

DIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT



Dear Students, Colleagues, and Friends of the Division of Student Affairs,

It gives me great pleasure to share the 2019-2022 Diversity Strategic Plan for the Division of Student Affairs. Areas of focus will include recruitment and retention, education and development, programming and services, and climate.

In fall 2018, we introduced a new diversity statement:

The Bowling Green State University Division of Student Affairs is committed to creating an atmosphere that celebrates diversity and respects all students, staff, and faculty. Each department strives to create programs and maintain spaces that respects and affirms the inherent dignity and value of all individuals, communities, and varying perspectives. Our aim is to help all members of our community reflect a personal awareness and understanding of intersecting identities, reciprocity, and feel a sense of belonging to our campus, region, the State of Ohio, and our world.

We strive to advocate for all students, especially for those who belong to underserved populations. We hold ourselves and each other accountable for challenging biases, norms, and privilege and for becoming multi-culturally competent professionals. We work toward a vision of a university, guided by the Division's Diversity Plan, where all individuals feel valued, engaged, and a sense of belonging to the university community.

Respectfully,

Thomas J. Gibson, Ed.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost
Division of Student Affairs

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

The following key terms are used throughout this document. Definitions are provided here in order to provide common language that all members of the Division can share as we move toward greater Social Justice and Inclusion competencies.

Diversity is the recognition of intersecting identities and social hierarchies, particularly related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, religion, and socio-economic status. The historical unequal distribution of power, privilege and resources, itself a mark of diversity, simultaneously impacts current experiences and future possibilities of individuals engaged in higher education in the United States (modified from BGSU Inclusion Network, 2012, as cited in Student Affairs Diversity Committee, 2014).

Belonging is “students’ perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group (e.g. campus community) or others on campus (e.g. faculty, peers)”. (Strayhorn, Terrell. (2012). College students' sense of belonging: A key to educational success for all students.)

Equity is the practice of ensuring that personal or social circumstances, such as protected class or intersecting identities, are not obstacles to achieving one’s potential. Equity is reflected in policies and processes which acknowledge that we live in a world where not all members are afforded the same resources, treatment, and opportunity, and works to remedy this fact (modified from Equity and Quality in Education, 2012).

Inclusion is the result of a successful alignment of diversity and equity. It is an active process that engages the community to cultivate an environment that sustains and affirms all members, particularly those from historically minoritized or minoritized groups. It is a commitment to distribute power and influence across hierarchies of differences and a willingness to act on this commitment.

Social Justice is “both a process and a goal” of realizing the “full and equal participation of all groups in [the University] that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. *Social justice* includes a vision of [the University] in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure” and which individuals are “able to develop their full capacities” while capable of “interacting democratically with others” from a position of empowerment and agency and “social responsibility toward and with others.”

ACPA/NASPA Social Justice and Inclusion Competency Area. “Social justice is defined as both a process and a goal that includes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create learning environments that foster equitable participation of all groups and seeks to address issues of oppression, privilege, and power. This competency involves student affairs educators who have a sense of their own agency and social responsibility that includes others, their community, and the larger global context. Student affairs educators may incorporate social justice and inclusion competencies into their practice through seeking to meet the needs of all groups, equitably distributing resources, raising social consciousness, and repairing past and current harms on campus communities.” (ACPA/NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Educators, 2015, p. 30).

A copy of this document and a corresponding rubric can be found at <https://www.naspa.org/constituent-groups/groups/professional-standards-division/resources>.

Climate, as defined by Dr. Susan Rankin, is “the current attitudes, behaviors and standards of faculty, staff, administrators and students concerning the level of respect for individual needs, abilities and potential” (<http://campusclimate.ucop.edu/what-is-campus-climate/index.html>). Respect is one of the most critical words in this description. It is not just the experience of individuals and groups on a campus; it is also the quality and extent of the interaction between those various groups and individuals that determines a healthy campus climate. Diversity and inclusion are extremely important aspects of campus climate.

Minoritized “signifies the social construction of underrepresentation and subordination in U.S. social institutions, including colleges and universities” (Harper, 2012, p. #9). For the purpose of Bowling Green State University’s Division of Student Affairs, minoritized is one word that can be used to describe students, faculty, and staff who hold one or more identities in social groups that are often systematically oppressed (e.g., people of color, LGBTQ+, disabled, non-Christian) (Vaccaro & Newman, 2016).

INTRODUCTION

In order to support Objectives 1 and 3 of the Focus on the Future Strategic Plan and our role within this “public university acting in the public interest and creating public good” (p. 2), the Division of Student Affairs makes a strong commitment to transformative actions intended to ensure all members of the campus community feel that they matter and experience a sense of belonging. Our actions will be a model for other divisions and units within BGSU as well as other peer institutions.

Objective 3 specifically calls for BGSU to “support all individuals to build a quality learning community that fosters diversity and inclusion, collaboration, creativity, and excellence.” To champion this objective, the Division of Student Affairs will prioritize the development of this community by providing premier services to marginalized and minoritized students.

To that end, the Division of Student Affairs will strive to:

1. Recruit and retain diverse staff
2. Develop and maintain Social Justice and Inclusion competencies in its workforce
3. Provide accessible and culturally targeted programs and services
4. Foster an inclusive campus climate

The Division of Student Affairs will commit to thorough and continual enhancement in all these areas by employing comprehensive data and assessment to inform and improve our practices. We are dedicated to meeting the changing needs of our students and community, and we will continue to help those we serve learn, grow, and contribute to the good of our global society.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Goal:

The Division will recruit employees who reflect BGSU's diverse student body. It prioritizes developing a culture in which minoritized employees are supported and grow professionally. To accomplish these goals, the Division and all of its offices, departments, and programs will implement intentional strategies to ensure that highly qualified staff with Social Justice and Inclusion competencies are recruited and retained.

Action Items:

1. Require Social Justice and Inclusion competencies in new Administrative Staff hires. Job requirements will include at least two of the ACPA/NASPA Social Justice and Inclusion competencies.
2. Develop and implement additional search committee training to reduce implicit bias, diversify candidate pools, and evaluate candidates fairly. All search committee members and department heads will be required to participate in this training within the last three years prior to a search.
3. Share the Division's Diversity Strategic Plan and related initiatives with applicants and current employees to highlight the Division's commitment to diversity and social justice
4. Provide career support and mentorship for staff from minoritized groups. This may include establishing identity-based affinity groups for Division staff, developing a formal mentorship program, and/or providing professional development support for members of minoritized groups.
5. Assess recruitment and retention strategies based on data and adjust strategies as necessary. Data will include the diversity of applicant pools to assess the impact of recruitment strategies (such as posting in particular publications). The Division will also conduct exit interviews to identify ways to improve retention.

EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Goal:

As guided by the ACPA/NASPA Competency Areas (see Key Terms and Definitions), the education and development of student affairs staff's Social Justice and Inclusion competencies broadly consists of two key areas: 1) establishing a baseline of knowledge, skills, and dispositions appropriate for all employees within each individual unit; and 2) providing staff with pathways for continued development and growth that allow our campus to meet the current and future needs of our student population.

Action Items:

1. Use baseline indicators of the Social Justice and Inclusion competency to help staff members assess their own level of awareness, knowledge, cultural sensitivity, and skills.
2. Establish and evaluate Social Justice and Inclusion competency goals for each staff member annually or biannually.
3. Provide effective education for supervisors to ensure Social Justice and Inclusion supervisory competencies.
4. Determine and communicate how staff evaluations in each unit will be tied to taking advantage of opportunities to attend unit, campus, local, state, or national conferences and workshop sessions that address diversity issues.
5. Ensure that Division of Student Affairs Professional Development efforts regularly have tracks focused on Social Justice and Inclusion competency at all employment levels (professional, graduate, and undergraduate).
6. Develop and execute assessment plans for the Division of Student Affairs and each of its units that measures progress and the effectiveness of staff education and developmental initiatives.

PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES

Goal:

The Division of Student Affairs works to provide programs and services that are accessible to a wide range of students and targeted to support underserved student groups. All programs and services should be designed with these aims in mind. To accomplish these goals, Student Affairs units will engage in ongoing assessment of these areas, make improvements to their programs and services to meet identified needs, and collaborate with others.

Action Items:

1. Engage in ongoing assessment to determine the reach and inclusivity of their services and programs. Assessment will include, as appropriate, usage data, evaluation of program content and format, and measures of effectiveness across demographic groups.
2. Improve content, format, design (e.g. universal), advertising, and other aspects of programs and services to increase inclusivity and participation. This includes developing effective programs that appeal to a wide variety of students, while also meeting the need for programs targeted to minoritized groups.
3. Collaborate with institutional units and groups, external partners, and students to build programs and services with a broader reach and wider appeal.

CLIMATE

Goal:

The Division of Student Affairs continues to improve campus climate. To this point, we will develop a three-year plan for continuous improvement in campus climate with regard to equity, diversity, and inclusion. This would be primarily assessed through 1) the reported satisfaction of all groups regarding the attitudes, behaviors, and standards of staff; and 2) the responsiveness of the campus and division when issues of bias, microaggressions, and other incidents occur.

Action Items:

1. Institute a Division of Student Affairs staff climate study to determine the level of reported satisfaction regarding the responsiveness of the campus and Division related to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
2. Develop and implement a communication plan for the University's efforts around building a more visible commitment to foster respect for equity, diversity, and inclusion on campus. Additionally, this communication plan would demonstrate a set of beliefs, values, and behaviors that we want members of our community to share.
3. Increase support for conferences, projects, and events focused upon diversity, equity, and inclusion to build a healthy organizational climate.
4. Provide effective training to ensure all staff are prepared to contribute to a culture of civility and mutual respect.
5. Expand services for students, especially around discrimination and minority stress.
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