

Year One Planning Process Summary

Information was gathered from the Human Resources Database and open office hours held for staff. These included three wide-ranging discussions with groups of staff that explored diversity, equity, and inclusion, and several informal interviews. Team members reviewed information, analyzed data, and developed the 2016-17 diversity strategic plan based on what they learned from the sources.

Through the planning process, the 2015-16 team learned that staff members find it difficult to add meetings or other conversations to their calendars. (Schedules are highly responsive to unanticipated urgent needs.) Going forward, the Office of the Provost diversity planning team will work to create different kinds of opportunities to provide input into DEI activities. These include the planned survey and greater use of standing meetings. The 2016-17 diversity leads will consult colleagues in other units to learn about additional alternatives.

Year One Implementation Summary

Year one was a year of learning for the 2016-2017 DEI leads. The challenges that were identified during the planning process proved to be barriers to completing the planned action items. Time constraints for the leads made it difficult to develop extensive communication strategies and plan unit level events. Similarly, staff had difficulty finding time to participate in DEI related events and activities. The siloed approach to staff meetings was also identified as a barrier. Leadership and support staff meet separately and the DEI leads do not have access to leadership meetings. This made it difficult to engage all levels of the staff.

Given the many challenges, there were things that did work well. Having a small staff made it easy to communicate and encourage participation. The leads used this to their advantage by speaking face-to-face with each member of the staff to encourage attendance at the DEI Strategic Plan Launch event to encourage participation in the All Staff Climate Survey. This proved successful with approximately 60-70% staff attendance at the DEI Plan Launch and 82.3% participation in the All Staff Climate Survey. Hosting unit level events over the lunch hour also worked well, particularly with support staff. The DEI leads met with other DEI leads and joined the Fleming Building DEI Committee, which was established to collaborate, share best practices, and produce DEI events aimed at building community across units within the building. Because many of the leads on the Fleming DEI Committee are in units much like the Office of the Provost – small in size and staff centric – ideas shared within this group translate well and can be easily replicated.

Moving forward, the leads will focus on developing communication strategies that are consistent, effective, and that reach all levels of staff. Identifying a DEI champion within the leadership team that can carry information to leadership will also be a goal. Having support and buy-in from leadership will be critical. A new Provost will start in the fall of 2017. This is an opportunity to educate him about the Office of the Provost DEI Plan and outline how leadership can support the work of the DEI leads. Planning and creating a budget for 2017-18 unit level DEI events and activities will increase success and support from leadership.

Year Two Implementation Summary

In year one of implementation, we identified several challenges that impeded engagement of staff within our office. Primary to those challenges was the lack of a strong connection of leadership to the unit's DEI plan and related activities. Therefore, **in year two** we specifically focused on reaching out to leadership and stressing the importance of having their support and visibility connected to our DEI efforts. It was particularly important for leadership to encourage participation and engagement of senior level staff. Having two key leadership positions filled was key to activating leadership and developing deeper engagement. Although this was positive progress during year two, it happened late in the year given the timing of hiring. Despite this stalling of efforts in the early part of the year, the impact of leadership support was immediately evident and allowed us to gain great traction and momentum in the latter part of the year.

Engagement of senior level staff and time constraints for all staff continue to present some barriers. However, we are encouraged by having leadership at the table to brainstorm ideas for how to address these barriers and increase participation in DEI related events at the unit level and across campus.

The establishment of the Office of the Provost DEI newsletter has also given us another avenue to communicate with staff and create awareness about DEI events happening across campus and within our unit. Also, the establishment of weekly DEI lead touch base meetings and monthly touch base meetings with leadership creates dedicated time to review implemented progress, plan engagement activities, and develop ideas to address challenges and barriers.

Year two implementation had a slow start but is closing out very strong. We hope to carry this momentum forward for a stellar year three.

Year Three Implementation Summary

Year three of implementation was the first year we had the benefit of an entire year of structured meetings with leadership. We found this helpful in keeping leadership apprised of our progress and checking in on action items that are owned by leadership. Leadership support is necessary in moving forward on action items that require procedural/structural changes. It also continues to be a key factor in the engagement of staff at all levels.

In year three, we had three major focuses: 1) addressing findings in our unit climate survey results; 2) offering a wide array of DEI activities at a regular cadence; and 3) increasing participation in DEI activities, particularly with Vice Provosts and Associate/Assistant Vice Provost level staff. We were able to begin addressing our climate survey results and we more than doubled the number of DEI learning opportunities by offering or promoting a DEI event every month during the academic year. Overall, engagement is still a struggle; however, it was encouraging to have greater participation from the Associate/Assistant Vice Provosts and a slight increase in participation amongst all staff.

In our efforts to engage staff, we scheduled most events during the lunch hour, which has had some success in the past; we sent email "save-the-dates" and formal invitations with several

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follow-up reminders, and we scheduled some events during our senior leadership meeting times to increase the likelihood of their availability. While we did experience a slight increase in staff participation, there is still opportunity for improvement.

To address the need for improving participation, we plan to focus year four on facilitating a deeper level of commitment by the Provost, Vice Provosts, Special Counsel to the Provost, and Chief of Staff/HR Director. There must be a paradigm shift in the prioritization and expectations connected to the DEI initiative in order to make meaningful changes to the culture within the Office of the Provost. That shift should begin with leadership.

Year Four Implementation Summary

Year four began with a focus on the need for improving engagement across all levels of staff, which was fostered and prioritized by the provost. Leadership addressed participation in DEI programming specifically with vice provost level staff. A clear expectation was communicated, setting the tone for engagement in year four.

Our engagement began positively with robust participation from provost office staff. However, early in the year, a number of circumstances derailed planned programming: a medical leave for the provost postponed a planned DEI themed retreat in November; in January, an acting and subsequently interim provost was named because of an investigation into allegations of sexual misconduct by the provost; and in March, the onslaught of the coronavirus across the country necessitated a state mandated stay-at-home order. This forced the cancellation of the rescheduled staff retreat and all other in-person training, programs and events, most notably a workshop on culture change developed by Organizational Learning specifically for the Office of the Provost.

These challenges inspired the development of *DEI ALIVE: Active Learning in (a) Virtual Environment*, which was intended to continue staff engagement with DEI related content and conversation. These sessions have proven to be a huge success, with an average of 30 participants in each session. The culture change workshop, *Creating the Climate We Desire*, was also presented virtually with a majority of the office participating. Both of these programs will continue and expand in year five with guest facilitators, the formation of internal working groups for culture change, and deeper collaboration with other units.

Recent events involving police brutality and the disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color have highlighted the need for dismantling systems of oppression. In year five, in addition to examining our office culture, we plan to interrogate the ways in which systemic racism may show up in the Office of the Provost, how we can address this and what it means to be anti-racist.

DEI 1.0 Reflections and Initial Priorities for DEI 2.0

- We need to ensure that our recruiting, hiring, and retention processes always include efforts to mitigate bias to attract a diverse talent pool and ultimately diversify our staff. Developing a diverse community requires serious attention to addressing issues related to social justice, systemic racism, sexism and classism. Examples of implementation include: a reimaged interview process that includes staff at all levels, requiring Unconscious Bias in Recruitment and Hiring and Behavioral Interview training for all staff.

- Continued work with Angela Benke and the Talent Acquisition Team for Interview Processes has taught us more about bias, both explicit and implicit. Also highlighted was the importance of a well-crafted position description, which can significantly broaden and diversify applicant pools.

- There is a need for more meaningful training in climate work, and clearer pathways to conflict resolution and difficult conversations for staff.

- It is important that we both continue to celebrate the opportunities for professional growth these positions provide, while also wrestling with the reality of turnover. We need to expand efforts to track both recruitment and retention.

- Standardized onboarding helps new staff become acclimated to our unit culture and feel a sense of belonging. Introduction of a mentoring program for new hires has been a great way to retain staff and should continue. For example: a standardized (living) onboarding document that is housed/available on our website, along with other resources for new and current staff.

- It would be useful to conduct a workload and pay equity study for our unit, and make the merit and equity review process more transparent for all staff.

- We are hopeful that the office will continue to offer flexible work arrangements for all staff, and be mindful to schedule DEI engagement opportunities for when most staff are in the office.

- Bringing staff together regularly helps to cultivate an inclusive climate and creates a space to have conversations about climate issues. During the COVID-19 Pandemic we were able to pivot to a learning platform that allowed us to keep our staff engaged around DEI-related topics (DEI ALIVE - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: Active Learning in a Virtual Environment).

- we will continue to offer DEI learning opportunities that cover a broad spectrum of diversity, equity & inclusion topics. People come to the table with different levels of comfort and we

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should create multiple mechanisms that allow staff to contribute in a way that feels comfortable to them.

- Naming leadership (Provost, Vice Provosts, Chief of Staff & Special Counsel) as champions of DEI is key, as leadership should be present at engagement opportunities and encourage staff participation. Collaboration with other units within university administration will also be beneficial.

- Having a more collective approach to the responsibility of advancing DEI in our unit (e.g. a broader DEI committee, apart from the DEI Leads) is important. Make sure we allow staff to fully participate in the development, revising, and implementation of our DEI plan; we want everyone to feel like this is *their* DEI plan.

- DEI engagement/event planning process must include properly vetting speakers and partnering with relevant experts, including individuals from marginalized communities, especially when we plan to host engagement opportunities about that community. We must be sure we are offering a broad swath of topics related to DEI to engage all interests of our staff.

- We plan to ensure representation of all staff levels on office policy-making committees or initiatives put in place by the provost, and adopt a transparent and clear misconduct policy/process for internal reporting for all employees.

- We will create greater understanding around the significance of provost-initiated priorities, and acknowledge the far-reaching heft these initiatives have on our campus.

- We will continue to embed DEI into the processes and information that we provide in service to the campus community (e.g. new deans' orientation, the All Chairs meeting, the annual budget planning process, promotion & tenure, etc).

- As a unit, we will look for opportunities to participate in more service activities.