

## **Fostering Equity and Inclusive Excellence Working Group**

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### **Section 1 – Executive Summary**

In drawing together the Fostering Equity and Inclusive Excellence (FEIE) strategic plan working group, we intentionally recruited students, staff, faculty, and alumni with diverse and intersecting identities, experiences, and perspectives. The working group closely examined the efforts of previous working groups, including the Diversity Advisory Council (2012), DEI Consultant Report (2013), the Diversity Advisory Council (2016), the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force (2020) and the Task Force on the Future of Education at UND (2021). The FEIE working group built on prior recommendations from these reports to identify themes and broad action plans. Focus group data collected by the Strategic Planning Committee informed our work as well. We intentionally added the language of access, using the acronym DEIA to indicate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. In considered response to feedback and best practices academically, we adopted the term “Indigenous” as more inclusive of communities both internal and external to the United States.

The group acknowledges that processes and programs identified here need further analysis and research and broader discussion to be successfully implemented at UND. For example, restorative justice has various traditions and approaches and must be attended to in UND’s specific context and pursued as a collective process that empowers all communities. DEIA metrics need to be defined to measure and inform authentic change at the institutional level and to address individual growth and accountability. Building diversity studies at UND will need to be strategic, building on existing strengths but also recognizing and addressing existing weaknesses.

Our working group challenged itself to articulate broad, encompassing ideas and to employ forward-looking language that will take UND’s DEIA efforts into the future. The rich list of specific action items generated by recent task forces provides very clear steps to be carried out. We strongly urge those who take this work forward to implementation to access those reports and recommendations (linked in our resources). We emphasize that metrics which measure sustained effort, demonstrated competency and improvement be based on these specific action items. Because both strategic planning and DEIA work is expansive and organic, we avoided recommendations that would be time-bound or that could be “checked off” as complete. We strove for the broadest definition of diversity, seeking to avoid excluding hidden and often unacknowledged identities. At the same time, we emphasize that clear, transparent and public measurements to monitor our work are essential to its success.

We recognize the very real pressures and barriers that influence the creation of a more just and equitable society. Institutions of higher education intentionally are at the forefront of innovation and are tasked with setting high standards in creating environments that facilitate learning, creativity, and discovery for all individuals. In purposefully striving to foster a culture of respect, empathy, and empowerment, UND best situates itself to lead in all aspects of our mission. Inclusive Excellence and Equity is the essential pillar of UND’s future. As such, in addition to the themes and action plans articulated here, we advocate for DEIA principles being intentionally infused throughout the entire strategic plan.

## Section 2 – Key Themes & Action Plans

### Theme 1: Culture and Climate

**Integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility into the organization, ensuring that DEIA is an institutional priority. Develop and implement anti-racist, anti-bias, equitable and inclusive policies and processes across the institution and implement a plan for restorative justice regarding UND's history.**

- 1.1. Establish the centrality of DEIA to UND's culture in its mission and vision. Articulate an institutional mission and vision that incorporate a full definition of diversity in offering support services and promoting belonging and engagement. Design and utilize DEIA metrics that create equitable and inclusive processes for units, colleges, and departments to follow.
- 1.2. Embed the DEIA mission and vision in UND's administrative structure, ensuring accountability and transparency in policy and initiatives.
- 1.3. Promote individual and collaborative engagement in DEIA work and establish strong cooperative relationships with the surrounding communities and Indigenous nations, seeking their guidance in embracing restorative justice that empowers all communities through a collaborative process.
- 1.4. Intentionally demonstrate and communicate UND's commitment to overcoming all forms of bias.
- 1.5. Continuously enhance the DEIA climate by engaging administrators, faculty, staff, and students in an ongoing quantitative and qualitative assessment of our efforts. This assessment must be thorough and made public.

### Theme 2: Curriculum

**Implement and integrate DEIA based curriculum in all modalities throughout UND, enhance inclusive pedagogy and practice, and increase opportunities for expanding knowledge and application of inclusion and justice within existing and future classes, curricula, and programs.**

- 2.1. Promote inclusive and diverse pedagogy and high impact practices to position students to engage with diverse perspectives, inclusive worldviews, and creative interdisciplinary problem-solving.
- 2.2. Frame the Essential Studies program and the Liberal Arts as foundational to DEIA learning, enabling us to value and appreciate both our collective identity as humans and tremendous variation within our humanity. Require all disciplines to be explicit in how they prepare a varied population and workforce to learn, adapt, and develop essential DEIA skills for an increasingly complex world.
- 2.3. Invest in diverse area studies and assist faculty and departments in creating undergraduate and graduate academic programs and supporting extracurricular engagement (see specific recommendations and strategies in the linked reports below).
- 2.4. Set a specific ten-year goal to become a premier institution for Indigenous Studies.
- 2.5. Invest in campus-wide faculty and staff training, resources, technology, and time to support the redesign of courses including pedagogical approaches to infuse DEIA throughout curriculum.
- 2.6. Implement administrative, programmatic, and curricular changes that enhance access and equity to improve the success of historically underserved members of the campus community including those in the online environment.

### **Theme 3: Equity and Engagement**

#### **Increase DEIA education, engagement, and belonging through professional development and educational opportunities for all members of the community.**

- 3.1. Provide time for and require ongoing professional development for all UND employees that fosters a sense of belonging, establishes equity-minded practices, and facilitates understanding of diverse populations with the purpose of meeting the ever-changing needs of our students and community.
- 3.2. Provide professional development and resources to support diverse and inclusive campus environments (inside and outside the classroom) that support equitable learning and convey a core commitment to inclusion.
- 3.3. Strategically and purposefully structure, fund, and support formal and informal spaces on campus that nurture DEIA.
- 3.4. Collaborate with and help to educate our regional and state partners in prioritizing a culture of belonging and inclusion for all students and employees.

### **Theme 4: Equity within Recruitment, Hiring, Retention and Advancement**

#### **Establish strong programs that support recruitment, mentorship, and advancement of historically underserved and marginalized students and employees.**

- 4.1. Establish and implement clear strategies and policies for recruiting and retaining members of the campus community of diverse and intersecting identities.
- 4.2. Promote belonging and provide equitable resources and opportunities for success, and advancement for all students and employees including those with diverse and intersecting identities, backgrounds, and experiences.
- 4.3. Create and implement flexible working and learning options that offer employment security and access to UND programs to a broader, more diverse population.
- 4.4. Embed DEIA expectations for administrators, faculty and staff in review processes (performance evaluations, annual reviews and promotion and tenure policies, etc.) for retention and advancement. Ground these expectations in the institutional and unit mission and vision statements for DEIA.

### **Theme 5 Investment, Improvement and Accountability**

#### **Invest in and structure review processes that include clear and robust measures to evaluate and assess ongoing DEIA initiatives and programs.**

- 5.1. Strategically and purposefully invest in DEIA related offices and employees, using a rich definition of diversity and providing structure, funding, and ongoing support.
- 5.2. Utilize a collaborative process to establish both institutional and individual benchmarks, accountability goals and metrics around DEIA at UND. Establish aspirational peers to inform our metrics.
- 5.3. Design and implement transparent plans and processes for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating data to monitor and achieve organizational DEIA goals and objectives for faculty, staff, administration, and students. It is

imperative that data is accessible to all and inclusive using the broadest definition of diversity, seeking to avoid excluding hidden and often unacknowledged identities.

5.4. Create a system of thorough and regularly scheduled audits for all policies and procedures and analyze the ways in which they support or inhibit our diversity, equity, inclusion, and access efforts. Use the audit to inform improvement of policies and procedures.

5.5. Establish a practice of accountability by integrating DEIA measures in all employee performance evaluations including staff performance evaluation, annual evaluations, and promotion and tenure processes.

## Resources

**We urge those working on DEIA at UND not lose sight of the tremendous work done by earlier task forces. The recommendations made by these groups offer many valuable and specific implementation strategies.**

1. [Diversity and Inclusion Task Force](#) (2020)
2. [Task Force on the Future of Education at UND](#) (2021)
3. Consolidated recommended action items (recommendations excerpted here, full text in above reports)  
[https://ndusbpos.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/UNDStrategicPlanningCommittee/EUge\\_vwlSIZKgAlAYuUR2fMBVXIGymKXq5PxiPxMdAVHJQ?e=VVmmV5](https://ndusbpos.sharepoint.com/:w:/s/UNDStrategicPlanningCommittee/EUge_vwlSIZKgAlAYuUR2fMBVXIGymKXq5PxiPxMdAVHJQ?e=VVmmV5)