

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION: A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE



[REDACTED]

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AUDIT



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION: A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

Presented by IBIS Consulting

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[REDACTED] Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Audit

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Section V:

Leadership Accountability and Vision/Buy-in

As a university system, the leadership of the [REDACTED] serves many: it is governed by a Board of Curators appointed by the Governor and the state legislature, and by extension, the constituents of the state of [REDACTED]; it is accountable to the communities in which its various campuses are situated; and it strives to meet the hiring needs of organizations. Most of all, [REDACTED] serves the students — developing them intellectually and socially to take their positions as global citizens.

In the [REDACTED] System Administration Strategic Plan 2013-2018, one of the opening sections describes *Emerging Trends in Higher Education*. The first trend listed is as follows:

The need to differentiate to remain competitive: Over the next five years the number of students graduating high school in [REDACTED] and nationally is projected to decline, which increases the competition among institutions of higher education to recruit students. In addition, the demographics of the students will change with more high school graduates of Hispanic and Asian ethnicity and a higher percentage with lower socioeconomic status. In order to remain competitive, our campuses will need to differentiate themselves from other institutions by understanding these changes and by becoming and/or sustaining best-in-class performance in chosen areas that support growth in student recruitment and retention.

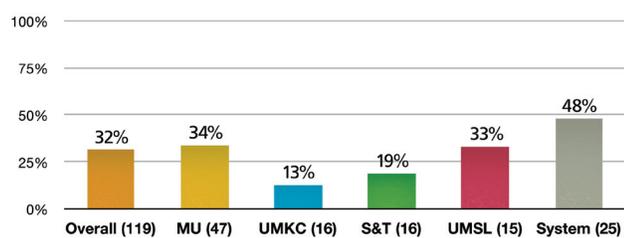
It is clear from this excerpt that the University knows the near future will bring more competition for fewer students, as well as demographic changes in the pool of potential applicants. It is also clear that the University knows its survival as a best-in-class institution of higher education depends on its ability to establish a learning environment that can attract and retain a diverse student body.

“[It’s time] for the campus to more directly align its mission, goals, and social actions with the communities it is a part of; see it as a responsibility for us to address and improve the challenges of families near us.” (POC-FAC, [REDACTED])

The commitment of the System’s leaders to own and drive DEI’s integration throughout the system is essential, as is the need for that leadership to develop a clear vision of what a fully accessible, equitable, and inclusive system will look like. Finally, the University’s leaders must be able to communicate that vision system-wide, inspire its constituents, and help build the scaffolding that will make that vision a reality.

WHILE MOST PEOPLE BELIEVE DEI IS CRITICAL TO THE CAMPUSES’ MISSION AND FUTURE SUCCESS, DEI IS NOT ADEQUATELY ANCHORED IN THEIR STRATEGIC PLANS

Department/Unit efforts to address DEI “Never” or “Intermittently” include a strategic plan addressing DEI specifically



92% of senior administration interviewed believe DEI is Important to their campus’ mission and future success. Approximately 80% of faculty and staff focus group participants, and nearly two-thirds of student participants also agreed on its importance. Yet despite their belief in the importance of DEI, less than one-third of Administrative Units reported “Never” or “Intermittently” making efforts to include a strategic plan addressing DEI specifically.

Among the most salient of IBIS’ findings was this: the System’s strategic plan needs a stronger, clearer vision of systemic DEI values and actions — and remain — the best-in-class institution of higher education to which it aspires. At present, the plan’s focus on DEI is cursory and superficial at best, lacking in specifics, and without a galvanizing vision. What is needed to turn the fleeting mention of DEI into a more robust and substantive plan are the following:

1. Real understanding on the part of the leadership of what DEI is, what it can bring to the University and academic communities, and why inadequate attention to it will be at the University’s peril;
2. The articulation of a clear, accessible, and transformative vision as part of the strategic plan, with goals that are stronger, broader, and more significant than mere numbers; and
3. Accountability, with people at all levels and in all parts of the system being held responsible for creating a working and learning environment in which everyone thrives.

“I’m not aware of a strategic vision for our university or workforce. There isn’t something we are all striving for. That would be helpful.”

(FC/W-M, [REDACTED])

“You don’t hear much about the System’s diversity and inclusion goals.”

(FC/W-NM, [REDACTED])

“We don’t know what the goals are; we need something to measure [ourselves against]. We need a strong vision for the culture you are trying to build. Accountability is nudging people along toward vision. Need more than a check for doing training.” (FC/W-M, [REDACTED])

“The school doesn’t really know what kind of a university it wants to be. What type of students do we want? Once we’re clearer, it will be easier to address inclusion issues; this can be an outstanding place for our community and our city. [We need a] clear definition of what we want to be as a university; stick to it and hold us to a standard.” (MPOC-M, [REDACTED])

A review of the System’s strategic plan made apparent to IBIS that though there is acknowledgement that the [REDACTED]’s constituencies are demographically varied, there is no indication that DEI is recognized as anything more or other than numbers on paper. Yet the information IBIS gathered through interviews, focus groups, and surveys indicates that the campus communities are hungry for DEI information, cross-cultural skills, connection across differences, and support in being inclusive and included.

Because the System’s strategic plan is the basis for determining institutional priorities and the allocation of resources, it is essential that DEI be more robustly called out, with DEI goals clearly defined and metrics more explicitly delineated.

When the leadership does not provide a clear vision, define specific goals, or enforce accountability across the entire system, each campus flounders. In such a leadership vacuum, members of the culture develop their own interpretations of their environment and culture; they enact their own vision. Needless to say, those multiple perceptions are neither cohesive nor unified enough to create consistent forward

momentum. Clarity of vision would do more than enrich the learning environment; given the current strategic plan's emphasis on streamlining resources and sharing best-practices to the fullest extent possible, it would also be fiscally responsible.

As it is, the campuses in the system differ widely in their awareness of and attentiveness to DEI. [REDACTED] in particular gets high marks; "Embrace Diversity" is in the *[REDACTED] Strategic Plan*¹; the campus also has a DEI strategic plan and has made numerous, sustained efforts to educate its various campus communities on DEI issues. There is also specific and clear reference to diversity in the *[REDACTED] Strategic Plan*² (Continually strengthen a diverse, safe, and inclusive campus culture).

**MANY UNIVERSITY LEADERS ARE PERCEIVED AS LACKING GENUINE
UNDERSTANDING OF ISSUES RELATED TO DEI**

"Leaders don't know the value proposition for DEI. They then just stand back, don't make the connection." (Sr. Leader, [REDACTED])

"I wish we could have more courage to discuss these issues and move beyond the fear of saying the wrong things. We need brave leaders who instill this mindset in their teams." (Sr. Admin., [REDACTED])

"A lot of our leaders want to continue the status quo. They don't see how systemic and institutionalized [racism] is." (POC-FAC, [REDACTED])

Across the system, the predominantly white male leadership was perceived to demonstrate limitations in their ability to connect with people in other demographics. Until the University's leaders genuinely understand that DEI is more than the presence of many different skin colors on campus, it will be impossible for them to develop a vision, much less commit to it. Multiple leaders across all four campuses were perceived as not having an awareness of the DEI issues experienced by the rest of their campus community, yet these same leaders are expected to take ownership and commit to resolving DEI-related issues. More often than not, organizational leaders are predominantly white and male; it is therefore incumbent on leadership to understand the limits that this can impose on the entire organization.

“A lack of diversity among our administration is a real issue.” (INTNL-FAC, [REDACTED])

“They should lead by example. They could do better. They aren’t against it but they aren’t proactive... Most of the administration look alike. [They] aren’t getting diverse perspective as [they] are having meetings.” (FC/W-M, [REDACTED])

This is not by any means intended to imply that the current Leadership should therefore step down. Rather, it is mentioned here to illustrate that because of its homogeneity, the University’s leaders must make an even greater effort to educate themselves about DEI, become aware of their own biases, understand the “business case” for DEI, learn how to identify and combat systemic bias, and develop the ability to appreciate others’ realities and experiences. These are foundational skills that will position them to better serve and support the system in its entirety.

MORE ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES MUST BE PUT IN PLACE TO BUILD A CULTURE THAT ENGAGES WITH AND VALUES DEI

Focus group and interview participants across the [REDACTED] perceive a lack of sufficient accountability among most university leaders. This perception became apparent when discussing strategic planning, accountability for DEI measures, and the university’s response to external social forces.

“There’s an old guard here that it’s going to be hard to change.” (Sr. Leader, [REDACTED])

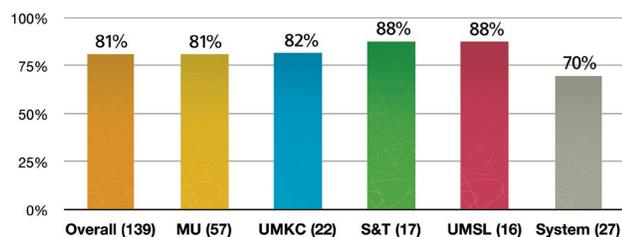
“We have a Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative that should be blown up and started over. No accountability for that. They haven’t provided the kind of leadership we need.” (Sr. Leader, [REDACTED])

“We are disrespected and patronized by this administration; talked down to; they don’t know us, have never been in the classroom.” (MC/W-FAC, [REDACTED])

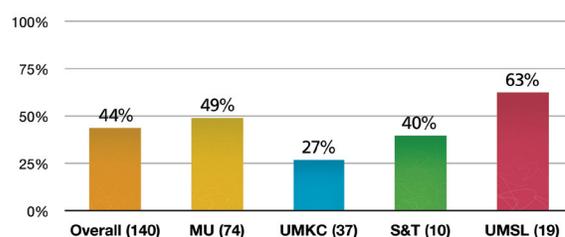
Connecting words and espoused values with clear and decisive action is a key indicator of accountability, and a gap between the two signals systemic dysfunction to stakeholders. While 81% of Administrative Units surveyed stated that leaders at the [REDACTED] affirm the value of all underrepresented staff members, a frequent concern in focus groups was that leaders don't follow up their verbal affirmation with real action.

“I’ve been involved in places [here] where there are bad managers, bad behaviors. The system does not have a way for them to be dealt with effectively.” (LGBT*Q, Sys)

In my Department/Unit we “Usually” or “Consistently” have leadership that affirms the value of all underrepresented staff members



In my Department/Unit we “Never” or “Intermittently” include metrics to gauge progress in a Department/Unit diversity plan



The perceived lack of accountability among leaders regarding DEI issues at the System level as well as the individual campuses is perhaps the most significant barrier to culture change at the [REDACTED]. 44% Academic Units reported “Never” or only “Intermittently” including metrics to gauge progress in a department/unit diversity plan. The Inclusive Excellence Change Model requires that DEI-related efforts be embraced by the Board of Curators, President, Provost, and other relevant senior administrators. Members of this senior leadership group must be committed to actively establishing inclusive excellence as an institutional priority and creating a sense of urgency for this work.

Focus group members expressed that this is felt so strongly that one [REDACTED] participant told us: “Certain behaviors among certain classes of employees are tolerated. Tenured faculty, senior administrators. People that work closely with the Chancellor. Eyes roll up as soon as diversity is mentioned. Not taken seriously. They say we don't have a problem” (FPOC-M, [REDACTED]).

“Culture change in academia is evolutionary; there is an old joke that change in higher education comes one death at a time.” (Sr. Leader, [REDACTED])

“We told them at the listening session: there are no consequences for administrators with bad behavior.” (POC-M, [REDACTED])

The dominant exclusion that many have experienced seems to have prevented dialogue that could lead to change, even among senior administrators, one of whom said: “I wish we could have more courage to discuss these issues and move beyond the fear of saying the wrong things. We need brave leaders who instill this mindset in their teams” (Sr. Leader, [REDACTED]).

At both [REDACTED] and within the system, perceptions arose that accountability was missing from the decision-making process as a whole and was often obscured within the shared governance model: “A lot of decisions are based on committees. Someone should make decisions and take accountability. We are really bad with shared governance... A lot of people are stifled in their offices” (FPOC-M, [REDACTED]).

“Faculty aren’t held accountable and are never disciplined.” (MC/W-M, [REDACTED])

“There are department chairs who haven’t had reviews in 15 years.” (INTNL-FAC, [REDACTED])

“The shared governance model is a barrier for every policy and program. You have to have a clear delineation between what the system and campuses are doing. Shared governance doesn’t allow people to take ownership of each piece. The projects that are successful are the ones where people actually take responsibility, and stay out of other’s areas, and are held accountable.” (FC/W-M, Sys)



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure DEI is integrated into all key aspects of the System's and Campuses' strategic plans, with accountability measures for the leadership and high level administrators, and metrics that include levels of engagement.

- Require DEI strategic plans for each CDO office.

- Have each department (academic and administrative) create specific DEI goals and plans tied to the strategic DEI plan for the campus.

- Provide in-depth trainings on DEI issues tailored for [REDACTED] leadership, including Board of Curators, with action plans, coaching, and mentorship groups between sessions.

- Conduct 360 degree evaluations of leaders with the most direct DEI-related responsibilities (e.g., CDO's, heads of Academic Affairs, etc.) to assess the amount of trust others have in them, the extent to which they are believed to be advancing DEI, and how effective they are perceived as being in their roles (Note: While it could be argued that ALL roles have DEI-related responsibilities, this refers to those roles responsible for making decisions about policies, programs, and procedures designed to improve the recruitment, retention, and development of members of the campus community).

- Create succession plans to build diversity on the leadership team over the course of the next decade; include recruitment and hiring of leaders from marginalized communities.

- Have Deans/Chairs prepare annual review documents that include assessing programmatic development in teaching; incentive structure; training and professional development offered and attended; DEI stats on acceptance, retention, and graduation rates of students of color; post-graduation opportunities offered and accepted; faculty/staff recruitment, hiring, and retention; outreach; research; and professional climate. The departmental plans should align with the overall college plan.

- Ensure leaders respond effectively and in a timely manner to all DEI related incidents that are brought to their attention. Integrate skills needed for addressing DEI related issues with the leadership competencies.

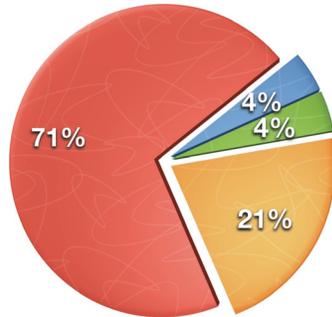
- Integrate DEI understanding, awareness, skills, and commitment in the performance evaluation procedures for leaders.

Websites and Resources:

1. [REDACTED]'s strategic plan
[https://www.\[REDACTED\].edu/provost/downloads/strategic-plan-web-brochure-10-29-09.pdf](https://www.[REDACTED].edu/provost/downloads/strategic-plan-web-brochure-10-29-09.pdf)
2. [REDACTED] Strategic Plan
[http://strategicplan.\[REDACTED\].edu/files/strategic-plan.pdf](http://strategicplan.[REDACTED].edu/files/strategic-plan.pdf)

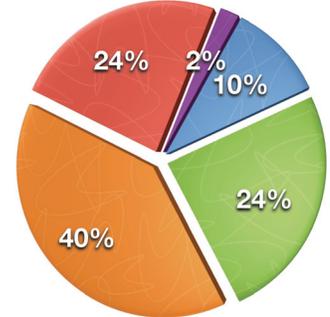
How important is DEI to your campus' mission and future success?

**Interview Responses-
Senior Admin., Dept.
Heads, and Staff**
(51 Responses)



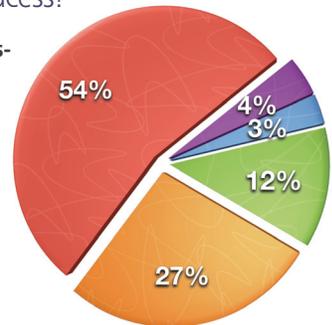
To what extent does DEI fit into the strategic plan at your campus?

**Interview Responses-
Senior Admin., Dept.
Heads, and Staff**
(51 Responses)



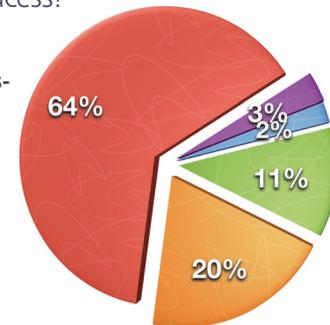
How important is DEI to [REDACTED]/your campus' mission and future success?

**Focus Group Responses-
Faculty**
(117 Responses)



How important is DEI to [REDACTED]/your campus' mission and future success?

**[REDACTED]
Focus Group Responses-
Staff**
(170 Responses)



How important is DEI to [REDACTED]/your campus' mission and future success?

**[REDACTED]
Focus Group
Responses-Students**
(82 Responses)

