

Developing a Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence

Executive Summary

Introduction

In the 2018-2019 academic year, the Office for Campus Diversity led an effort to create the University's first Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence. Based on a nationally recognized model for equity and inclusion in higher education, the Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence was created through the guidance of the Diversity Advisory Council, with broad stakeholder engagement including students, faculty, staff, and community members.

In applying the Inclusive Excellence framework on an institutional level, the Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence focuses on five key dimensions – including 1) access and success, 2) education and development, 3) community engagement, 4) climate and intergroup relations, and 5) organizational infrastructure (see Figure 1 below). In each of the five dimensions, Diversity Advisory Committee members focused on identifying key objectives to advance campus-wide efforts to integrate diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives throughout the institution to advance the educational mission and align with the University's strategic plan.



Figure 1. Five Dimensions of the Inclusive Excellence Framework

In 2018, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette received the *INSIGHT Into Diversity* Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award for the first time. The HEED Award, open to all colleges and universities across the U.S. and Canada, measures an institution's level of achievement and intensity of commitment in regard to broadening diversity and inclusion on campus through initiatives, programs, and outreach; student recruitment, retention, and completion; and hiring practices for faculty and staff. Applications are comprehensive, covering all aspects of campus diversity and inclusion. One of the goals of the application process is to help institutions of higher education assess their diversity efforts in order to build on their success and improve. The University's successful application for the 2018 HEED Award served as an impetus for envisioning the next phase of institutional progress related to equity, diversity and inclusion work.

Diversity Advisory Council

The Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) served as the Strategic Planning Committee, guiding the development of the key objectives in the Inclusive Excellence Strategic Plan. A University Committee reporting directly to the President, the Diversity Advisory Council serves as a catalyst for change and an advocate for diversity and inclusion within the campus and surrounding community. The DAC provides support for programming, education and resources to University students, faculty, staff and community stakeholders. The DAC also supports the mission of the Office for Campus Diversity in cultivating an inclusive campus culture.

The Diversity Advisory Council consists of community and campus leaders who are committed to promoting the values of diversity and inclusion on the campus of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Membership on the DAC is reflective of the diversity within the campus community, based on a variety of characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, geographical region, religion and nationality.

Strategic Planning Methodology

In October 2018, the DAC met to begin the strategic planning process. After reviewing the Inclusive Excellence framework, each member of the DAC selected one of the five dimensions of the Inclusive Excellence framework on which to focus. These groups comprised five subcommittees of the larger DAC. Throughout the Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 semesters, members of the DAC engaged in a structured process for assessing the existing landscape; identifying leverage points and challenges; constructing the plan's key objectives, tasks and action steps; developing metrics to measure the achievement of the objectives over time; and finalizing/releasing the plan. The strategic planning methodology is outlined in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Strategic Planning Methodology

Timeline

The DAC met monthly from October 2018 to May 2019 to complete the strategic planning process. The Fall 2018 semester consisted of an introduction to the planning process, assessing the existing landscape, and identifying leverage points and challenges. The Spring 2019 semester consisted of setting objectives, tasks and action steps, developing metrics for assessment, and preparing the plan for approval and dissemination. The release of the finalized Strategic Plan for Inclusive Excellence is planned for Fall 2019. The strategic planning timeline is outlined in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3. Strategic Planning Timeline