

April 4, 2019

To: President John Williams

From: The President's Diversity Advisory Council

RE: Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives Progress Update

Building a diverse and inclusive college community for learning, living, and working at Muhlenberg is central to our institutional mission to “develop independent, critical thinkers...who are committed to understanding the diversity of human experience.” The commitment to diversity and inclusion as a critical focus of our work is formalized in a number of institutional documents that serve as the foundation for the College's goals and priorities. As stated in the College's mission statement: “The College is committed to providing an intellectually rigorous undergraduate education within the context of an inclusive and diverse campus; we strongly believe that diversity is essential to learning and to our success as a pluralistic community.” We, therefore, are providing this update to the community to both share the positive changes we have made in a number of areas since the last campus update was provided in 2017 and to invite your feedback as we turn our focus to the next set of priorities that will help us, as stated in the College's Diversity Strategic Plan, “to move substantially closer to the ideal of a diverse, inclusive, and just community.”

Brief History and Background

Formalizing an institutional commitment to diversity and inclusion at Muhlenberg grew from an initial grassroots effort by a number of student groups working with a small number of faculty and staff in 2013. This group, known as the Diversity Vanguard, proposed to then-College President Helm that the College create an Institutional Diversity Strategic Plan outlining specific recommendations, funding, and priorities for a five-year period. The College's first strategic plan for diversity was approved by the Board of Trustees in October, 2014 and covered the period between 2014-2019. A few years later, President Williams was appointed and began a strategic planning process for the college that resulted in diversity, equity, and inclusion listed as central to the academic strength of the College: “We believe Muhlenberg cannot achieve excellence across the institution without prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion in our campus community, in our curriculum and co-curriculum, and in our connections with local and global societies.” This plan was approved by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 2017.

The President's Diversity Advisory Council (PDAC)—a council comprised of faculty, staff, administrators, and students—was tasked with overseeing progress on the Diversity Strategic Plan. One of the major initiatives recommended within the plan was to work with an outside consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of all college policies and processes to determine if any are exclusionary or otherwise do not align with a diverse, inclusive, and equitable community. During the summer and fall of 2017, consultants from CREDO gathered college policies and processes geared toward students, enrollment, campus climate, human resources, curriculum, and administration for review and visited with upwards of 80 college community members

on campus in focus groups or one-on-one interviews for further discussion. CREDO submitted its final report to the college during the spring of 2018.

Progress Report

In the pages that follow, we have highlighted several initiatives that represent some of the work we have accomplished since the last update was provided to the community. The partial list includes recommendations that have been completed, as well as several that remain in progress or not yet addressed from the 2014 Diversity Strategic Plan, 2017 College Strategic Plan, and the 2018 CREDO report. If you are a member of the Muhlenberg community, you can access the [full CREDO report](#) online (accessible with your college login) and can access the Diversity Strategic Plan at <https://www.muhlenberg.edu/diversityatmuhlenberg/>.

Assessment and accountability—who is responsible for which recommendations and how we will know when a goal is met—is a critical aspect of any strategic planning recommendation. Although the responsibility for diversity and inclusion work is shared among all of us in the Muhlenberg community, we recognize the need to establish specific accountability for particular initiatives. Some of the work to identify particular offices or divisions as responsible for specific initiatives is complete, while it remains ongoing in other areas. If you have questions about any of the content of this report, or would like to know who you can talk to directly about a particular initiative, contact Dr. S. Brooke Vick, Associate Provost for Faculty and Diversity Initiatives (brookevick@muhlenberg.edu) and look for future invitations to share your feedback with the members of PDAC on campus, coming soon.

The initiatives highlighted below integrate recommendations originally advanced within the 2014 Diversity Strategic Plan, the 2017 College Strategic Plan, and the 2018 CREDO report.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Completed Initiatives

- Provide funding for inclusive pedagogy sessions for faculty and staff.
- Develop a regular review schedule of learning outcomes and effectiveness of Human Difference and Global Engagement courses (an integrative part of curriculum review).
- Develop and require online diversity training for all employees.

Incomplete Initiatives (* indicates in progress)

- Create summer faculty institutes on inclusive pedagogy.*

- Incorporate Intergroup Dialogue pedagogy into courses and programs across the institution.
- Provide stipends to support participation in MILA courses and Alternative Break programs for students otherwise unable to participate due to financial constraints.*
- Establish a multi-stage diversity education program for beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of participation.
- Establish benchmarks and awards for participation in diversity trainings and workshops.
- Pool one-time funding resources to establish project-based diversity grants that allow for interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty, staff, and students.

INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES & CULTURE

Completed Initiatives

- Provide one-time funding for a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of all college policies and processes to determine which are exclusionary, discriminatory, or supportive of unearned privilege.
- Update Hate/Bias policy with comprehensive Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy and Procedures to ensure equity and protection of all members of the Muhlenberg community.

Incomplete Initiatives (* indicates in progress)

- Establish a clear definition of and institutional commitment for inclusive excellence.
- Conduct a campus climate survey initiative that captures and addresses the experiences of underrepresented or minoritized faculty and staff.
- Establish and disseminate a glossary of diversity terms to be used across the institution.
- Hold senior leaders accountable for encouraging unit/divisional participation in trainings through establishment of participation benchmarks with availability for 100% of employees.
- Create a supplier/vendor diversity policy and appoint a college point person to oversee implementation.

- Increase opportunities for faculty and staff to come together to celebrate individual and College successes and to learn about the institution in multiple venues. *
- Develop a comprehensive philosophy and strategy around Restorative Practice for community building and harm repair campus-wide. *

STUDENT LIFE

Completed Initiatives

- Create early warning system to identify and support struggling students.
- Install gender-neutral bathroom signage and develop a reference map of gender-neutral bathroom locations on campus.
- Offer gender inclusive housing opportunities to first-year students.
- Revise the policy to allow a club or organization to be formed that has fewer than 10 current students under special circumstances.

Incomplete Initiatives (* indicates in progress)

- Prioritize funding for financial aid and develop strategies for supporting students who experience unexpected financial hardships and/or seek educational opportunities that have an associated cost. *
- Upgrade software and policies to make it easier for transgender students to change their names on IDs and in some College records. *
- Expand opportunities for and access to internships for students.*

STAFF AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Completed Initiatives

- Create the position of Associate Dean for Diversity Initiatives to ensure that diversity initiatives and progress toward diversity goals are both coordinated and regularly assessed (since upgraded and expanded to full time Associate Provost for Faculty and Diversity Initiatives position).
- Create the position of Assistant Director of Multicultural Life to support expanded programmatic initiatives related to diversity and multicultural life.

Incomplete Initiatives (* indicates in progress)

- Establish a comprehensive employee experience for adjunct faculty including orientation, professional development, and support.
- Include in every employee (faculty and staff) job description the expectation that employees will actively foster inclusion, justice, and social equity in their work; include assessment of personal efforts in these areas in annual performance appraisals. *

BUILDING A DIVERSE CAMPUS COMMUNITY

Completed Initiatives

- Create a comprehensive retention group that regularly evaluates retention and satisfaction data to prioritize short-term actions and inform long-term programs to support student success and retention.
- Create a Muhlenberg-Allentown Promise Program that will annually provide at least one full-tuition scholarship for a qualified student from the Allentown School District High Schools.
- Increase institutional presence for the equity advocates program for faculty and staff hiring. While serving as members of a search committee, equity advocates attend to inclusive and equitable recruitment and evaluation of candidates, assisting search committees in developing diverse applicant pools and avoiding biased decision making.
- Implement policies and training for search committee members to enhance recruitment of racially and ethnically diverse candidates.
- Expand Emerging Leaders program by adding a second cohort.

Incomplete Initiatives (* indicates in progress)

- Establish pathways to support faculty/staff affinity groups.
- Develop a policy to include the use and participation of equity advocates as part of the recruitment plan for all faculty and staff searches.*
- Clarify goals of the Emerging Leaders program.*

Our efforts to develop a diverse and inclusive campus community for all students, staff, and faculty have resulted in several positive changes and have helped us to identify additional priorities moving forward as we continue to grow our capacity and

commitment to this goal. We invite you to review the Diversity Strategic Plan and the full CREDO report, share your feedback, and join us in supporting and advancing the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Muhlenberg.

Respectfully submitted,

President's Diversity Advisory Council

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Robin Riley-Casey, Director of Multicultural Life

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Kristen Glass Perez, College Chaplain

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