Strategic Approach Toward Inclusive Excellence

Alexis D. Abernethy, PhD
Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity

In Consultation with the Diversity Council, Ethnic Centers, Faculty Senate, selected members of the Board of Trustees, Senior Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students

December 18, 2018
Updated and Fully Adopted March 15, 2019

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"The reason we need a variety of theological educators and a variety of thinkers from various backgrounds [is] because it represents God's creation" (Rev. Dr. Katie Cannon).

Introduction

The mission of Fuller Theological Seminary is an evangelical, *multidenominational*, *international*, and *multiethnic community* dedicated to the equipping of *men and women* for the *manifold* ministries of Christ and his Church. Fuller's vision is Forming *Global* Leaders for Kingdom Vocations. A focus on diversity is central to Fuller's stated mission and vision as noted by the italicized words in these statements. In Spring 2018, the Provost's Council, under the leadership of Provost Mari Clements, compiled a list of 169 objectives that were prioritized into four strategic categories:

- Recruit, retain, and resource excellent students
  - Increase diversity and academic rigor
- Serve our diverse student body better
  - Responsive in terms of language, race, and ethnicity
  - As well as online and geophysical
- Recruit, retain, and resource the faculty *for* the future
  - Strategic hires
  - Increasing diversity
  - Monitoring and evaluating
- Achieve reaccreditation with all three accreditors

Given the mission, vision, and strategic objectives of Fuller Theological Seminary, we have invaluable visionary starting points for addressing diversity, but more focused attention is required. In announcing the position of the Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity, President Mark Labberton noted that "Fuller Seminary recognizes that diversity, inclusion, and equity are educational, economic, and civic imperatives [that are] critical to achieving academic excellence. The values affirmed by this position are everyone's responsibility at the Seminary, but we also believe a new position that will lead strategic change and innovation is necessary."

In describing the position, he noted that the "Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity serves to foster transformational change so that the values and practices of diversity, inclusion, and equity are more fully integrated into the mission and life of the Seminary. In this role Dr. Abernethy will help us identify and address barriers to

inclusion and equity, advocate for faculty diversity through recruitment, retention, and development of faculty from underrepresented populations, and implement changes and offer resources for faculty so that syllabi content and teaching approaches will reflect a more culturally informed lens."

Fuller has made concerted efforts to address diversity issues, but these efforts have tended to be isolated initiatives rather than a more strategic approach. Isolated initiatives do not address issues such as compositional diversity (i.e., faculty, staff, and administrators), campus climate, students' multiple identities, curriculum transformation, and classroom and co-curricular practices as well as learning (Williams, Berger, & McClendon, 2005). In order to make sustained efforts toward transformational change, a comprehensive approach needs to be developed that involves the engagement of the entire seminary community (Williams et al., 2005). The Associate Provost in consultation with the Diversity Council, Assistant Provosts from the Ethnic Centers, Chair of the Faculty Senate, selected members of the Board of Trustees, Senior Administration, faculty, staff, and students have developed this strategic approach.

Key Definitions

"Making Excellence Inclusive is AAC&U's guiding principle for access, student success, and high-quality learning. It is designed to help colleges and universities integrate diversity, equity, and educational quality efforts into their missions and institutional operations" (Association of American Colleges & Universities).

Inclusion – "exists when traditionally marginalized individuals and groups feel a sense of belonging and are empowered" to shape and redefine the culture (Williams, 2013, p. 90). "The active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity—in the curriculum, in the co-curriculum, and in communities (intellectual, social, cultural, geographical) with which individuals might connect—in ways that increase awareness, content knowledge, cognitive sophistication, and empathic understanding of the complex ways individuals interact within systems and institutions" (Association of American Colleges & Universities).

Equity – "the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all students, faculty, and staff in every stage of [Fuller Theological Seminary] education and career development, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some [marginalized] groups" (UC Berkeley Strategic Plan for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, 2009).

Insights from Fuller Theological Seminary's Diversity Council

Another critical term to define is diversity. The following paragraph excerpts from a working document developed by the Language Committee of the Diversity Council are helpful in illuminating one approach to understanding diversity (May 15, 2018).

> **Introduction**. The "language" committee was tasked by the Diversity Council to identify and clarify the various ways in which the term "diversity" is used at Fuller, and if possible, to create a guideline to facilitate consistent usage of the term *within* the Diversity Council. The scope of this document is, therefore, limited to the specific task of supporting the work of the Diversity Council. While the complexity!) of the subject/word "diversity" makes the possibility of miscommunication more likely, the committee felt any attempt to simplify, reduce, or assign priority to a specific element of "diversity" would be counterproductive. For example, an emphasis on one element of diversity (e.g., race) could unintentionally diminish other equally important aspects of diversity (e.g., people with disability). Instead, the committee believes that the Diversity Council can minimize possible miscommunication in using the term "diversity" by differentiating between the various *elements* of diversity (e.g., age, gender, etc.) and the various ways in which "diversity" *impacts* Fuller as an organization.

> **Elements**. In general, the word "diversity" functions as an omnibus term including more and more elements every year. The problem with this term is that depending on the context and the participants, a different set of diversity elements are at stake. Depending on one's position and role within the institution, everyone has a particular entry point of reference for diversity. Thus, each player can have their own set of elements that they hold to be significant at each situation, leading to significant assumptions and subsequent misconnections and miscommunication.

> The following is a list of possible diversity elements at Fuller:

> - Nationality
> - Ethnicity
> - Culture
> - Race
> - Denomination or theological tradition
> - Language
> - Gender
> - Sexuality/LGBTQIA
> - Ability/Disability
> - Geographic Location
> - Online, Regional Campus or Pasadena Campus
> - Age
> - Socioeconomic
> - Position
> - Marital Status
> - School (SIS, SOP, SOT)

> Because of our societal and institutional history and demographic, there are not only various diversity elements but also normativities in each element that hold the position and power of being the standard.

For faculty members and academic programs, how the respective or related academic fields or guilds define diversity could serve as a norming paradigm, especially given that the formation of all academics occurs in these guilds and academic communities. For example, there might be tendencies such as these:

- School of Intercultural Studies towards nationalities
- School of Psychology towards ethnicity and culture
- School of Theology towards race

Diversity, then, can mean a multitude of things at Fuller depending on specific context and participants. Moreover, in these contexts, there are systemic and structural forces at work that enforce normativities.

Categories. In addition to having numerous elements, "diversity" also *impacts* Fuller in various ways. The following are three (broad) categories that can be helpful in recognizing the different ways that diversity impacts the Fuller community:
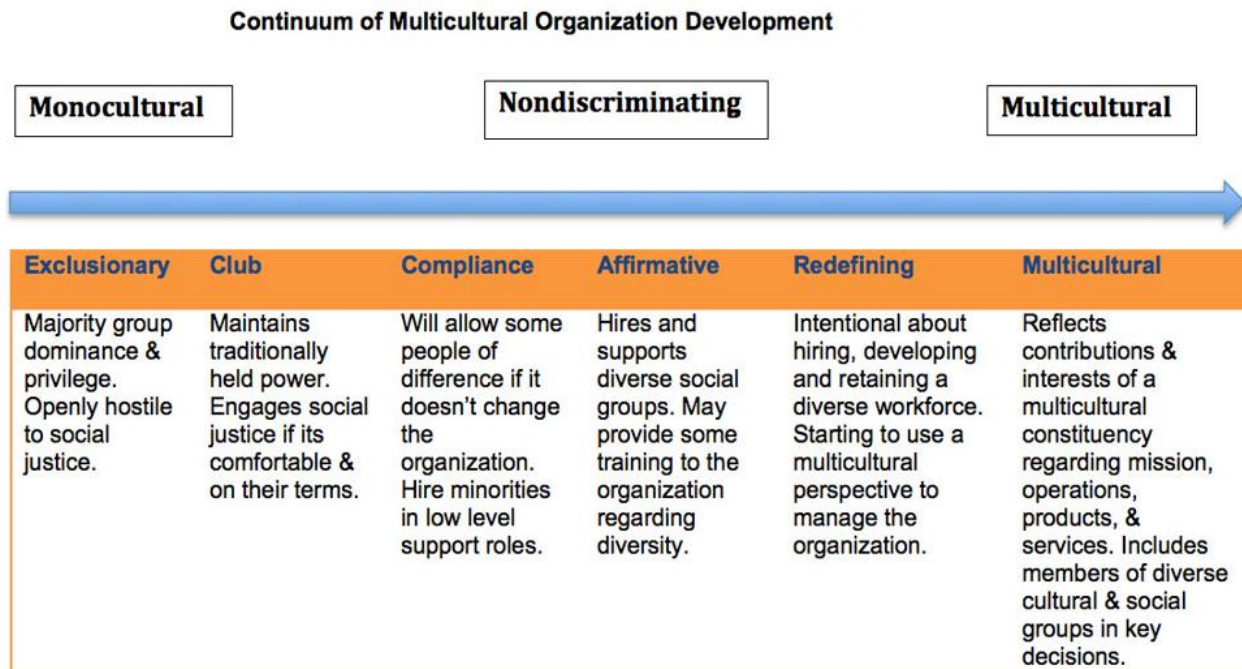
- Legal/Compliance
- Academic/Curricular
- Campus Culture/Organizational Identity

While these categories have distinctive traits, they are neither unique nor exclusive; many share common characteristic and can impact the institution in overlapping ways. Nevertheless, understanding that diversity impacts Fuller in different ways can help improve clarity in use of the term "diversity". For example, training that fulfills the "legal/compliance" aspect of diversity may not address curricular challenges; or diverse reading required for a core course may or may not impact campus culture.

Institutional Perspectives

A Fuller study (Lee, Shields, & Oh, 2008) was conducted to address pedagogy and campus climate issues related to educating a culturally diverse body of students. Survey and qualitative results indicated that pedagogical concerns were prevalent, but concerns related to the racial climate were most important. Specifically, some students noted that the seminary environment was experienced as dis-empowering. Models from the literature on developing multicultural organizations may illumine some of the students' concerns.

Holvino (2008) developed a Multicultural Organizational Development Model to depict an organization's progression from a monocultural to a multicultural institution. The figure below depicts this model.

Continuum of Multicultural Organization Development

Monocultural		Nondiscriminating		Multicultural	

Exclusionary	Club	Compliance	Affirmative	Redefining	Multicultural
Majority group dominance & privilege. Openly hostile to social justice.	Maintains traditionally held power. Engages social justice if its comfortable & on their terms.	Will allow some people of difference if it doesn't change the organization. Hire minorities in low level support roles.	Hires and supports diverse social groups. May provide some training to the organization regarding diversity.	Intentional about hiring, developing and retaining a diverse workforce. Starting to use a multicultural perspective to manage the organization.	Reflects contributions & interests of a multicultural constituency regarding mission, operations, products, & services. Includes members of diverse cultural & social groups in key decisions.

Cascante-Gómez (2008) adapted the MCOD to the MARED (Model for Advancing Racial/Ethnic Diversity) model in order to tailor this model to theological institutions and to include a specific focus on social justice.

MARED – ADAPTATION OF MCOD FOR THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS

▶ Four assumptions undergird MARED as a model for the advancement of racial/ethnic diversity in theological institutions.

▶ The first is that racial/ethnic diversity involves concern for both social inclusion and social justice. This concern demands attention simultaneously to issues of racial/ethnic representation and to issues related to "disparities" and/or discrimination. …

▶ The second assumption is that this model embraces diversity beyond race and ethnicity. ….

▶ Third, MARED assumes there are already conditions in most if not all theological institutions, as well as all their theological disciplines, to plant the seeds of multicultural diversity.

▶ Fourth and final assumption is the centrality of dialogue as a relational and transformational activity of individuals and groups with the goal of transforming the unequal and unjust realities of the world in which they live… (Cascante-Gómez, 2008, pp. 24-5)

The original MCOD model has four steps toward change: (1) identification of the change team, (2) determination of the readiness and campus climate, (3) institutional assessment, and (4) change planning and implementation. Cascante-Gómez (2008) added an important first step to the original MCOD model: *the generative event* (that normally takes place outside of the institution that may disrupt typical functioning).

Although these generative events occurred inside rather than outside of Fuller Seminary, a series of efforts dating back to January 2016, through the protest on June 5, 2018 to the present that were initiated by the Black Seminarian Council (BSC) and Racial Justice Initiative Coalition (RJIC) have served as critical generative events that have challenged Fuller Seminary to make more concerted steps toward greater diversity, inclusion, and equity. The set of concerns included the following:

- Provide institutional transparency on operations of power and process of implementation
- Hire (and retain) more Black faculty, faculty administrators, administrative staff, and non-administrative staff
- Create clear policies, protocols, and trainings that address racial harassment and discrimination (Titles VI & VII) and enforce institutional commitments to diversity
- Incorporate Black thought into Fuller's core academic curriculum
- Implement a functional system for institutional culture learning accountability
- Increase culture learning and racial harassment training among faculty and senior administrators
- Increase the diversity of Fuller's Board of Trustees
- Increase the number of Black students in doctoral programs and master's level programs
- Restore Associate Dean position for Pannell Center as a tenure track position

In addition to the BSC and RJIC concerns, a group of School of Psychology Students of African Descent prioritized the following concerns in June 2018 in hopes of a more "constructive dialogue that will result in a more inclusive vision and broader reach" for Fuller. They organized their most salient and pressing concerns into three domains: (1) syllabus/coursework, (2) faculty and interpersonal relationships, and (3) clinical training.

Strategic Approach

These concerns and other challenges are in varied stages of being addressed. There are many facets to this work including reviewing policies and procedures, leadership, and addressing other dimensions. A number of current efforts are already underway to provide more support for faculty, staff, and students. Some of these efforts have involved gatherings of groups of people in the discussion of books, presentations, and conversations related to race, etc. For example, the Diversity Council offered three book clubs this past spring that were well received. While there have been past and currents efforts to improve our multicultural climate, we have not adopted a strategic approach in these efforts.

A draft version of this Strategic Approach for Inclusive Excellence was presented on several occasions in Fall 2018 in an effort to achieve consensus and develop a strategic plan. This document outlines an institution-wide approach to addressing issues of inclusion and equity. This approach is informed by and fully consistent with the recommendations from the Diversity Audit. One way of understanding some of the challenges associated with sustaining change is explained by the figure below that depicts key considerations in Leading and Managing Complex Change (Knoster, 1991). Vision, consensus, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan are critical dimensions for effecting change. While progress has been made at Fuller in terms of equity and inclusion, there can be an overall sense of limited progress since there has not been a comprehensive action plan. Progress is made, but then these efforts are not sustained. Another insight from this model is the potential for sabotage if consensus is not achieved. To that end this strategic approach outlined below already reflects broad cooperation and offers a foundation for the development of future efforts to foster inclusion and equity.

Leading and Managing Complex Change

Vision +	Consensus +	Skills +	Incentives +	Resources +	Action Plan	= Change
	Consensus +	Skills +	Incentives +	Resources +	Action Plan	= Confusion
Vision +		Skills +	Incentives +	Resources +	Action Plan	= Sabotage
Vision +	Consensus +		Incentives +	Resources +	Action Plan	= Anxiety
Vision +	Consensus +	Skills +		Resources +	Action Plan	= Resistance
Vision +	Consensus +	Skills +	Incentives +		Action Plan	= Frustration
Vision +	Consensus +	Skills +	Incentives +	Resources +		= Treadmill

Adapted from Knoster, T. (1991) Presentation in TASH Conference. Washington, D.C.
Adapted by Knoster from Enterprise Group, Ltd.

In addition to understanding the challenges associated with complex change, approaches that help organize institutional efforts toward inclusion and equity are invaluable in the development of a strategic approach. Dr. Daryl Smith is a professor of education and psychology at Claremont Graduate University and has summarized 40 years of diversity research in her book, *Diversity's Promise for Higher Education*. Her model for identifying institutional indicators for change is based on this research. She identified four areas that need to be addressed (Smith, 2015): Climate and Intergroup Relations, Access and Success, Education and Scholarship, and Institutional Viability and Vitality. There are subcategories for each of these areas. Many models include similar concepts related to climate, student access, and education, but the extensive development of the institutional viability and vitality indicators is a significant contribution of this model.

(Smith, 2015)
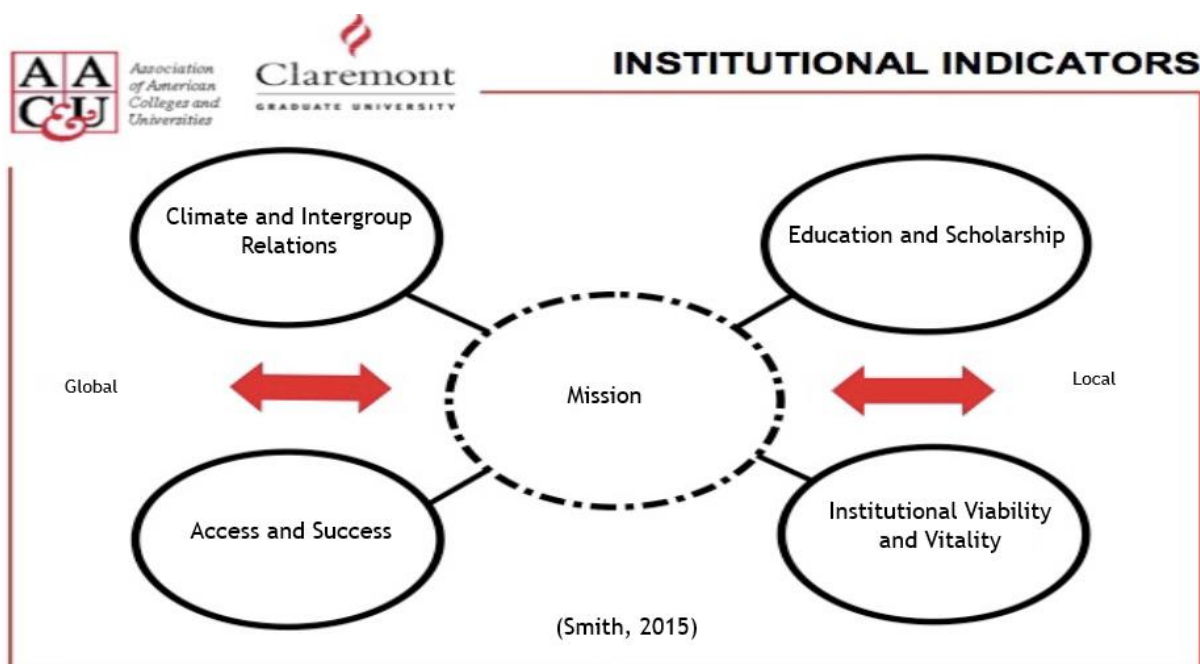
The following pages, Access and Success, Climate and Intergroup Relations, Education and Scholarship, and Institutional Viability and Vitality provide background and offer examples of specific goals and outcomes that are underway with several identified short-term outcomes. Additional strategic short-term and long-term goals and outcomes will need to be developed in this upcoming year.

Proposed Tasks – Access and Success – Student Focused

Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention – Develop strategic short-term and long-term goals and expected outcomes for student recruitment, admissions and retention – Admissions and Deans

Student Success – Identify barriers to inclusion and equity and develop short-term and long-term goals and expected outcomes

       General support and mentoring for students – Faculty and Advising

       Student Evaluation - Faculty

       Culturally Based Support – Ethnic Centers

Indicators - Identify quantitative and qualitative indicators of success and barriers for students of color and have this inform policy in 3 schools and IS courses – Submit key findings to the Diversity Council and incorporate insights for monthly conversations of the Associate Provost with the Deans

       OUTCOME – Identify key changes in policies or procedures that will address
       barriers for student success by 10/31/19

Fuller Leadership Platform and Fuller Studio - Increase cultural competence for outward facing FLP and Fuller Studio in collaboration with the Associate Provost and Ethnic Centers

       OUTCOME – Obtain feedback that offerings are more culturally responsive as
       compared to pretesting – 7/1/19
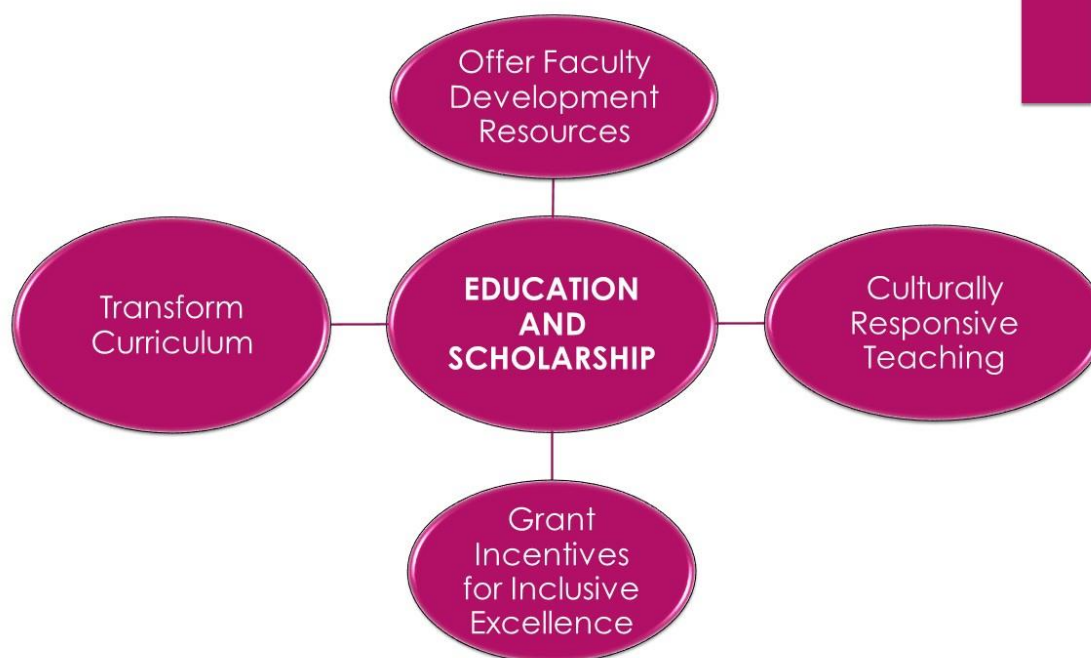
Proposed Tasks – Education and Scholarship – Faculty Focused

Offer IE (Inclusion and Equity) Faculty Development Resources – Associate Provost's office will compile resources
    OUTCOME – 50% of Faculty will report accessing resources by 7/1/19
Provide Culturally Responsive Teaching – Engaging content, engaging culturally diverse students and critical moments, IE Faculty Development Group (includes faculty members from the Diversity Council and the Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity) in collaboration with Deans
    OUTCOME – Faculty will report specific inclusive strategies that informed their teaching at the end of 2018-9 academic year evaluation
Grant Incentives for Inclusive Excellence – Associate Provost's office will offer small grants
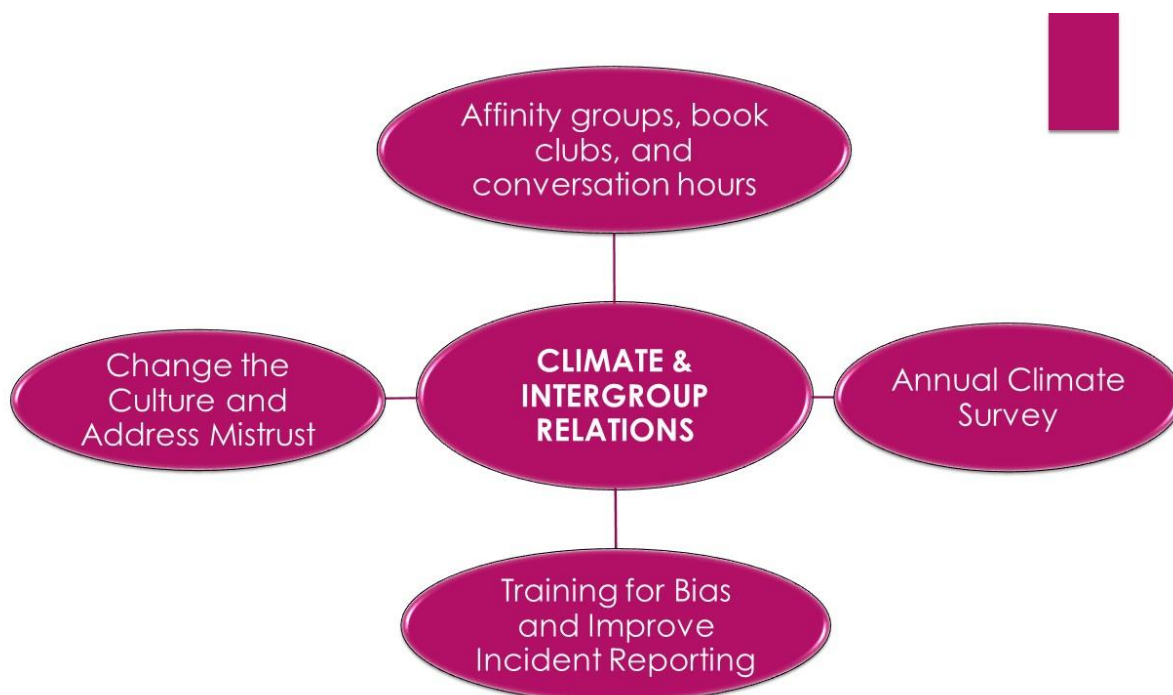   OUTCOME – Several faculty will receive grants and describe specific insights and strategies that will increase their ability to teach in a more inclusive and equitable way by 9/1/19
Transform Curriculum – Content integration and knowledge construction led by Deans and faculty with the support of the Associate Provost
    OUTCOME – Strategic discussion for course revision led by the Deans with the support of the Associate Provost within each school about short-term goals to be achieved by 7/1/19 and develop long-term goals

Faculty Development Group. In response to the concerns that have arisen related to past racially-laden incidents and other curricular concerns expressed by our students, the Faculty Senate has taken a lead in prioritizing opportunities for faculty development during this academic year. An IE Faculty Development Group that includes faculty members from the Diversity Council and the Associate Provost for Faculty Inclusion and Equity have planned four sessions during the 2018-9 Joint Faculty meetings: Fall Retreat, November, February, and May. During the Fall Retreat the focus was on orienting classes to a multiracial environment and encouraging conversations with faculty if concerns arose. The November Joint Faculty meeting focused on content integration and knowledge construction. The February Joint Faculty meeting will focus on understanding and addressing implicit bias. The May Joint Faculty meeting will focus on teaching and communication strategies that promote the equitable treatment of others. These principles are relevant to other areas of diversity such as ethnicity, gender, and disability, but the initial focus for this year is on race and the integration of Black scholarship (See the outline below for an overview).

- Approaches to Preparation
    - In order to achieve inclusive excellence, we must incorporate the following dimensions of multicultural education (Banks & Banks, 1995).
        - Content Integration – e.g., integrate Black scholarship and experiences in course content
        - Knowledge Construction
            - Create an opportunity for students to critically examine Black experience and Black thought
            - Consider the implicit cultural assumptions of the field and how key concepts need to be reconsidered
            - Decenter whiteness and reorient toward an approach that where Black thought and experiences are central to knowledge (Jennings, 2014; Morris, 2016)
        - Understanding and Addressing Implicit Bias
            - Understanding how professors' and students' racial attitudes affect the classroom environment
            - Insights for addressing the effects of implicit bias
        - Equity Pedagogy
            - Teaching strategies and classroom environments that help diverse groups acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to conflict resolution, justice, and fairness that promote the equitable treatment of others
                - Thoughtful review of and reflection on past incidents or misunderstandings that have been racially laden
                - Considering best practices in addressing these situations

Affinity groups, book clubs, and conversation hours

Change the Culture and Address Mistrust

CLIMATE & INTERGROUP RELATIONS

Annual Climate Survey

Training for Bias and Improve Incident Reporting

Proposed Tasks – Climate and Intergroup Relations

Small Groups – Affinity groups, book clubs, and conversations hours developed in consultation with the Associate Provost and Diversity Council
 OUTCOME – TBD by each group but outcomes expected to be related to increasing multicultural knowledge and improving multicultural relationships
Annual Climate Survey – Provost
 OUTCOME – Annual survey to be completed by 6/1/19 with annual progress expected on major indicators in subsequent years. More detailed outcomes TBD
Enhanced training for bias and improve incident reporting process – Office of Student Concerns
 OUTCOME – Revised incident reporting process and related training by 7/1/19
Culture Shift and Addressing Mistrust
 Experiential Learning Approach – IE Faculty Development Group
 OUTCOME – Increased sensitivity to interpersonal dimensions and faculty communications that enhance and impede trust as measured by self-reflection by the faculty during their year-end review by 7/15/19
 Addressing Student, Staff, and Faculty Concerns - Stronger collaboration and communication among the Office of Student Concerns, HR, Diversity Council, Assistant Provosts of the Ethnic Centers, Deans, Associate Provost, Provost, President and relevant offices
 OUTCOME – Students, faculty, and staff report improved relationships and progress toward goals in Climate Survey by 6/1/19 and annually
 Active Efforts to Change Culture and Address Issues of Distrust – Board of Trustees, President – develop short-term and long-term outcomes, TBD

Proposed Tasks – Institutional Viability and Vitality

Improve Quality of Incident Management – Office of Student Concerns
OUTCOME – Process for incident management clearly communicated by 4/1/19
Implement Fuller Institutional commitments for Racial Justice and Intercultural Life –
Faculty Senate & Diversity Council
OUTCOME – Diversity Council will coordinate the translation of Institutional
Commitment for Racial Justice and Intercultural Life into policy by 7/1/19
OUTCOME – Develop and adopt policy related to Title VI – Diversity Council and
Faculty Senate by 4/1/19
OUTCOME – Develop and adopt policy related to Title VII – HR and Faculty
Senate 7/15/19
OUTCOME – Develop an affirmative action plan – Fuller General Counsel and
HR by 6/1/19
Inclusion in Program Planning and Program Reviews – Diversity Council and Ethnic
Centers in consultation with the Associate Provost
OUTCOME – All offices develop 1-2 short-term strategies related to inclusion
and equity by 5/1/19
OUTCOME – Center and Institute reviews include a question related to cultural
diversity by 7/1/19
OUTCOME – All programs develop an approach for evaluating steps toward
inclusion and equity TBD
Adopt Fuller Strategic Approach – Associate Provost and all
OUTCOME – Fuller will incorporate Smith's model and Cascante-Gómez's
MARED emphasis on social justice by 3/15/19

Improve Public and Constituency Perceptions – President, Provost, Associate Provost, Communications and Marketing, President and Provost Councils

> OUTCOME – Improve public perceptions of Fuller in comparison to June 2018 by 12/15/19

Recruit, Retain, and Develop Diverse Faculty – Deans in consultation with the Associate Provost

> OUTCOME – Revise faculty hiring procedures to be more inclusive. Revise job descriptions, adopt nontraditional recruitment strategies, and reexamine screening process, the recruitment visit, and the interview process. For all faculty hires, include criteria of cultural competence, including awareness of and sensitivity to race and gender concerns, each as relevant to our diverse student body and the historical contexts of our fields by 4/15/19
>
> OUTCOME – Recruit one faculty member for the Pannell Center by 7/1/19
>
> OUTCOME – Remove barriers to inclusion so that recruitment efforts result in the hiring of a workforce that is an accurate reflection of the demographics of the qualified available workforce for schools of theology, psychology, and intercultural studies over the next five years
>
> *Mentoring & Development of Faculty* - Deans in consultation with the Associate Provost
>
>> OUTCOME – Deans will take a more active role in the mentoring and development of faculty, and this mentoring will be informed by attention to issues of inclusion and equity by 7/1/19
>
> *Promotion and Tenure Policies and Practices* – Faculty Senate and Associate Provost
>
>> OUTCOME – Promotion and tenure policies will be revised to more fully address issues of inclusion and equity by 11/1/19

Board Leadership – Board of Trustees, President

> OUTCOME – Increased diversity of the Board leadership that more accurately reflects the demographics of the Fuller community by 7/1/20

Increase Staff Diversity and Support – HR in consultation with the Diversity Council, Ethnic Centers, and the Associate Provost

> OUTCOME – Identify key offices at Fuller that will benefit from immediate support from the Diversity Council by 7/1/19
>
> OUTCOME – Develop a recruitment plan to attract more diverse staff by 7/15/19
>
> OUTCOME – Develop a supportive approach to increase retention for staff by 7/15/19

Summary of Selected Next Steps

The following next steps summarize some of the major emphases of this strategic approach.

- Encourage all offices to take strategic steps toward inclusion and equity
- All offices will accomplish one inclusion and equity goal by 9/15/19
- Enhance faculty, staff, and student recruitment plans
- Associate Provost will work with faculty in collaboration with the Diversity Council, Ethnic Center Directors, Deans, Provost, and President
  - Recruit, develop, and retain faculty from underrepresented groups
  - The IE Faculty Development Group will assist faculty in
    - Offering more inclusive content
    - Reimagining their discipline
    - Understanding and addressing implicit bias
    - Enhancing faculty members' capacity to communicate in an inclusive and equitable manner
- The President will work with the Board of Trustees to obtain a deeper commitment to inclusion and equity

As we seek to equip men and women for the manifold ministries of Christ, may we do so in a way that glorifies God and reflects the rich and diverse beauty of His creation. May Fuller Theological Seminary provide more fertile ground for His work.

Quarterly updates on Fuller's Strategic Approach to Inclusive Excellence will be provided in Spring, Fall, and Winter quarters.

Your comments and suggestions are invited. Please send comments to Sara Dwyer, Executive Assistant to the Provost, at saradwyer@fuller.edu with the subject line Response to Strategic Approach.

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