Planning Process for the
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Strategic Plan

2015-2016
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About

U-M President Mark Schlissel has made diversity, equity and inclusion a priority of his presidency. At an event in September 2015, he officially launched a campus-wide initiative to produce a five-year strategic plan to enhance diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the university.

The entire campus—almost 50 units, including the 19 schools and colleges and the health system—was engaged in the planning. Each unit was responsible for conducting an engaged planning process and developing a unit-specific strategic plan that covered its main constituencies (staff, students, faculty, etc.) and addressed the following areas:

- Recruitment, retention and development
- Education and scholarship
- An equitable, inclusive environment
- Service (as applicable to service units).

More than 250 individuals across campus served as planning leads, representing each of the university’s schools, colleges and campus units. The campus was divided into four planning areas—academic affairs, student life, other VP units, and the health system—headed by Robert Sellers, Jackie Simpson, Laurita Thomas and David Brown, respectively.

The planning timeline continued through Spring 2016. In June, unit plans were rolled up into a single, comprehensive document, to be unveiled in October. Over the course of the plan’s five-year implementation (2016-2021), units will continue to assess and refine their plans, report on progress and identify additional opportunities for improvement.

CHARGE TO THE COMMUNITY
Vision

The U-M Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Planning Initiative was a grassroots, “ground-up” effort, shaped by input from the entire campus community. Throughout the planning year, thousands of students, staff and faculty participated in more than 200 engagement events and activities, including the university’s first Diversity Summit. Opportunities to contribute ranged from hallway post-it note campaigns and in-person discussions with deans and other leaders as well as a variety of other formats, including focus groups, online forums, fireside chats, surveys, bulletin boards and committee meetings.

The engagement efforts also included the following campus-wide activities:

- More than 750 staff attended four town halls and two staff-focused Diversity Summit events
- Nearly 450 students participated in six town halls and 17 student life activities
- President Schlissel engaged 80 student leaders at a Diversity Summit town hall and held meetings with a variety of identity-based student organizations throughout the winter
- More than 2,500 members of the U-M community attended five public events at the Diversity Summit
- Nearly 1,000 ideas were contributed on comment cards, by email and through social media.

The feedback provided was used to inform the strategic planning process, both at the unit and university levels. A summary of the many feedback themes and ideas that emerged can be found in the Community Feedback section of this document. You can also hear members of the university offer their perspectives about how a more diverse, equitable and inclusive campus can be created by watching the videos below.

IMAGES OF SUCCESS IN 2025 AND BEYOND
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gW6wT-11Jns

FORGING THE PATH FROM HERE TO THERE
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTDQcs0dYE
History

The origins of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Planning Initiative date back to January 2014, when U-M Provost Martha Pollack established a committee on diversity, equity and inclusion to continue and expand the work begun by former President Mary Sue Coleman’s Diversity Blueprints Task Force. Pollack charged the committee with making recommendations to improve the campus climate, increase enrollment of underrepresented minorities and address issues surrounding the Trotter Multicultural Center.

The committee recommended, among other things, that the university conduct strategic planning around these issues.

Building on that foundation, President Mark Schlissel decided that addressing these issues would be a major focus of his presidency. He announced his intentions at a February 2015 breakfast gathering of faculty, staff, student and administrative leaders.

Responding to the president’s charge to move forward, a Diversity Executive Leadership Team (DELT) was established that April to oversee the strategic planning process and to develop the planning objectives, initial structure and timeline. DELT, in turn, convened a Diversity Working Group to centrally manage the planning initiative and to work with schools, colleges and campus units to identify local planning leads.

The campus-wide Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Planning Initiative was officially launched in September 9, 2015. More than 200 people joined President Schlissel on that day to celebrate the university’s past successes, envision its future and collectively set in motion the most comprehensive strategic planning effort ever undertaken at U-M.

The University of Michigan has had a fierce and longstanding commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. University leaders who have played a critical role in advancing diversity, and the plans that they developed, are detailed at the webpages listed below.

U-M DIVERSITY HISTORY
https://diversity.umich.edu/our-commitment/facts-history/

LEGAL HISTORY
https://diversity.umich.edu/our-commitment/legal-issues/
Community Feedback

From all across campus, members contributed their ideas, provided feedback and helped shape a vision for improving diversity, equity and inclusion at the University of Michigan.

Below are some key themes that emerged from campus-wide forums, including 10 staff and student town halls and a community assembly with President Schlissel. This input, along with other feedback collected throughout the planning process, was provided to unit planning leads across campus to inform the plans in U-M schools, colleges and units as well as the university’s overall Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Key Themes from/for Staff
- **Pay Equity and Financial Resources**
  Create a more equitable staff experience by closing the income gap between highest- and lowest-paid employees, offering free tuition to ensure that all staff advance, and providing other support such as child care and affordable housing.
- **Recruitment, Hiring and Retention**
  Conduct focused marketing to attract more diverse applicant pools, train managers on hiring practices, and provide continuous professional development and mentoring that nurtures career advancement for all.
- **Space and Facilities**
  Develop welcoming workspaces for all staff, including facilities that accommodate a full range of special needs, support the spectrum of gender identities and religious practices, and provide safe spaces for employee identity groups to meet.
- **Education and Training**
  Improve the university’s climate through mandatory and continuous cultural competency training for all staff and faculty, from new hires to senior leaders.
- **Accountability and Leadership**
  Embed diversity, equity and inclusion into all job descriptions and performance criteria and hold leaders across campus accountable for progress, including specific metrics of success.
- **Campus Engagement**
  Establish mechanisms to solicit ongoing feedback from staff on these issues, report on milestones and progress, and regularly celebrate diversity, equity and inclusion in meaningful ways.
Key Themes from/for Students

- **Campus Involvement**
  Celebrate diversity through campus events, discussions and other forums that visibly showcase U-M's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in meaningful ways.

- **Space and Facilities**
  Make spaces and facilities available and accessible to develop a more inclusive and equitable experience across campus.

- **Education and Training**
  Create a safer, more inclusive climate for students—on campus and in the classroom—by requiring diversity, equity and inclusion-specific training for all students, staff and faculty.

- **Resources**
  Develop financial aid resources that makes a U-M education available to more students and invest in support services that ensure all Wolverines are successful.

- **Recruitment and Retention**
  Implement effective strategies for recruiting and retaining a more diverse representation of students, staff and faculty.

What Does Success Look Like in 2025?

Many engagement activities ended with the question, “What Does Success Look Like in 2025?” Following is a sampling of the most-often-repeated answers.

- Our campus population reflects the racial diversity of our state, but our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion goes beyond racial diversity to include differences in gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, religious beliefs, age, (dis)ability status, size, personality types, political affiliation, ideas and opinions.

- There is an absence of fear on campus, and all are welcome to posit their thoughts and ideas, regardless of identities, backgrounds or beliefs.

- All university community members can afford to live in Ann Arbor, and students are not required to work full time in order to pay rent.

- We have maintained high standards for academic excellence, but all students have the resources and support they need to be successful and to feel included, paying particular attention to students from first-generation and low-income households, international students and undocumented students.

- Staff members are treated as equals by faculty and administrators, and their professional growth is encouraged; retention of faculty and staff of color is a priority; males and females are paid equally for the same work.

- Doing the right thing is not a volunteer role, but is built into performance evaluations for all faculty and staff.
How Do We Get There?
An additional question asked of engagement event attendees was “How Do We Get There?” Below are some of the themes and ideas that emerged.

- All university community members should be asked to take personal action and be accountable for our institutional commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Provide financial support in the form of scholarships, endowed chairs, funded summer internships, tuition waivers for employees and their children, and housing subsidies. We should consider special outreach to alumni to fund these kinds of programs.
- Pursue a variety of innovative student recruitment strategies.
- Reevaluate admissions standards and consider other factors besides GPA and test scores, and we should make special efforts to admit students from marginalized communities, including prisons.
- Consider using the support services provided to student athletes as a model for all students, and create programs that remove economic barriers and ensure all students can thrive.
- Provide more accommodations in physical spaces for community members with special needs and create a campus guide to related facilities and services so they are easily accessed.
- Provide training to all hiring managers on how to recruit and interview diverse candidates effectively, and diversity and inclusion should be embedded in all staff work plans.
- Consider offering additional resources for staff in the lowest salary brackets, including subsidized housing, childcare and professional development stipends and tuition waivers.
- Address classroom climate issues holistically, requiring that all students and faculty receive relevant training and we incorporate these issues into our teacher-training programs. We should also require cultural competency and diversity training for all staff, including frontline staff.
- Address issues of inequality among faculty, including re-evaluating tenure criteria and hiring practices, equalizing pay for male and female faculty, and increasing compensation and stature for faculty in certain fields.
- Recognize the differences between diversity, equity and inclusion and be sure to address them each individually, as well as collectively.
- Dedicate appropriate budget to these issues across the institution and take measures to coordinate all related services and initiatives across campus.
- Publicize accomplishments and accountabilities for strategic planning and implementation, but don’t make it all about quotas—find other ways to measure success. We should also acknowledge where we’ve failed to make progress.
- Address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in our Health System, including increasing and retaining racial diversity among nurses, and ensuring that women’s health is taken seriously.
Diversity Summit
Thousands of university community members participated in the first-ever U-M Diversity Summit, held November 4-13, 2015. The summit included a number of campus-wide events designed to stimulate conversation and ideas about diversity, equity and inclusion.

A centerpiece event was a community assembly with President Schlissel, emceed by Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist Clarence Page, at Rackham Auditorium. Prompted by two thought-provoking videos, the more than 1,300 attendees were asked to answer two questions: “What does success look like?” and “How Do We Get There?” Nearly 200 university staff, students and faculty offered suggestions and ideas at the microphones, on comment cards and online through the Be Heard social channel. (See comments in the Community Feedback section.)

Additional local events and activities were held across campus in schools, colleges and units. The entire university community was encouraged to participate in the planning process and help create U-M’s vision for the future.

Following the summit, President Schlissel reflected on the events and the university community’s involvement in the strategic planning process, and offered observations in his blog “On the Agenda” and also in a follow-up email to the student community.

REFLECTIONS ON U-M’S DIVERSITY HISTORY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGRDphTdY5A

LEADERSHIP, DIVERSITY & THE FUTURE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Xmcb45LD8g

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY ON DIVERSITY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtRDhYP7QNg
Planning Process for the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2015-2016

Timeline

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Planning-Year Timeline

PHASE I
Data Collection and Analysis
Sept-Dec 2015

PHASE II
Action Planning in the Schools, Colleges and Units
Jan-Mar 2016

PHASE III
Review and Refine Plans
Mar-April 2016

PHASE IV
Final Plans Submitted and Reviewed
May-June 2016

PHASE V
Plans Roll Up into U-M Plan
July-Aug 2016

PHASE VI
U-M DE&I Strategic Plan Announced and Year-One Implementation Begins
September 2016