“Taking Leadership on Who and What Matters: The Plan to Build a Model Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive College of Liberal Arts & Sciences”

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan for the University of Kansas College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

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Background
Persistent inequities in higher education have negatively affected the welfare and success of historically minoritized populations. In the past year, public and private universities across the United States have addressed student, faculty, and staff concerns by hiring diversity officers, forming advisory groups and task forces, producing reports, and initiating programs. In response to multiracial, ethnic, and cultural student protests and demands for change at the University of Kansas, KU created the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Advisory Group (DEI Advisory Group) to assess the learning and working conditions on campus. The DEI Advisory Group’s goal was to generate recommendations for the Chancellor on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion that require urgent and long-term attention. The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (“the College”) is also investing in a proactive approach that considers the needs and interests of all minoritized groups on campus, through the development of infrastructure and strategies that will ensure we embed these issues in the fabric of the College and give them significant priority at all times. The College takes seriously this assessment and the recommendations put forth in the “Report of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group.” The Advisory Group’s report is available on the Provost’s website at this link: DEI Advisory Group Report 2016.

Students, faculty, and staff from historically minoritized groups at KU have reported circumstances that impede their welfare and success on campus. Students of color, LGBTQIA students, and students with disabilities describe a range of factors that cause significant impediments to their success and well-being, limit their feeling of inclusion, and diminish their sense of having a voice in classrooms and student government. In addition, they relate experiences of hostile learning and living environments and unwelcoming social spaces across campus more broadly. These experiences include microaggressive behaviors as well as outward acts of intolerance by peers, faculty, and staff. Students of color at KU, especially, experience academic stops, probation, and dismissals at rates that far exceed their representation on campus. Women students at KU have related instances of misogynistic messages and acts that are often poorly addressed and minimized. As is the case on other campuses, KU students – especially those from historically minoritized groups – may underutilize the

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resources available through Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS), whose mission is to assist students as they balance work, school, and social life within a challenging environment. Faculty and staff also report experiences similar to those of students, as well as barriers to successful career progression, and they often cite lack of adequate mentorship and support, and a lack of colleagues with similar backgrounds or shared experiences.

The Office of the Provost has taken these issues seriously, including the significant undertaking of a comprehensive campus climate survey. The results of that survey will offer further insight for campus improvement. The climate survey and other activities are part of the University’s efforts to address these issues and provide an important backdrop to leadership efforts and tangible actions across the University and in the College. Indeed, the students, staff, and faculty in the College are in need of leadership through which we hold ourselves accountable. We are obligated, to the best of our ability, to build the equitable and inclusive learning and working community that all of us expect and deserve. In the process, the College will lay the groundwork for an effective strategy that serves and supplements the broader campus vision and mission of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

With this understanding, the administration of the College convened a group of faculty members and staff in spring 2016 to form a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Work Group. The DEI Work Group produced a vision statement, a set of principles, and a mission statement to address the areas in which we have historical, pervasive, and persistent disparities. This document, “Taking Leadership on Who and What Matters: The Plan to Build a Model Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive College of Liberal Arts & Sciences” is a next step. Once enacted and over time, the plan presented will not simply improve, but transform, the College’s approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The goal of the plan is to produce a model environment for learning and working in the College – an environment in which practices and policies for equity actually produce parity, differences are valued, and the success of each individual matters.

As we proceed, we must acknowledge the significant work of individuals and programs that have historically addressed diversity, equity, and inclusion concerns and efforts. These efforts have provided pockets of targeted recruitment, activities to support retention, statements of support, public programming, and the development and implementation of inclusive classroom learning techniques. We also appreciate the initiatives and hard work many students, faculty, and staff are currently undertaking, and we are eager to link these to the broader strategic goals – augmenting and building upon these activities where feasible and appropriate.

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2 Faculty members of the College DEI Work Group (spring 2016): Henry Bial (Associate Dean and Director, School of the Arts), Kelly Chong (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology), Stephanie Fitzgerald (Associate Professor, Department of English and Indigenous Studies Program), Luis Gonzalez (Professor and Chair, Department of Geology), Jennifer Hamer (Professor and Chair, Department of American Studies), Nicole Hodges-Persley (Associate Professor and Acting Chair, Department of Theatre), Caroline Jewers (Associate Professor, Department of French & Italian and Associate Director, School of Languages, Literatures & Cultures), Clarence Lang (Chair and Professor, Department of African & African American Studies), and Shannon Portillo (Associate Professor, School of Public Affairs & Administration). The Work Group was initiated and chaired by Dean Carl Lejuez, and coordinated by Jessica Beeson and Charles Neiss (College).
The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences’ Statement on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

In the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, we understand that an equitable and safe multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural environment produces innovative thinking, research, and learning.

**Our Vision:** We seek to provide an environment for learning and working where differences are valued and each person in the College community is supported and offered an equitable opportunity to achieve their academic and professional goals.

**Our Guiding Principles:**

- **Diversity.** The College is committed to providing an environment where differences strengthen our entire community and provide the foundation for equitable opportunities and successful outcomes for all. Our definition of “diversity” encompasses acceptance and respect for each other. We are multiracial, multiethnic, and multicultural, and we recognize that there are inequalities and privileges generated by those differences that include race, ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, abilities, religion, regions, Veteran status, citizenship status, and nationality. By affirming the complexities of our histories, cultures, and experiences, we move toward a fuller understanding of ourselves and each other.
- **Equity.** The College is committed to policies, processes, practices, and programs that appreciate difference and create fair, safe, and just learning, working, and living environments for students, staff, and faculty.
- **Inclusion.** The College is committed to providing a context in which all students, staff, and faculty, receive respect and opportunity for intellectual growth and professional development for careers, service to the public, and democratic participation in a diverse society, regardless of social, cultural and economic background and experience.

**Our Mission:** The College is committed to developing and implementing a plan to transform the College into an exemplary diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning and workplace environment for all students, staff, and faculty.

**Our Plan:** The College will be transformed into a diverse, equitable and inclusive community by building upon our current strengths:

- We will develop recruitment and retention policies and practices that create and maintain a staff, faculty, and student body that is more representative of state, national, and world demographic trends.
- We will expand our curriculum to emphasize equitable and inclusive learning and classroom environments, approaches, and content.
- We will develop and enhance academic programs and services to create a holistic approach to equitable and inclusive student success, including services that promote student health and well-being, such as the College’s office of Student Academic Services, offices within KU’s Student Affairs, and KU’s Office of Undergraduate Studies.
- We will develop and offer professional development and advancement policies and practices for faculty and staff that create an intentionally holistic approach to career trajectories.

**Mission Statement of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences**

In the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Kansas our mission is to provide an educational experience that allows and encourages learning without boundaries. Through our innovative research and
teaching, we emphasize interdisciplinary education, global awareness, and experiential learning to ensure that our graduates are engaged and socially responsible citizens who embrace diversity and are empowered to build their futures in Kansas and the world.

Taking Leadership on Who and What Matters:
The Plan to Build a Model Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

I. We value a diverse, equitable, and inclusive climate

Goal: We aspire to build and nurture a diverse, equitable, and inclusive climate that provides the fundamental knowledge and necessary resources to foster a learning and workplace environment where all students, staff, and faculty not only feel encouraged, valued, and respected, but also are supported, and able to succeed, regardless of identity or background.

Such a climate requires that all actors – students, staff, faculty, and administrators – share a common understanding of our goals and expectations as they regard diversity, equity, and inclusion. For example, KU currently requires faculty, staff, and students to participate in online learning about policies and appropriate behaviors regarding sexual harassment and disabilities. In response to concerns from students, staff, and faculty, opportunities exist to request on-campus workshops on gender identities, gender expression, and sexuality diversity (through the Center of Sexuality & Gender Diversity) and diversity, equity, and inclusion (through the Office of Multicultural Affairs). In addition, the Office of International Programs is currently considering learning options for faculty and staff who work with international students. Within the College, a Department of Theatre faculty member has developed the Interactive Theatre Troupe, which offers workshops on attitudes, behaviors, and identities upon request to campus groups and academic units.

Despite these activities, we lack mandatory professional development and adequate resources that provide faculty, staff, and students with fundamental awareness and understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion; related expectations regarding appropriate and inappropriate behaviors; means of identifying and addressing related concerns; and direction on campus policies that encourage equitable and safe learning and workplace environments.

Steps Toward Goal
• We will develop DEI professional development that consists of online learning modules. These modules will offer baseline or fundamental knowledge of diversity, equity, and inclusion; College- and campus-related expectations regarding appropriate and inappropriate behaviors; means of identifying and addressing associated concerns; and direction on campus policies that encourage equitable and safe learning and workplace environments.
• We will offer mandatory online DEI professional development for College faculty and staff, repeated every three years.
• We will identify existing College and campus resources and/or develop activities and workshops that supplement the mandatory online learning and professional development. Existing resources may include, for example, collaboration with units such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Center for Teaching Excellence, College Interactive Theatre Troupe, Office of International Programs, Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity, Student Veteran Center, and Counseling & Psychological Services.
Some, but not all, supplemental learning (e.g., Safe Zone Training provided by the Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity) will be mandatory for designated College offices and positions.

- We will provide special acknowledgement of units with a 90% completion rate of the online module to indicate that a unit is actively supportive and committed to a diverse, equitable, and inclusive learning and workspace. This designation will be comparable to that received via KU’s Safe Zone Training.
- We will require all College of Liberal Arts & Sciences students to complete an online DEI learning module by a prescribed date. This module will be consistent with KU’s mandatory online sexual harassment learning. DEI Learning will be required every five years of enrollment.

**Goal Implementation Timeline**

YEAR 1
- We will research, develop and pilot online modules for faculty and staff.

YEAR 2
- We will implement an online module for faculty and staff.
- We will begin a collaborative series of supplemental DEI learning activities.
- We will research, develop and pilot an online module for students.

YEAR 3
- We will implement an online module for students.

**II. We value the recruitment of faculty, staff, and administration from underrepresented communities**

**Goal:** Establish our commitment to, and accountability for, active recruitment to increase the representation of historically minoritized populations in the College’s faculty, staff and administrative/executive hires. In this way, we will progress toward a closer reflection of state, national and world demographic trends while meeting or exceeding those among peer institutions. We especially seek to increase the numbers of faculty members who are African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Latina/o, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and those with disabilities.³

**Steps Toward Goal**
- We will undertake mandatory DEI online professional development and supplemental learning for any department/program seeking hiring approval (90% completion by faculty and staff prior to hiring approval). This DEI professional development will include a focus on hiring.
- We will develop an “Active Recruitment for Inclusive Hiring Plan” for use by the College. In its current form, KU’s “Hiring for Excellence” protocol is not, by itself, a strategy for diversifying faculty. The College will review current data on outcomes for “Hiring for Excellence” and address any identified gaps with steps that enhance our ability to recruit a more diverse and representative faculty, staff, and administration. Employment of the steps will be mandatory for departments and programs seeking College approvals for hires. A number of College units have already instituted steps for diversity and inclusion that may serve as a model for similar fields and disciplines.

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³ We recognize that other demographic groups, though historically minoritized, have achieved numerical overrepresentation among students, faculty, and staff. Nonetheless, College efforts to build diversity, equity, and inclusion will actively integrate the experiences and concerns of this broad range of KU student, faculty, and staff populations.
• We will revisit the Dean’s Scholar program with the specific goal to diversify KU’s faculty and professional staff. With this program, KU graduate students from traditional racial/ethnic minority groups are provided scholarships to support the completion of doctoral education. Upon completion, awardees are expected to seek and accept a position at KU (should one be offered) and maintain that position for a time equal to the number of years they were awarded and received scholarship funds. We will consider possible collaboration with Kansas State University and other Big 12 institutions as appropriate.

• We will develop the “CLAS Fellows Program for Building Inclusive Leadership” to provide opportunities for historically minoritized faculty and staff (though not exclusively) with administrative and professional development that may support retention, increase interest in administrative work, and augment preparedness for university leadership.

Goal Implementation Timeline

YEAR 1
  o We will establish steps for active DEI recruitment of faculty, staff and administrators.
  o We will develop a structure and process to incorporate the four racial/ethnic affinity councils at KU (“Affinity Councils”) and the Consortium for Gender & Sexual Diversity (“Consortium”) into the recruitment process. The Affinity Councils include the Black Faculty & Staff Council, Native American Faculty & Staff Council, Asian American Faculty & Staff Council, and Latina/o Faculty & Staff Council. The Affinity Councils and the Consortium were established by minoritized faculty and staff to serve as sources of professional development, support, retention, and advocacy. The groups’ participation can enhance KU’s ability to successfully recruit and retain minoritized faculty and staff.
  o We will pilot a “CLAS Fellows Program for Building Inclusive Leadership” to be awarded to one or more faculty and/or current staff. Fellows will contribute to current College initiatives, activities, programs, research, and/or grant-writing that directly apply to College student, staff or faculty recruitment, retention or development.

YEAR 2
  o We will implement steps for active DEI recruitment of faculty, staff and administrators.
  o We will place a call for nominations for CLAS Fellows, for a fully established program to begin fall 2018.

YEAR 3
  o We will implement fully the CLAS Fellows Program for Building Inclusive Leadership.

III. We value the retention of faculty, staff and administration from underrepresented communities

Goal: We will establish our commitment to, and accountability for, active retention efforts to increase the representation of historically minoritized populations in the College’s faculty, staff and administration. We will develop and maintain a “CLAS Support Pathway,” an approach that actively supports successful outcomes for retaining and developing faculty, and staff and administrators from historically minoritized populations.

Steps Toward Goal
• We will collaborate with existing strategies offered by the Office of the Provost and College units.
• We will establish a network that offers: a) direct professional development; b) guidance toward recruitment, retention and promotion; and c) a climate and community of social support.
• We will develop new opportunities and enhance existing professional development opportunities for marginalized faculty and staff.
• We will provide individual guidance for marginalized tenure-track faculty in preparation for annual reviews, Progress Toward Tenure Review and the Promotion & Tenure review; mentoring will be offered by the Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.
• We will establish relationships with existing Affinity Councils and the Consortium, and meet at least twice annually to build and maintain a community of social support and professional development.
• We will communicate information about the CLAS Support Pathway and its means of assistance for marginalized faculty and staff.
• We will ensure that the CLAS Support Pathway provides support to our faculty and staff in several key ways. This support includes but is not limited to facilitating: a) a first step for faculty or staff who feel in need of support but are unable or unwilling to seek support through the ombudsperson and/or KU Institutional Opportunity & Access; b) acceptable and supportive terms for jointly appointed faculty; c) mediation of chair/faculty or staff member understandings, expectations and, in the case of faculty, the balance of research, teaching and service; and d) resolutions for negative experiences related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and classroom.

Goal Implementation Timeline

YEAR 1
  o We will define parameters of the CLAS Support Pathway.
  o We will implement the CLAS Support Pathway during spring 2017.
  o We will promote the CLAS Support Pathway to faculty members and departments.
  o We will formalize the relationship with the Consortium and Affinity Councils and begin regular meetings.
  o We will identify and develop resources and strategies for social and professional support.

YEAR 2
  o We will establish a tracking mechanism to measure the progress and success of the CLAS Support Pathway.
  o We will administer a survey for participants and non-participants to gauge the use and outcomes of the CLAS Support Pathway.
  o We will continue identification and development of resources and strategies for social and professional support.

YEAR 3
  o We will continue tracking the CLAS Support Pathway use by faculty, staff and administrators.
  o We will track outcomes of minoritized faculty, staff and administrators.

YEAR 5
  o We will evaluate the achievement of a targeted 100% retention rate for minoritized faculty at the end of each mandatory review year.

IV. We value the recruitment of a student body from underrepresented communities

Goal: We will establish our commitment to, and accountability for, increased representation of historically minoritized populations in the College’s student body through active recruitment and retention efforts. In this way, we will progress toward a closer reflection of state, national and world demographics while meeting or exceeding similar trends among disciplinary aspirational peers. We especially seek to increase the numbers of undergraduate and graduate students who are African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Latina/o, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and those who have disabilities.
**Steps Toward Goal**

- We will complete a review of unit websites to ensure that their narratives and images reflect a DEI vision, and work with units on revisions.
- We will undertake undergraduate student recruitment strategies that include collaborations with key stakeholders, including Lawrence School District and Upward Bound, as well as the KU Office of Admissions, Office of First-Year Experience, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and other identified resources.
- We will develop targeted graduate student recruitment strategies.
  - We will identify current successful models of programs that utilize a “grow your own” graduate pool from KU undergraduates. We will consider how these examples may be revised to be more effective in the recruitment of traditional, racial, ethnic minorities and/or implemented elsewhere.
  - We will provide GTA opportunities that support the recruitment of historically minoritized students in the arts and humanities, and explore how we may enhance current practices in the social, behavioral, and natural sciences.
  - We will work with the College’s student recruiter to identify effective recruitment strategies (e.g. Haskell and other minority-serving institutions, recruitment conferences, NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates, graduate student bridge, McNair Scholars Program, Multicultural Scholars Program, Undergraduate Research, Honors Program).
  - We will encourage academic departments to maximize their use of graduate College support for minority graduate student recruitment.

**Goal Implementation Timeline**

**YEARS 1 and 2**

- We will identify and develop a clearinghouse of current DEI undergraduate and graduate recruitment efforts, and assess how the College may better offer support, build collaborations, and/or utilize models for other College programs.
- We will complete a review of unit websites.

**V. We value the retention of a student body from underrepresented communities**

**Goal:** We will establish our commitment to, and accountability for, an increased representation of historically minoritized populations of undergraduate students by improving retention so the student population more closely reflects state, national and global demographics while meeting or exceeding similar trends among disciplinary aspirational peers.

**Steps Toward Goal**

- We will collaborate closely with existing offices, including the College’s Student Academic Services, individual College academic programs and the Office of Undergraduate Studies to improve students’ progress toward degree.
- We will enhance opportunities for success and develop alternative pathways for success through gateway courses that often serve as barriers to progress to degree (e.g. introductory Math and Biology courses); make use of early alerts and interventions, modification of course delivery/instruction, cohorts, and 2nd eight-week and winter session.
- We will evaluate retention efforts at enrollment benchmarks, with a focus on year one, the third semester, and years two through five.
• We will address the general emotional and psychological health of students by collaborating with Watkins Health Services, Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS), Student Affairs offices and academic programs to encourage student understanding and use of available health resources.
• We will enhance existing affinity-based student support services and facilitate the development of others to strengthen opportunities for academic achievement.
• We will highlight success stories on the College website and through other communications.
• We will develop an annual student survey to gauge the use and effectiveness of student support services.

**Goal Implementation Timeline**

**YEAR 1**
- We will build a College DEI website that will link to the College website. This website will provide the following: a) this strategic plan; b) background information and statistics on retention; c) a comprehensive diversity events calendar including all relevant campus departments, offices, and student groups; and d) links to additional student, faculty, and staff diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.
- We will work with student groups to establish specific and measurable short- and long-term goals.
- We will collaborate with the Watkins Health Center, including Counseling & Psychological Services, to support their goals; collaborate on strategies such as orientation programming and/or mid-semester “stress check-ins.”
- We will identify and develop other retention supports (e.g., campus engagement, expanded research engagement opportunities, expanded definitions of and participation in Honors).

**YEAR 2**
- We will evaluate the success of alternative pathways and interventions in gateway courses with an initial goal of reduction in MATH 101 withdrawals and failures and second-time enrollees, with a goal of 50% improvement by end of year 2 following implementation.

**YEAR 3**
- We will continue the evaluation of success rates in gateway courses.

**VI. We value curricula and classroom environments that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive**

**Goal:** We will establish our commitment to, and accountability for, a liberal arts and sciences education that adequately prepares all students for work, research, leadership, and informed citizenship in an increasingly diverse and global society. All students learn better when they are valued in the classroom and feel sufficiently confident to ask questions and engage peers and instructors, and thus our curricular content and classroom spaces must reflect our value for the complexities of our diverse histories and circumstances.

**Steps Toward Goal**
• We will situate diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of College curricular protocols, with the goal of ensuring that we represent and dignify the experiences of historically minoritized populations.
• We will expand and encourage opportunities to learn about the complexities of our US and global histories, cultures, and experiences. We seek to ensure that students have sufficient exposure to these complexities and can no longer move through and complete an undergraduate degree.
without significant engagement in discourse or scholarship encouraging them to explore understandings of cultural differences, identities, biases, discrimination, and privilege.

- We will increase the recruitment and retention of historically minoritized populations so that (a) traditionally marginalized students are not isolated in classrooms and other College learning spaces; and (b) we widen and support the full participation of all students. The greater their representation in learning spaces, for example, the greater the full participation of historically minoritized students in classroom discourse and learning activities.
- We will establish our commitment to, and accountability for, diverse, equitable, and inclusive classrooms in evaluation, promotion, and tenure policies, and actively center inclusivity in routine teaching, hiring, and review practices.
- We will work with the Office of Study Abroad to make study abroad programs more accessible, feasible, and representative for underrepresented students to pursue opportunities in international experience and intercultural learning.
- We will work with the Center for Community Outreach and Alternative Breaks to assist students from minoritized communities to engage in domestic volunteering, research, and travel opportunities.

**Goal Implementation Timeline**

**YEAR 1**

- We will identify and promote courses and supplemental learning activities relevant to these goals (e.g. advertisements in the University Daily Kansan, Majors Marketplace, social media). This includes the identification of existing courses that directly contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and encouraging the placement of these courses in one or more requirements of the KU Core.
- We will develop language, and seek to improve current policy as needed, in the creation of job advertisements that emphasize the need for candidates to articulate understanding of, commitment to, and practices of equity and inclusion in the classroom.
- We will work with the Faculty Senate and appropriate others to develop promotion and tenure guidelines that emphasize expectations for departments and faculty to articulate understanding of, commitment to, and practices of equity and inclusion in the classroom.
- We will identify and promote resources, such as the Center for Teaching Excellence, through which faculty can learn how to create inclusive classrooms that support varied and intersecting differences such as those related to race/ethnicity, disabilities, gender expressions, and sexuality.

**YEAR 2**

- We will collaborate with College departments and programs and campus units (e.g., Office of Multicultural Affairs, Center for Sexuality & Gender Diversity, Emily Taylor Resource Center, Student Veteran Center, and Watkins Health Center) to offer and promote regular supplemental learning and engagement opportunities.
- We will develop an undergraduate *Certificate in Discourse and Differences*\(^4\), an opportunity for students to supplement classroom education by actively engaging in campus events such as forums, lectures, and films that deepen an understanding of differences and enrich the capacity to learn about themselves and others. We will aim for implementation by fall 2018.

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\(^4\) This is a tentative title and we welcome suggestions.