest and authentic sense of self
- Demonstrate cross cultural understanding and cultural competency (lanec.edu)

The Multicultural Center will provide a safe and comfortable space for students and faculty members to learn from each other and support one another. In the forward to Francisco Valdes’ anthology, Crossroads, Directions and a New Critical Race Theory, Charles R. Lawrence, III reflects about Bell Hooks’ discussion about the “radical dimension” of a home place.

“In hard times it is especially important to create home places: safe places among trusted friends to seek refuge and dress wounds of battle and places for hard conversations, where differences can be aired and strategy mapped, where we can struggle with and affirm one another.

The Multicultural Center will provide co-curricular activities, events and projects that can support assignments required by SUNY Gen Ed classes. As described by the SUNY DEI mandate, the Chief Diversity Officer will “work collaboratively with offices across campus including but not limited to, the offices of academic affairs, human resources, enrollment management, and admissions-to elevate inclusiveness and implement best practices related to diversity, equity and inclusion in such areas as the recruitment and retention of students and senior administrators, faculty and staff hires” (suny.edu). He or she will support the mission of the Multicultural Center and the efforts of these offices with their respective cultural competency programming.
The director of the Multicultural Center’s primary responsibility is for the development and coordination of outreach and awareness programs that promote multicultural education for the campus community. He or she serves the campus community by promoting unique programming that encourages cultural competency. These programs and projects will be coordinated with the required cross-culture coursework at WCC.

Possible Programs and Projects

- Month long cultural celebrations
- Social Justice Engagement Workshops
- Graduation Ceremony enrichment: distinct collars for 1st generation graduates and/or members of certain cultural clubs
- Cultural Competency campaign which include visiting guest speakers with associated campus-wide activities
- Public Deliberation and Civic engagement on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion
- Cultural Competency Certificate Program – students are required to attend various events hosted by the Multicultural Center and the Student Involvement Office, and participate in community service or internship related experiences; upon completion the certificate will appear on academic record and diploma.

Faculty Research and Engagement
Cultural Competency professional development in higher education is relatively new. Publications from respected organizations have presented best practices for this type of professional development, however no proven case studies were identified that match WCC profile. These suggestions reflect research from the resources mentioned above.

- Conduct a review of best practices in educational institutions and nonprofits (lanecc.edu)
- Identify assessment tool(s) to assist employees, departments, and the institution in determining their level of competency in each of the identified content areas (lanecc.edu)
- Develop a cultural competency professional development model with multimodal levels of competencies (e.g., foundational, intermediate, advanced) (lanecc.edu)
- With recognition of the intersectional nature of identity/identities, areas of focus will include: Race; Ethnicity; Culture; Language; Religion; Spirituality; Socio-Economic Background; Social Class; Gender; Sexual Orientation; Domestic Violence; Marital Status; Accessibility; Age; Ability; Mental Health; Veterans; Military Status; Understanding of Social Justice; Understanding of the Dynamics Related to Power, Privilege, and Oppression (lanecc.edu)
- Define learning outcomes for each level of competency on Social Justice and Inclusion report from College Student Educators International and Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (naspa.org)
- Establish a tracking system to record and monitor employee completion of cultural competency professional development (lanecc.edu)
- Make recommendations for the incorporation of a cultural competency requirement into all employee evaluations, reappointment and promotion applications (lanecc.edu)

Develop an evaluation component of professional development trainings and activities that includes soliciting feedback from student and employee groups as well as producing an annual report to the Board of Trustees and the larger College community (lanecc.edu)