President’s Report to the Board of Trustees

Diversity & Inclusion
Strategic Plan
Spring 2016

Celebrating the Past. Changing the Future.
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Message from the President

It is with great pleasure that I present this report to the Board of Trustees highlighting our efforts to increase and support the diversity of students and staff. I am committed to creating a learning and working environment where all students and employees feel welcome and appreciated for their contributions to our landscape of multiculturalism. Extensive social science research shows that there are substantial educational benefits that follow from diversity in higher education.

Student body diversity promotes learning outcomes, and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce and society. Workforce diversity increases creativity, productivity, and morale of employees. Together, student and workforce diversity serves to effectively unite our community.

An organization’s success and competiveness depends upon its ability to embrace diversity and realize the benefits from it. In keeping with our mission and vision, I am dedicated to the intellectual and economic enrichment of the diverse communities we serve and preparing our students to thrive in a dynamic, diverse and global environment. Our value of diversity and inclusiveness is at the forefront of everything we do.

Sincerely,

Dr. Beth Lewis
President
Executive Summary

In accordance with the College of the Mainland’s vision to be a valued and vital community partner by enriching our community and preparing our students to thrive in a diverse, dynamic and global environment, we are committed to diversity and inclusion efforts that enhance and capitalize on our divergent strengths.

Increasing multicultural awareness and cross-cultural competencies is a crucial part of our Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan. This plan sets forth our functional definition of diversity that refers to the exploration of our differences and similarities in a safe and positive environment through four existing dimensions:

1. representational diversity (demographics),
2. curricular and co-curricular transformation,
3. campus climate, and
4. institutional leadership commitment and accountability.

Viability and sustainability of our diversity and inclusion efforts are essential to our continued growth and success.

Additionally, this plan reviews the six stages of becoming a multicultural organization as defined by the Institute of Multicultural Development. Employees who were surveyed perceive COM as a “Redefining” organization, which is one that is committed to working toward an environment that goes beyond “managing diversity” to one that “values and capitalizes on diversity.” Our ultimate goal is to be perceived as a “Multicultural” organization that reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission, operations, and product or service; it includes the members of diverse cultural and social groups as full participants, especially in decisions that shape the organization. To achieve “multicultural” status, we will

1. Offer educational and training experiences to expand awareness, knowledge and cultural competencies.
2. Promote policies, practices and procedures that provide opportunities to increase minority representation of students, staff, faculty and administrators.
3. Provide internal resources to students and employees for informal alternative dispute resolutions as well as transparent formal venues for filing complaints or grievances relating to discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation.

Ultimately, the success of our attempts to make diversity and inclusion a critical part of our organization will depend upon leadership at all levels. While we have made good efforts toward our goals, we still have many opportunities for future success.
History of Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

College of the Mainland started its diversity efforts in 1989 when it developed a five year Affirmative Action Plan. The purpose of the Affirmative Action Plan was to formalize the continuing plan for providing equal employment opportunities for minority, female, handicapped, Vietnam era veteran and disabled veteran job applicants and to ensure appropriate utilization of the same.

In 1994, the College developed its Texas Educational Opportunity Plan for Public Higher Education. Also known as the 2000 Access and Equity Plan covering the period between September of 1994 – August of 2000, it was designed to increase the undergraduate rate of African American and Hispanic Students; continually increase the number and proportion of African American and Hispanic faculty, administrators and professional staff and increase the number of minorities and women on its governing board.

In 2004, the Office of Diversity and Equity was created. Lonica Bush was hired as the Executive Director of Diversity and Equity to provide leadership in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs essential to diversity efforts. A campus wide Diversity Council was established.

In 2006, College of the Mainland became an “Achieving the Dream” Institution. This is defined as a college “that engages in a process of institutional improvement and increased student success,” and has an effective process evaluation.

In 2010, College of the Mainland’s Board of Trustees won the 2010 Western Regional and National Equity Awards from the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). COM was nationally recognized for exemplary commitment in the areas of

- Diverse student population growth
- Maintaining an environment conducive to minority success
- Curriculum offerings
- Partnerships/articulation agreements
- Meeting the needs of diverse student populations
- Commitment to employing diverse staff
- Outreach to a diverse community
- Actively seeking diverse representation on governing boards, and
- Promoting underrepresented contracting and vendor participation.

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1 A multi-year, national initiative aimed at improving student success rates among students of color and first-generation college students.
In 2013, COM became an Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The HSI designation is awarded to colleges, universities, or systems/districts where total Hispanic enrollment constitutes a minimum of 25% of the total enrollment. Eligibility designation qualifies an institution of higher education to receive grants under the Title V of the Higher Education Act, as amended.

In 2015, The U.S. Department of Education awarded COM a Title V grant totaling $2.6 million over five years. The Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (DHSI) Program provides grants to assist an HSI in expanding educational opportunities for, and improving the attainment of, Hispanic students. These grants also enable an HSI to expand and enhance their academic offerings, program quality, and institutional stability.
Functional Definition of Diversity

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. Functionally, it means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing and appreciating our individual differences as well as our similarities. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs and other ideologies. Our functional definition of diversity is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual.
Multicultural Organizational Development

The Institute on Multicultural Organizational Development led by Dr. Bailey W. Jackson and Dr. Linda S. Marchesani of the University of Massachusetts – Amherst developed a model of six stages in becoming a multicultural organization. The six stages can be grouped into three broad categories:

- **Mono-cultural**
  - Stage One: Exclusionary
  - Stage Two: The Club

- **Non-discriminating**
  - Stage Three: Compliance
  - Stage Four: Affirmative Action

- **Multicultural**
  - Stage Five: Redefining
  - Stage Six: Multicultural

College of the Mainland surveyed approximately 100 Diversity Representatives\(^2\) to determine their perceptions of where they thought we were along the continuum of becoming a multicultural organization.

An overall majority of the Diversity Representatives thought that we were a “Redefining” organization characterized by being a system in transition. This type of organization is not satisfied with just being “non-oppressive.” It is committed to working toward an environment that goes beyond “managing diversity” to one that “values and capitalizes on diversity.”

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\(^2\) Diversity representatives are employees who volunteered to complete an eight hour Community of Respect cross-cultural competency training. To date there are approximately one hundred “Diversity Representatives.”
The following graph shows the perceptions of Diversity Representatives from 2009 – 2015:

1. The **Exclusionary Organization** is openly devoted to maintaining the majority group’s dominance.
2. The **Club** describes the organization that stops short of explicitly advocating anything like the “majority” group’s supremacy, but does seek to maintain the privileges for those who have traditionally held social power.
3. The **Compliance Organization** is committed to removing some of the discrimination inherent in the “Club” by providing access to members of social identity groups that were previously excluded. However, it seeks to accomplish this objective without disturbing the structure, mission and culture of the organization.
4. The **Affirmative Action Organization** is also committed to eliminating the discriminatory practices and inherent advantage given members of the “majority” group in the “Club” by actively recruiting and promoting members of those social groups typically denied access to the organization.
5. The **Redefining Organization** is a system in transition. This organization is not satisfied with just being “non-oppressive.” It is committed to working toward an environment that goes beyond “managing diversity” to one that “values and capitalizes on diversity.”
6. The **Multicultural Organization** reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission, operations, and product or service; it acts on a commitment to eradicate social oppression in all forms within the organization.
Four Dimensions of Campus Diversity and Inclusion

Many colleges and universities measure the effectiveness of their diversity initiatives in various ways. We choose to assess our initiative by examining four highly espoused dimensions of diversity and inclusion. While these dimensions are interrelated they are each distinct in their focus:

1. **Representational Diversity**: The degree to which the campus attracts, retains and develops students, faculty and staff of color;

2. **Curricular and Co-Curricular Transformation**: The extent to which principles of multiculturalism, pluralism, equity and diversity are currently incorporated into the curriculum and co-curriculum, as well as ongoing efforts to further infuse them into the same;

3. **Campus Climate**: The degree to which the events, messages, symbols, values, etc., of the campus make it a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, faculty, staff, and members of the broader community; and

4. **Institutional Leadership and Commitment**: The clarity of expectations, investment of human and fiscal resources, and accountability as demonstrated through the words and actions of campus leadership at all levels.
Representational Diversity

Representational Diversity is the degree to which the campus attracts, retains and develops students, faculty and staff of color. The following charts show the demographic statistics based on race and gender between student and employee populations for 2005, 2010 and 2015.

2005

The following charts show that in 2005, Whites made up 57% of the student population and 68% of the employee population. Blacks made up 18% of students and 17% of employees. Hispanic students made up 19% of the population, while only 11% of full-time employees were Hispanic. Asians were 3% of the student population and 2% of the employee population. Among students only 3% were designated as Other and only 1% of employees were also so designated.

*Pie chart percentages are rounded.*
2010

In 2010, 50% of the total student population was White while 63% of all full-time employees were White. Blacks made up 19% of both student and employee populations. Hispanic students made-up 19% of the population while only 13% of employees were Hispanic. The Asian population represented 3% of both students and employees. Students designated as Other were 9% of the population while only 3% of employees were so designated.
2015

The charts below compare the percentage of students and full-time employees by race for 2015. While the student body was made up of 51% White students, White full-time employees represented 65%. Black students made up 19% of the student population but only 13% of full-time employees were Black. While 27% of the student body was Hispanic only 15% of full time employees were Hispanic. Percentages of the Asian population were much closer; Asians made up 3% of the student population and 4% of full time employees. Only 1% of students were classified as Other while 4% of the employee population was designated as Other.
The following charts compare student and employee populations according to gender in 2015. Men were 41% of students and 35% of the employees. Women made up 59% of the student population and 65% of the employee population.
The following chart shows the percentages of full time faculty by race in 2015. White were 74%, Hispanics and Blacks made up 8% respectively, Asians were 5% and 6% were classified as Other.
Comparing our faculty to other 2 year institutions in Texas for 2014, COM had 8% more White faculty, 1% more African American faculty, 6% less Hispanic faculty, equal percentages of Asian faculty at 4% and 3% less Other faculty. With respect to gender, COM had 4% fewer female faculty and 4% more male faculty.

2014 THECB Faculty Demographics
In 2015, 67% of administrative and professional staff were White, 13% were Black, 14% were Hispanic, 3% were Asian and 4% were Other.

Among classified staff in 2015, 54% were White, 18% were Black, 23% were Hispanic, 4% were Asian and 2% were Other.
Curricular and Co-Curricular Transformation

Curricular and Co-Curricular Transformation is the extent to which principles of multiculturalism, pluralism, equity and diversity are currently incorporated into the curriculum and co-curriculum, as well as ongoing efforts to further infuse them into the same. The following is a list of curricular and co-curricular programs that support this dimension:

**Study Abroad Program** has historically provided opportunities for students and employees to explore diverse cultures and languages by traveling abroad to places such as Japan, Canada and Oaxaca, Mexico. In an effort to make these experiences available to more students and to emphasize the academic content of study abroad, COM has joined with our Gulf Coast community college partners to form the Texas Gulf Coast International Education Consortium (TGCIE). The consortium was created to assist in developing collaborative study abroad and exchange programs and offers community colleges greater flexibility and more efficient use of limited resources. Study Abroad experiences are invaluable for cultural understanding, and they also prepare students with skills for future careers. By joining this consortium, COM will be able to offer a wider variety of study abroad learning opportunities to enhance the cultural competence of more Gulf Coast community college students.

**Curricular Focus on Cultural Competence** has been in evidence for many years. A faculty survey conducted by the Instructional Assessment Committee in 2006 revealed that 51% of full-time faculty emphasized multicultural issues in their instruction even if it wasn’t an explicit part of their curriculum. With a broad emphasis on multiculturalism through student life events and the instructional curriculum, it should stand to reason that our students are acquiring global perspectives and cultural competence. To assess student achievement in this area, COM uses not only classroom learning artifacts but also a standardized test, the Global Perspective Inventory (GPI). Results of GPI assessments reveal that COM students score substantially better than average for community college students with regard to all aspects of cultural competence measured by the GPI. In fact, our students perform better than students at four-year universities on this inventory in five of the six areas measured by the GPI. Finally, with the implementation of a new core curriculum in Fall 2014, COM emphasizes Social Responsibility as one of the core curriculum’s six Core Objectives. Students receive instruction across the curriculum in Social Responsibility, which the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board describes as including intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national and global communities. And as of this academic year, the workforce programs have adopted the general education Core Objectives, meaning that students in those programs are also receiving focused instruction in this area.
Community of Respect is an eight hour workshop offered to all employees on a voluntary basis. It is designed to improve inter-cultural competencies and provide hands-on strategies to assist participants in learning how to work more effectively with colleagues and students whose cultural backgrounds are different from their own. To date, we have trained over 100 employees who are now certified as Diversity Representatives. These Diversity Representatives serve on search committees to ensure that all applicants are given fair and equitable consideration no matter what their cultural background. The workshop includes three Modules:

- **Module I** is a self-awareness learning experience that explores the fact that everyone has cultural values. The main goal of Module I is for participants to identify their own culture and to gain an understanding of how the values of their culture influence how they understand the behavior of others.

- **Module II** introduces the participants to cross-cultural communication concepts and terminology that helps them gain an understanding of how individuals from different cultures communicate differently than those in the participants’ own cultures. Module II explores how these concepts are factors in the misunderstandings that often occur in cross-cultural relations.

- **Module III** involves the application of knowledge and skills learned in Modules I and II to real-life encounters in different contexts by examining case studies and exercises on intercultural conflict.

Online Training Courses are offered to all employees and are required to be completed within 30 days of hire and every two years after hire date. These courses include: 1) Diversity Benefits for Higher Education Employees; 2) Preventing Discrimination and Sexual Violence; 3) Discrimination and Harassment Prevention for Higher Education; and 4) interviewing.

1) **Diversity Benefits for Higher Education Employees:** This diversity training course discusses the business benefits of diversity in the workplace with guidelines on interacting with different personalities and cultures, and teaches employees to approach diverse people with inclusion and respect.

2) **Preventing Discrimination and Sexual Violence:** The Clery Act requires all higher education institutions to receive training on sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, and stalking. The course educates faculty/staff members about sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking, as well as how the college prohibits such offenses and employee responsibilities to respond.

3) **Discrimination and Harassment Prevention for Higher Education:** Chapter 21 of the Texas Labor code requires employment discrimination training for all state employees.

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3 The “Interviewing” course is required of all search committee members and hiring managers.
employees. This course goes beyond sexual harassment training to provide harassment training on other types of illegal harassment based on protected classes such as race, gender, national origin and disability.

4) **Interviewing:** This course includes an interactive 45-minute lesson which instructs hiring managers and search committee members on using interviewing strategically in order to discover the best job candidates in accordance with equal employment opportunity guidelines.

**Campus Climate**

Campus Climate is the degree to which the events, messages, symbols, values, etc., of the campus make it a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, faculty, staff, and members of the broader community;

**Multicultural Events** are facilitated by the Human Resources Department and are hosted throughout the academic year by the Multicultural Committee whose mission is to foster the awareness and appreciation of diversity, multiculturalism, and global interdependence for students, employees and the community. These events include:

1) Hispanic Heritage Month;
2) Native American Heritage Month;
3) Holidays Around the World;
4) Black History Month (combined with MLK Day);
5) Women’s History Month;
6) Asian American History Month;
7) Cinco De Mayo; and
8) Juneteenth

In addition to the multicultural events on campus, there are several student clubs, organizations and initiatives that students may participate in that support a welcoming campus climate for students of various cultural backgrounds:

- The **Japanese Culture Club** seeks to promote interest in and knowledge of all aspects of Japanese culture, specifically in Japanese media and literature. The goal is to encourage cultural awareness, challenge people’s social biases and acquaint members with the widespread effects of Japanese culture.
- The **Students for Christ Club** is an interdenominational organization open to both Christians and non-Christians, this club invites all who are interested to attend with open hearts and minds. It offers a time to slow down and pray for the campus, world and each other and encourages positive growth and fellowship among students.
• The **Organization of African American Culture (OAAC) Club** enhances the overall college experience of African American students so that they will achieve academically. The goals of the organization are to connect African American students with academic and professional resources/services; create a culture of success and empowerment among African American students; and improve the cultural and social awareness of African American students.

• The **Veterans Organization** ensures that veterans, active-duty personnel, reservists and their families receive all benefits entitled to them. This organization also provides readjustment resources and provides students and successful alumni a network for professional development.

• The **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) Club** strives to unite LGBT students by encouraging support, building awareness, advocating for students and providing a safe environment to discuss LGBT topics. Students are also given opportunities to build leadership and teamwork skills by planning workshops and working on community projects with other clubs.

• The **Hispanic Student Organization (HSO)** is a successor organization to the Dream Act Leadership Organization due to the legislative changes in the USA. The HSO aims to bring awareness about the Hispanic culture, history, and language to the college community through different cultural, educational, social, and political events and activities. Some of the activities that HSO sponsors include Spanish tutoring, Hispanic film and poetry events, Cinco de Mayo celebration, and Hispanic Heritage Month events. The HSO also focuses on the recruitment and success of students at College of the Mainland.

• The **Minority Males for Excellence Initiative (MM4E)** purpose is to increase retention, success, and completion for minority males on campus.

**Institutional Leadership and Commitment**

Institutional Leadership and Commitment involves the clarity of expectations, investment of human and fiscal resources, and accountability as demonstrated through the words and actions of campus leadership at all levels.

**Policies and Regulations**

There are several Board policies and Administrative regulations that clearly establish the expectations of leadership with respect to diversity and inclusion:

**DAA (Local)** The purpose of the College District’s equal employment opportunity policy is to reaffirm that the College District is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer and to ensure that all applicants are selected without regard for race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, sexual
orientation, genetic information, gender identity, or gender expression. In addition, in this policy the Board authorizes the annual development and implementation of an Affirmative Action Plan in accordance with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures.

**DC (Local) and (Regulation)** The local policy states that the College President or designee shall establish guidelines for advertising employment opportunities and posting notices of vacancies. These guidelines shall advance the Board’s commitment to equal opportunity employment and to recruiting well-qualified candidates. The regulation sets forth requirements for each search committee and hiring manager. For example, every search committee must have at least one Diversity Representative to serve on the committee. In addition, the candidate assessment form used by the committees and the hiring manager includes a section related to the candidates’ experience working in a diverse environment and with diverse students and staff.

**FA (Legal) and (Regulation)** The legal policy affirmatively states that an officer or employee of a political subdivision, including a college district, who is acting or purporting to act in an official capacity may not, because of the student’s race, religion, color, sex, or national origin, refuse to permit the person to participate in a program owned, operated, or managed by or on behalf of the political subdivision; refuse to grant a benefit to the person; or impose an unreasonable burden on the person. The purpose of the regulation is to establish that the College prohibits discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation and to set forth procedures by which such allegations shall be filed, investigated, and resolved.

**FFD (Local) and (Regulation)** The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, age, or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy and is prohibited. The regulation details information about student grievances involving allegations of discrimination, harassment and retaliation.

**Human and Fiscal Resources**

In terms of human and fiscal resources, COM’s leadership applied for and was awarded the Texas Association of School Board’s (TASB) Loss Prevention Grant in 2015 and applied those funds towards face to face equal employment opportunity training for
all full time employees facilitated by the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division. The mandatory training covered the following topics:

- Texas and Federal Laws
- Protected Classes
- Diversity, Non-Discrimination
- Sexual Harassment Definition and Prevention
- Retaliation
- Roles and Responsibilities of Employees and Supervisors
- Supportive Behaviors
- Equal Employment Opportunity Practical Exercises

Moreover, there is a dedicated professional position, Director of Diversity and Equity, in the Human Resources Department who is responsible for:

- Gathering, analyzing and reporting appropriate workforce statistics;
- Directing and coordinating College recruitment and selection efforts;
- Participating in career fairs, professional conferences and networking with other Diversity and HR professionals;
- Providing diversity sensitivity training to faculty and staff;
- Remaining current and ensuring compliance with appropriate federal, state, and local personnel policies and regulations; and
- Investigating and processing employee grievances involving allegations of discrimination.

The following graph shows the number of employee grievances filed during the 2012 - 2013 academic year to present. This represents an 87.5% decrease since 2012 - 2013.
Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

The following strategies have been developed to support the College’s vision to be a valued and vital community partner by enriching our community and preparing our students to thrive in a diverse, dynamic and global environment:

4. Offer educational and training experiences to expand awareness, knowledge and cultural competencies that aid in the understanding and management of institutional diversity.
5. Promote policies, practices and procedures that provide opportunities to increase minority representation of students, staff, faculty and administrators.
6. Provide internal resources to students and employees for informal alternative dispute resolutions as well as transparent formal venues for filing complaints or grievances relating to discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation.

Educational and Training Experiences

We will continue to offer educational and training experiences to promote an environment of multicultural understanding and inspire campus dialogue on diversity and inclusion. Specifically we will offer:

1) Two Community of Respect Workshops per academic year (Fall and Spring)
2) Seven to Eight Multicultural Committee Co-Curricular Events per academic year.
3) Online Training Courses to all new hires within 30 days of hire date and bi-annually after hire date plus three additional courses in the Fall of 2016:
   a) Americans with Disabilities Act and ADA Amendments Act for Higher Education
   b) FERPA for Higher Education
   c) Respect and Inclusion Series: Uncovering Implicit Bias
4) Develop and implement two Innovation and Inclusion Round Table Discussions or Focus Groups to better understand students’ and staff’s perceptions about our climate for diversity.

Increasing Minority Representation

We will continue to promote policies, practices and procedures that provide opportunities to increase minority representation of students, staff, faculty and administrators. In addition we will:

1) Partner with four Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Hispanic Serving Institutions in Texas to recruit highly qualified applicants to fill our vacant staff, faculty and administrator positions.
2) Advertise vacant positions in publications such as Diverse Issues in Higher Education and The Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education.
3) Continue to offer training to each search committee and hiring manager regarding equal employment opportunity guidelines.
4) Develop and implement an annual affirmative action plan.

**Alternative Dispute Resolutions**

We will continue to examine and revise our policies and procedures prohibiting discrimination, harassment and/or retaliation for both students and employees. There will continue to be zero tolerance for any conduct or behavior that discriminates against a student or employee based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, sex, age, veteran status, marital status or physical challenges. Additionally we will:

1) Apply for one to two Loss Prevention Grants from TASB focused on anti-discrimination practices and leadership styles for supervisors.
2) Train and certify two Human Resource Professional Staff members in Conflict Resolution and Mediation.
3) Obtain training and certification for Title IX Coordinators from the Association of Title IX Administrators.
4) Contract with “Final Eyes” Title IX investigation support and review services.

**Budget Implications**

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Conclusion

For over 25 years, COM has successfully engaged in various diversity and inclusion efforts. Our Spring 2016 Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan sets forth an action plan to further demonstrate our commitment to a safe, positive, and nurturing environment through four dimensions of campus diversity. As we prepare our students to thrive in a diverse, dynamic and global environment we are excited about our comprehensive, innovative and strategic focus on diversity and inclusion.