

DIVERSITY EQUITY & INCLUSION

Strategic Overview

JULY/AUGUST 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Saint Joseph's University has made considerable progress toward the completion of a number of strategic diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) goals outlined in the current strategic plan and contained within the Draft Blueprint for Inclusive Excellence document and the information learned from the 2018 Institutional Climate Study.

As stated on the SJU website, these past efforts had two primary goals:

1. Gain knowledge about how faculty, staff and students currently perceive and experience the campus climate
2. Apply findings to inform current inclusion work, develop strategic priorities and create an Inclusive Excellence Blueprint for all areas of the institution

In the pages that follow, I outline recent achievements that were in progress before my February 2020 arrival at Saint Joseph's, as well as a strategic framework for building on our strong foundation into the future. This will be a living and evolving document that grows with the institution, as our DEI work is never done.

I invite all Hawks and Hawk supporters to join us in our journey to inclusive excellence by collectively increasing our cultural competency and racial literacy. As a Jesuit institution we set a high bar to be with and for others. Our University is committed to being a diverse and inclusive community, strengthened intellectually and socially by the range of knowledge, opinions, beliefs, political perspective, identities, and backgrounds of all of our constituents.

In unity and solidarity,

Nicole R. Stokes, Ph.D.

Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At Saint Joseph's, diversity, equity and inclusion is a focal point of the University's strategy and mission. Notably, the University has made significant strides in DEI in the last five years, and the following highlights are examples of initiatives completed in recent months.

- 1. Fall 2020 Launch of the Chosen Name Policy & Practice** – In partnership with the Trans-Inclusion Working Group, IT and the Provost's Office, SJU now has the ability for students, staff and faculty to select their chosen name that they wish to be addressed as and what pronouns they prefer on official documents and in official University systems. The IT improvements made during spring and summer 2020 will soon permit one-stop notification that will carry across multiple University systems automatically.
- 2. Refinement of the protocols and procedures for the Bias Activity Response Group (BARG)** in terms of clarifying the process for addressing and investigating allegations of bias activity and this entity's engagement with the Office of Public Safety and Student Life Division in outcomes reporting.
- 3. Refinement of the protocols and procedures of the Office of Community Standards** to ensure a fair and equitable process for adjudicating student conduct for all of our students.
- 4. Faculty DEI sessions to support and facilitate inclusive classroom conversations**, including discussion regarding the upcoming presidential election. Examples:
 - Teaching and Learning Forum. Title: *Creating and Sustaining Equity in the Online Classroom: Supporting and Empowering Diverse Learners* (May 14, 2020)
 - Office of Teaching and Learning Masterclass Series. Title: *How to Have and Facilitate Difficult Conversations in the Classroom (Introductory Concepts and Approaches)* (July 23, 2020)
 - Office of Teaching and Learning Masterclass Series. Title: *How to Have and Facilitate Difficult Conversations in the Classroom, Part II (Advanced Practice)* (August 6, 2020)
 - Office of Teaching and Learning Masterclass Series. Title: *Where is the line? Inclusivity, Academic Freedom and the Academe: Strategies for Navigating Seemingly Conflicting Concepts* (August 13, 2020)

This is a continuing series with additional sessions being planned.

- 5. Standardized DEI training for faculty and staff to ensure fair and equitable hiring** at the University. This ongoing training project is conducted in partnership with the Office of Human Resources and outlines clear strategies for drafting a position description that is inclusive and clear, diversifying the applicant pool and addressing implicit bias throughout the hiring process. Our recent search for the Director of Title IX and Equity Compliance is evident of these strategies. The search committee intentionally reached out to professional organizations that support diverse people currently employed in Title IX, student conduct and student affairs positions. These actions yielded a large, competitive and diverse pool of applicants for this position. Of the six qualified and impressive people chosen for first round interviews four of the six were diverse candidates and of the three finalists chosen, two of the three were diverse candidates.
- 6. DEI training for SJU faculty and administrative units** that is focused on skill development in how to practice inclusive excellence in their respective roles at the University. The goal is for this training to be in-depth and ongoing use of inclusive excellence practices in our daily work for all units at the University.

OUR PLANS FOR THIS ACADEMIC YEAR

While Saint Joseph's diversity, equity and inclusion work is wide-ranging, the following priorities have been identified for the 2020-2021 academic year.

1. 2020-2021 Diversity and Inclusion Lecture Series: Structural Inequality and Explorations of Our City: Philadelphia

Our development and participation in the [SJU Unlimited Learning Series](#) (in July 2020) exploring the structural inequalities in our city was intended as a first of many conversations that will hopefully lead us toward social change. The Diversity and Inclusion Lecture Series will focus on structural inequality, protests as a means for social change and civic engagement, including the following topics:

- **September 24th Kickoff** to the series will highlight Intersectional Allyship and Campus Activism with Amber Hikes, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). Hikes will inspire you to leverage the principles of the Student Senate #BeCivil campaign to strengthen your personal work as an ally to all of our communities. You'll leave with tools to be a better ally, resources to understand your role in community building, and a renewed commitment for justice.
- Interdisciplinary understandings of protest as a means for social change
- Athletics and protests
- Advocacy and agency in the digital age
- Understanding structural inequality in Philadelphia
- Philadelphia's initiatives in the LGBTQIA+ and Black Trans Lives Matter movement

Refer to the [University Calendar](#) for the latest event information.

2. **Day of Dialogue** is in the planning stages for February 2021. With the success of the inaugural event in February 2020, we plan to build upon the knowledge, skills and discourse about diversity, equity and inclusion on our campus and in our immediate community. There will be day and evening action-oriented sessions that provide practical, participatory and agency-building tools for inside and outside of the classroom for our University constituents. The event will close with an evening plenary with an external keynote speaker on a timely and critical DEI topic. Classes for the day and evening will be cancelled so that all students can participate in the events and discussions.

3. **Revised Policy on Student Demonstrations on Campus and Continued work on #BeCivil Campaign** – In partnership with the Student Life, the Provost's Office and Student Senate, we have revised our University policies for on-campus demonstrations to be student-friendly and to work in tandem with the Office of Public Safety, Division of Student Life and the office of the Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Our goal is to provide our students with an inclusive and effective means for expressing civic engagement while keeping our campus community and our neighborhood community safe. The new approach and policy was successfully implemented during the Walk of Solidarity, held on campus in June 2020, in support of protests against the killing of George Floyd.

4. **DEI and the Arts** – In partnership with the Art Department, we have made a significant investment toward diversifying the art programming by featuring diverse artists and genres and with the ultimate goal of diversifying the University art collection as a long-term investment strategy. The SJU Women's Center is using the donor gift of purchased artwork by Lavett Ballard of a mixed media painting called "Redbone" with an African American woman subject. Ballard is a prominent African American woman artist based in southern New Jersey who was recently featured in *Time Magazine*. She is exhibiting her art on campus in Merion Hall beginning August 31 through early September.

5. **Launch of new Climate Surveys** – The office of the Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will partner with Institutional Research to explore ongoing surveys to assess our culture. Best practices indicate that campus climate be assessed on a every two- to three-year basis.
6. **Development and Project Launch of DEI Staff and Faculty Training and Professional Development Portal Using Bridge**
The office of the Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will partner with the offices of IT and Human Resources to launch a new DEI-focused faculty and staff training portal using a new IT Platform called Bridge. This training platform will permit asynchronous DEI training and professional development content to be available 24/7 to our staff and faculty constituents. It will also assist the University in meeting our equity and compliance goals for training new and current faculty and staff (full and part- time).
7. **Development on the DEI Strategic Plan and Organizational Restructuring & Re-Visioning** – The office of the Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion will help shape and execute academic and co-curricular programming that supports the strategic initiatives of the office and the University. This includes an exploration of new advisory council structures that could enhance the University’s DEI strategy development and execution.

ONGOING PROJECTS AND PRIORITIES

Our DEI work can be seen in our recruitment strategies, research and fundraising and University relations. The following actions provide an overview of our holistic, multidisciplinary approach.

Developing pipeline for recruiting and retaining diverse students at SJU

We are committed to increasing diversity among our student body and retaining the diverse Hawks who are already a part of our community. In partnership with the University Advancement team and other campus colleagues, we are pursuing several funding opportunities in this regard.

- **St. Perpetua Scholarship** – Funding current students in the St. Perpetua Fund for Leadership Development Pipeline to diversifying on-campus student leadership.
- **DEI PTK Transfer Scholarship** – This would be a new funding initiative that would maximize the new block transfer credit initiative and would allow us to recruit academically prepared diverse transfer students from the area community colleges with active Phi Theta Kappa Chapters. This is a multi-pronged win in terms of adding to our DEI enrollment strategy, a key partnership area for SJU with the two-year college market. Three of the four area community colleges in the Philadelphia area are MSIs (Minority Serving Institutions) and drawing from this population will assist with increasing our DEI enrollment metrics in key programs.
- **DEI Leadership and Innovation Fund** – This would be a new initiative that would provide resources for further execution of our DEI strategic priorities. In addition, this funding would leverage our DEI enrollment strategy to recruit high-potential underrepresented student populations into a DEI focused leadership development and mentoring program for continued support and overall student success across all academic programs.

Increasing Research

Exploring DEI in a research setting is critical to our mission as an academic institution, and it enables us to advance learning in this field of study. To this end, we will regularly submit grant-based proposals. Recent examples include:

- Four-year grant in partnership with Menlo College (Atherton, Calif.) from the Institute of Education Sciences. Project Title: Emulating the Overachievers: Cultivating Success for Part-Time Transfer-In Students at Four-Year Colleges and Universities. Co-PI with Kristina Powers, Ph.D., director of institutional effectiveness, Menlo College (scheduled for Spring 2021)
- Three-year grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for the Women's Center, Haub School of Business and partnership with Adanu for Women's Leadership Development and Gender Equity Practices in Post Covid-19 economic recovery in Ghana. Co-PI with Morgan Bryant, Ph.D., assistant professor of marketing; Vana Zervanos, Ed.D., associate dean in the Haub School of Business; and Richard Yinkah, executive director of Adanu (submitted August 2020)
- Three-year grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for the Women's Center "SJU Food Urbanism Initiative" (submitted May 2020)

Enhancing Our University Relations

Our partnership with our external constituents, including our alumni, donors and neighbors, is critical to the success of our extended community. The following priorities have been identified and are in progress.

- Creation of a Diverse Alumni Council that will function as a subcommittee of the SJU National Alumni Board (NAB). The group will work in partnership with University Advancement and the office of the Associate Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to engage our diverse alumni to give back to SJU in time, talents and treasure in terms of mentoring, event planning and strategic visioning for long-term engagement with the University among our diverse graduates.
- Ongoing DEI support and training for our University Advancement Team to seek out and support inclusive excellence best practices in corporate and alumni giving efforts.
- Advancement has also committed to leveraging resources and support to fund the aforementioned student pipeline development initiatives.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To learn more, visit
[sju.edu/diversity-inclusion](https://www.sju.edu/diversity-inclusion).



