Committee for 125.2 Equity and Inclusion Task Force

In order to fully realize our purpose of facilitating the common good, a mission to better the lives of the people in the region, as well as each of our values, a commitment to inclusion and equity in a diverse environment is essential to the success of East Tennessee State University. Living this commitment requires consistent focus, review, accountability, and adjustment in an open and transparent manner. This commitment will, at times, feel antithetical to "the way we've always done things" and change will be necessary. Building on a legacy of service, education, and research with near and far reaching impact on generations of people in this region for over 100 years, we look to keep the best of who we are and adapt as we are called to do when contexts and knowledge evolves. Recognizing that communities with diversity that foster equity and inclusion, are safer, healthier, more efficient and effective, innovative, and overall successful in living their values and achieving their mission, ETSU is committed to this work and holding of inevitable tensions of change, growth, and difference with humility, courage, and empathy, as we enter the next decade poised to better *all* of the lives of the people in the region and beyond.

Summary of themes emerging from our work – What the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion means:

- Institutional commitment, policy, practices and accountability for all. Everyone is responsible (Institutional Commitment)

- Climate and culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion equals belongingness (Climate)

- Diversity representation in the pipeline, recruitment, retention, and success of our people (Diversity)

- Diversity, equity and inclusion embedded in the work of the university throughout teaching, research, service, and training (Embedded)

Definitions developed to guide our work

- Diversity- A set of conscious practices that focus on encompassing all the ways in which people differ and the characteristics that make one individual or group different from another.

    - Include but not limited to: race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/express, religion, age, ability, veteran's status, genetic information, income status, etc.

- Equity - Equitable actions bridge and bind the concepts of equality, fairness, and justice, in that such actions assure that what is needed for equality to be realized, for fairness to be the standard of action, and justice to be given, circumstances should inform the application of these things.

- Inclusion - All members have a voice, have the opportunity to fully participate in the campus community, and are valued for their differences

- Belonging- An organization that engages full potential of an individual. where innovation thrives, and views, beliefs, and values are integrated

Strategic Academic Vision:

- East Tennessee State University will be a place where:
  - all students and employees, irrespective of various group status/intersections, will achieve success.
  - there exists a richly diverse environment for learning, working, and playing where differences are valued and each person in the university community is supported and experiences a sense of belonging, contribution, and purpose.
  - differences of perspective and views are approached with curiosity, seeking to understand rather than attack or dismiss, and connections are encouraged. People are accountable for their words and actions and are given the opportunity to reflect, learn, and do better.
  - diversity, equity, and inclusion are fully integrated and serve as a lens through which policies and practices are developed, implemented, and evaluated.
  - representation of the diversity of humanity is commonplace in all aspects of the university.
  - shared equity leadership is the guiding approach in university, planning, action, and accountability. The work of equity and inclusion is the work of everyone affiliated with East Tennessee State University and ETSU will serve as an accountable partner in the work we all share in the region and the world.

Goals and link to ETSU Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan

- Institutional commitment, policy, practices, and accountability – Everyone is responsible.
  - Assess, monitor, and share progress on access, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts*
  - Engage in shared equity leadership principles to inform policy, procedures, plans, and actions
- Climate and culture of diversity, equity, inclusion = belongingness
  - Promote a welcoming, supportive, and inclusive living, learning, and working environment for all faculty, staff, students, and visitors*
- Diversity representation in pipeline, recruitment, retention, and success
  - Identify, recruit, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of students from underrepresented, underserved, and minoritized populations and international students (close the gap)*
  - Identify, recruit, and retain a greater number of individuals from underrepresented and/or minoritized populations into administrative, faculty, and staff positions, and especially into leadership roles across campus, including chairs, deans, vice presidents, and board members*

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion embedded in the work of the university in teaching, research, service, and training.
  - Promote undergraduate curricular requirements to include significant intercultural perspectives and skills in interaction*
  - Promote research and scholarship including diverse voices and representation
  - Develop and strengthen partnerships with diverse communities locally, regionally, nationally, and globally*
  - Provide personal and professional development and public programming related to enhancing understanding and skill development in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion*

*These goals are included in existing ETSU E and I Strategic Plan

Targeted outcomes:

Note that outcomes are only relevant if the are inextricably tied with our values, vision, the meaning and context of diversity, equity, and inclusion and "our why." In other words, the outcomes are only meaningful if the behaviors and work they represent are lived, seen, experienced, and felt throughout the institution and region.

- ETSU will grow and communicate its equity and inclusion presence and impact.
- ETSU will become and sustain recognition as a Great College to Work For.
- ETSU will increase the enrollment, retention, and graduation rate for first generation students, students from poverty, BIPOC, and close the gaps.
- ETSU will hire, retain, and promote faculty and staff in an equitable manner with an emphasis on diversification.
- ETSU will lead and collaborate with partners in the region to embed cultural competence in our workplaces, systems, programs, scholarship, and service.
- ETSU will earn and maintain the Insight into Diversity Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) Award.

Key Outcomes with target timeline:

- Update DEI Strategic Plan to 10 years (Year 1-3)
  - Add specific benchmarks for diversity, climate, and equity goals (include internal and regional input) (Year 1-3)
  - Develop and display DEI mission, vision, values, goals as a basis for university and sub-unit focus (Year 1-3)
  - Include DEI updates in President's report to ETSU, the BOT, and community (Year 1-3)

- Educate faculty, staff, students, and BOT on the What, Why, and How of Equity and Inclusion (Year 1-3)
  - Articulate our vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion and embed throughout all of our work (administration, faculty, staff, students, marketing, web presence, invited guests and speakers, etc.)
  - Pledge to act against racism (Year 1-3)
  - Provide education opportunities for everyone in inclusive language, microaggressions, and cultural competence
- Update training and communicate compliance expectations and reporting structure (Create a work group including faculty and staff to review and update compliance training (Year 1-3)
  - Develop robust structure and training in how to respond and address incidents that do not rise to the legal definition of harassment/discrimination but are harming in the work environment (Year 5)
- Collect, catalog, and organize DEI activities and related data (Year 1-3)
  - Catalog existing DEI data from units gathered in 2021, utilize this process to develop a systematic framework for future data collection (Year 1-3)
  - Utilize Digital Measures to capture DEI work (Year 1-3)
  - Routinely collect comprehensive data related to DEI (Year 1-3)
    - Add collection of gender identity/expression; sexual orientation, etc. to data collected regarding students, faculty, and staff (Year 1-3)
    - Collect climate (i.e., Great Colleges to Work For, NSSE, etc.), demographic, enrollment, retention, and graduation data for faculty, staff, and students and share disaggregated data to colleges, etc. (Year 1-3)
    - Record data as feedback on goals and document how feedback was reviewed and utilized to make changes (Year 5)
  - Include outcome measures (process, satisfaction, impact) (Year 5)
- Develop robust communication strategies - share data and outcomes routinely (Year 1-3)
  - Report on DEI activities each year (BOT, website dashboard, internally/externally) (Year 1-3)
  - Develop a comprehensive website for DEI (Year 1-3)
    - Include link to compliance and other relevant organizations and units (Year 1-3)
    - Include structure and activities reflecting DEI (Year 1-3)
    - Include updated dashboard (by semester) reflecting benchmarks, outcome measures, and data (tied to strategic goals) (Year 5)
  - Share all data holistically and disaggregated for colleges/programs as appropriate (Year 1-3)

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- Define and learning outcomes reflecting cultural competence awareness, knowledge, and skills in academic programs and scholarship (Year 1-3)
    - Add cultural competence learning outcomes review as part of curricular review process
    - Embed cultural competence principles into FAP/FAR/FAE review
    - Assist faculty in updating course materials that are representative of diversity (reference lists including work from authors represeting diversity; case study examples reflecting diverse people and family structures; names of "characters". Develop a checklist for faculty to consider
    - Include focus in Instructional Development Grants and other grant support for teaching (follow thru on impact)
    - Add a focus within research/scholarship including population historically underrepresented/minoritized
    - Include literature and sources that are inclusive of historically underrepresented populations
- Develop comprehensive structure of DEI (Year 5)
    - Hire/support full-time VP for Equity and Inclusion (Year 5)
    - Evaluate support staffing needs for Equity and Inclusion (Year 1-3)
    - Assign adequate budget for DEI activities tied to strategic plan (Year 1-3)
    - Develop working teams for HEED application review, submission, and implementation of strategic initiatives (Year 1-3)
    - Develop and share a comprehensive structure of all DEI offices (Year 1-3)
    - Master DEI experts (i.e., different levels: competent, proficient, expert) in each college/unit with compensation incentive to serve in the role that provides support, answers to questions, facilitate conversations, supports DEI activities in the classroom, administrative meetings, hiring, retention efforts, etc.) (Year 5)

- Make accessibility and disability part of E and I (Year 1-3)
- Link to more integrated and inclusive efforts for international faculty and students (Year 1-3)

- Develop and promote specific initiatives that target key areas of the Great Colleges to Work For survey; utilize benchmarks (Year 5)
  - Continue to gather and share data on climate from variety of contintuents and utilize to create benchmarks and accounability

- Develop a comprehensive strategy for pipeline, recruitment, retention, graduation and employment for under-represented, minoritized populations including benchmarks and action plans (Year 5)
  - Develop benchmarks and success targets to close the gaps in numbers, retention, and graduation for impacted groups (Year 1-3)
  - Develop faculty affairs/student affairs partnerships to support faculty in the classrooms and advisors in how to meet students where they are and scaffold support. Promote faculty understanding of strengths and resilience of students as well as potential barriers they may need to overcome. (Year 1-3)
  - Identify top economic sectors in the region and collaborate with key stakeholders to develop a recruitment/retention initiative. (Year 1-3)
  - Examine and create strategy for "Grow Your Own" programs that compete with other universities across the state in high need areas (Year 1-3)
  - Examine scholarship structures that target recruitment and retention for students
  - Assure that all opportunities for students from various groups are known throughout the institution (faculty, advisors, students, potential students) and track rates of usage, etc.
  - Increase diversity representation in leadership teams
  - Examine faculty and staff mentoring programs as potential impact strategies to develop leadership capacity

- Develop a comprehensive hiring plan and support units (departments, colleges, HR) in hiring efforts for typically under-represented/minoritized populations (Year 5)
  - Promote and attend faculty/staff recruiting events for expanding pipeline and recruitment of faculty/staff representing under represented/minoritized/protected class populations (Year 1-3)
  - Develop pathways for faculty exchange; doctoral fellow scholarships, etc. (Year 5)
  - Develop strategies for supporting international faculty and staff (Year 5)

- Adopt and implement trauma/resilience informed care principles in offices, customer service, academic and student affairs through trainings, coaching, support for faculty, staff, and students (Year 5)

- Develop and operationalize values, create common language for behaviors and interactions

Big Ideas

- Review and recognize the Indigenous peoples of the land currently owned/utilized by ETSU and develop a land acknowledgement statement by 2022. (Year 1-3)

- Coordinate a summit to examine access and performance disparities in education, health, and employment in our region (Consider STRONG ACC as a model/resource) (Year 1-3)

    - Engage parents, faith leaders, local government, employers, K-12 and higher ed partners, non-profit sectors, and service providers

    - Identify key areas of our strengths

    - Identify gaps in success

    - Develop comprehensive and collaborative plans for impact

- Create a Center for Equity and Inclusion (Year 5)

    - Would incorporate structure, data and benchmarks, communication, and programming

- Create a Community Engagement and Development (Year 5)

    - Researches the socioeconomic, cultural, and racial factors of the Appalachian Highlands region

    - Serve as technical assistance to community organizations connected to the income and minoritized populations

- Build the leadership development of the regional BIPOC population (Year 1-3)

    - Regional leadership and inclusive community engagement for BIPOC population to come together to develop leadership and strategic initiatives

    - Could utilize yearly E&I Conference by Fall 2022

- Invest in region to address systemic poverty and racism in the Appalachian Highlands (Year 5)

    - Utilize ASRL to conduct regional asset-based survey by Spring 2023

    - By spring 2022 identify a percentage (e.g., 5%) of ETSU endowment is invested in regional Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI)

    - By Fall 2022, create a regional pipeline program for BIPOC children beginning at grade 3