



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan Progress Report

2023-24 | YEAR 2 OF 3



PRIORITIES

1

PRIORITY 1

**Grow our leadership on inclusive teaching and scholarship in relation to Equity, Inclusion and Diversity.**

2

PRIORITY 2

**Increase access and success for under-represented and marginalized populations.**

3

PRIORITY 3

**Continuously build upon a campus climate where everyone feels welcome, supported, included, and valued.**

4

PRIORITY 4

**Attract, recruit, support and develop a diverse community inclusive of all students, faculty, and staff.**

5

PRIORITY 5

**Develop an institutional infrastructure to drive change.**



## A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT AMES



This year's report conveys the vitality of community activities conducted in support of our commitment to embrace "diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential components of a rich intellectual and cultural environment in which all members are given the opportunity to reach their full potential as active participants in our local and global society." It represents another successful year of progress on our strategic plan led by Geoff Miller, our Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and supported by the DEI Coalition and Faculty Liaisons.

I am proud of our efforts as a community to recognize that it takes concerted effort and resources to create an equitable and inclusive environment in a society that has generally failed to live up to those ideals. The campus-wide support of these efforts is all the more important at a time where DEI is often being misunderstood and vilified. The popular press, social media, and some politicians and elected officials have offered caricatures of DEI as simply preferential hiring or as indoctrination in White guilt. Anyone who takes diversity issues seriously knows how shallow those caricatures are.

At Russell Sage, we are committed to building communities of understanding, support for, and participation in DEI efforts. By working with our different constituencies—students, faculty, and staff—we are collaborating not indoctrinating, and including not excluding. Creating an opportunity that benefits us all. I'm energized and heartened by the good work I see unfolding on the Sage campuses. And I continue to be optimistic about what the future holds for bringing us closer to achieving our vision of a "campus that supports an optimal learning and working environment for all students, alumni, faculty, administrators, and staff."

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Christopher Ames". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Christopher Ames**

*President, Russell Sage College*

## A LETTER FROM DIRECTOR MILLER



Russell Sage College continues to deliver policies and programs based on its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategic plan to enhance a campus that supports an optimal learning and working environment for all students, faculty, administrators and staff.

As we conclude the second of our three year plan, it gives me great joy to report that steady and good progress continues to be made to achieve the goals based on the 5 overarching priorities of the strategic plan. This annual report is written to give the reader the highlights of year 2 efforts based on the priorities of the plan and recognize the many individuals and organizations that partner with us and contribute to our shared vision of DEI. Included in this narrative is the DEI Strategic Plan Tracking tool which illustrates a detailed progress report based on the measurement of success related to the 16 goals and 46 strategies outlined in the plan.

Finally, I get to take this annual opportunity to thank Barbara Cockfield who led the process of the college's DEI plan several years ago. Barbara's commitment to equity-driven education delivery is embedded in this plan and strategy and we are proud to execute it in her honor.

The DEI work we do at Sage is specific and unique to our needs as a community. We will continue to be brave as we promote a more just and equitable experience for our students, staff and faculty.

In Unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoff Miller".

**Geoff Miller**

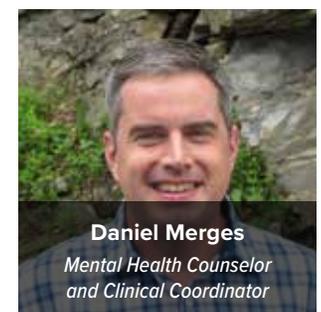
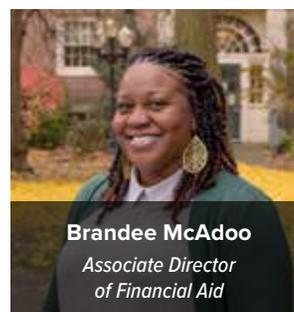
he/him

*Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

## THE DEI COALITION

### RSC's DEI Vision Statement

Russell Sage College embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential components of a rich intellectual and cultural environment in which all members are given the opportunity to reach their full potential as active participants in our local and global society. We realize that the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion is an evolution that moves us towards our aspirations of a culturally inclusive community. The understanding we gain, as we continually assess our institution, will create informed and intentional transformation. Russell Sage College is committed to developing policies and programs to create a campus that supports an optimal learning and working environment for all students, alumnae/i, faculty, administrators, and staff.





**Emily A. Obuya**  
*Associate Professor*



**Nana Owusu-ofori**  
*Assistant Director  
of Service Learning*



**Rebecca Palmer**  
*Director of Student  
Success Advocacy*



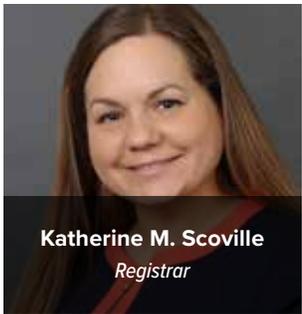
**Tasha Pringle**  
*Associate Director of HEOP*



**Ray Rodriguez**  
*Associate Director of  
Undergraduate Enrollment  
Management - Transfer*



**Alyssa Sands**  
*Assistant Director of Graduate  
Enrollment Management*



**Katherine M. Scoville**  
*Registrar*



**Ali Schaeffing**  
*Assistant Professor of Geography  
& Director of Service Learning*



**Sara Schuman**  
*General Education  
Core Coordinator*



**Madison Scisci**  
*Social and Digital  
Media Specialist*



**Cait York**  
*Director of Accessibility Services  
& 504 Compliance Officer*



## PRIORITY 1

**Grow our leadership on inclusive teaching and scholarship in relation to Equity, Inclusion and Diversity.**

---

The faculty at Sage continue to be engaged and driven to have conversations around identity, equity, and educational outcomes for students. Partnering with the Provost's Office has provided the opportunity to meet with faculty to discuss DEI best practices, inclusive teaching through professional development, and reflection based activities that deepen practitioners' ability to empathize with their students. Dr. Emily Obuya, our DEI Faculty Fellow, has assembled a group of colleagues, representative of each academic department, to serve as DEI faculty liaisons and act as a network of ambassadors to co-create professional development ideas and disseminate institutional DEI efforts to their department.

*“Our DEI Faculty Development Plan outlines a comprehensive, strategic approach to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion at RSC. Beginning with a thorough needs assessment conducted through surveys, interviews, and focus groups, we identified key areas for improvement and initiated healing discussions and enrichment sessions to build a supportive atmosphere. Concurrently, we researched successful DEI programs to inform our framework and roadmap, which will guide the implementation of the faculty development plan. The development of a practical toolkit for faculty and the collection of baseline student data will further support our efforts to ensure sustainability. Implementation will be flexible, based on feedback, and we will continuously review and iterate our strategies to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness. This structured plan emphasizes collaboration, accountability, and sustained progress in creating an inclusive educational environment.”*

— Dr. Emily Obuya





Throughout the academic year, DEI Faculty Liaisons played a crucial role in fostering a culture of diversity and inclusivity within their department. Their responsibilities encompass a wide range of activities aimed at promoting equity, supporting underrepresented groups, and advocating for inclusive policies and practices within their discipline. At the core of their role is serving as a bridge between faculty members and the office of DEI. DEI liaisons facilitate communication and collaboration, ensuring that the voices and concerns of our communities are heard and addressed effectively.

### 13 DEI FACULTY LIAISONS

**Andrea Dievendorf**  
*Biology and Health Sciences*

**Sandra Penny**  
*Chemistry and Biochemistry*

**Francesa Durrand**  
*Educational Leadership*

**Jae Kim**  
*Interdisciplinary, Sociology*

**Marcy Fiet**  
*Nursing*

**Martha Wasserbauer**  
*Nutrition*

**Becky Bernhardt**  
*Occupational Therapy*

**Cathron Donaldson**  
*Physical Therapy*

**Kelly Smith**  
*Education*

**Vincent Corcoran**  
*Psychology*

**Leah Rico**  
*Graphic and Visual Arts*

**David Baecker**  
*Theatre and Performing Arts*

**Elizabethe Kelly**  
*Gen Ed.*



Faculty from across disciplines participated in the transformative text of Dr. Brenda Allen's groundbreaking work, "Differences Matter: Communicating Social Identity." In this 7-week faculty reading group, we delved into the intricacies of diversity and inclusion within our classrooms. In partnership with the Gen Ed. Core, faculty participants engaged in lively discussions, critical reflections, and collaborative activities aimed at deepening our understanding and fostering meaningful change within our academic community. From exploring the intersectionality of social identity to addressing power dynamics and privilege, this reading group offered a comprehensive exploration of diversity issues.

### 9 PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Wendy Gaughan  
Leslie Bennett  
Emily Obuya

Tracy Egan-Lasek  
David Baecker  
Jenn Morrill

Sara Schuman  
Ali Schaeffing  
Kate Kagan

### FEEDBACK

*"The conversations were important and I felt able to have a safe space to discuss issues. I liked the online journaling as well."*

*"I loved the group and wished it could have lasted a bit longer. It was interesting to hear how RSC 201 implements the curriculum and how students respond. It's an ongoing conversation. I learned so much from the people who participated and from Sara and Geoff."*

## Powerful Teaching, Active Learning, Reaching All Students

Education Department Chair and DEI Faculty Liaison Kelly Smith led this program during the J-College session by discussing the core principles of powerful teaching by emphasizing evidence-based practices that have proven to enhance student learning outcomes. The interactive workshop invited participants to explore innovative teaching frameworks tailored to promote critical thinking and active engagement among all students.

### FEEDBACK

*"I can't wait to apply strategies to accomplish my goals which will help how I teach my students."*

*"It was great to learn about these specific and powerful teaching tools!"*



Engaging in volunteer activities that center DEI can be incredibly beneficial for college students to see themselves in the communities served. These experiences provide opportunities for students to actively engage with diverse communities, gain perspective on social issues, and develop empathy and cultural competence. This past year we held 3 volunteer events:



The Albany International School / Dual Language program hosted their Hispanic Heritage Month Festival and Sage volunteers helped ensure the festival's success.



The Underground Railroad Education Center in Albany held a volunteer opportunity session and tour for members of the Sage community. The Center researches and preserves the local and national history of the Underground Railroad movement, its international connections, and its legacy to today's social justice issues.



A small group of volunteers set up and joined in for Pakistani cooking demonstrations at the Refugee Welcome Center.



## FEEDBACK

*“Thank you, Thank You, Thank You!! All of you played a special role in bringing Hispanic Heritage Month alive in our building all month long! The students learned so much and felt so much pride during assemblies, learning within the classroom about Hispanic culture, the parade and of course the celebration. Thank you for all your help, support, and time, it is truly appreciated!”*

**Alexandra Avila-Clary**  
First Grade Teacher – Dual Language Program

## PRIORITY 2

**Increase access and success for under-represented and marginalized populations.**

---



## DEI in the classroom

Guest speakers and presentations in class can be incredibly enriching experiences for students as they provide access to a wide array of experiences and cultures. These presentations offer opportunities for students to see their cultural backgrounds, traditions, and perspectives represented among their peers, fostering cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.



NYS Assembly Member Jessica Gonzales-Rojas visited students to talk about her legislation to represent Arab identifying individuals on the census.



A panel discussion on Diversity in the Economy, was moderated by Cy-Mier Dace a RSC business student, featuring CEO of The Albany Black Chamber of Commerce & Social Club Deshanna Wiggins and Walter Thorne, Market President and Publisher for the Albany Business Review.



Trainer Lyndon Cudlitz worked with students to explore the fundamental concepts of gender and sex, their distinctions, and the significance of understanding these concepts in contemporary society.



Scrimshaw Distinguished Visiting Artist Nambi E. Kelley, acclaimed playwright and television writer and the season two co-producer on Peacock’s “Bel Air,” was a guest speaker in several classes and held a play reading for the public in the Meader Little Theater.



Afrofuturistic artist Jordan Taylor Hill is not just about music; he’s also a storyteller, bridging cultures through words and rhythms that fuse Hip-Hop with a musical drumming demonstration about the crucial role of music, dance, and culture in our global society.

Hosting Critical Conversations allow us to uplift people through their stories which represent a wide variety to students and participate in discussions based on experiences, which we believe is crucial for fostering understanding, empathy, and inclusivity.



Schenectady Community Ministry Executive Director Amaury Tañón-Santos, DMin, facilitated a conversation that asks the question “How should I identify you?” and empowers participants to think about LatinX identity through a process of self-identification and representation.



Caleb Seguin, spoke about concepts of adult supremacy and its resistance in the Anishinaabe Culture’s parenting styles.

### FEEDBACK

*“I thought it was quite interesting how Amaury used his own personal life experiences to emphasize his points. Also, when he was asked to further explain some points about the LatinX term, you could tell he was very passionate about the conversation, which made it just that much more exciting to listen to.”*

### FEEDBACK

*“I learned a lot about the Indigenous community. Despite my maternal grandmother being half Native American, I did not grow up learning much about that part of my ancestry, but I wish I did. It was great to hear how Indigenous children were raised and how different it is from American culture. What I would take away from the presentation is how he mentioned to keep an open mind when listening to others’ perspectives. I liked how they used the analogy of chaff in the wind.”*

 FEEDBACK

*“This presentation got me thinking about the different races and the benefits that come with each race. Lukee mentioned how Black men and White men both smoke marijuana, but Black men are more likely to get arrested for it. So, it got me thinking about researching why Black men get arrested for marijuana use disproportionately to White men.”*



Activist and community leader Lukee Forbes introduced students to using Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) scores instead of traditional risk assessments regarding incarcerated people.

 FEEDBACK

*“I really did enjoy learning from Farkhondeh because she helped me understand that migrating from a different country and going through college to become a nurse can really show us how determined people can be.”*



Alumna Farkhondeh Tajik '23 didn't start regular education until she arrived in the United States at age 22. Since then, she has completed her degree in nursing. Filmmaker Elahe Gol Pari previewed her short documentary about Farkhondeh's story of perseverance in the face of adversity.



Cricket Hall of Fame Inductee Ashok Adikoppula set up a local not-for-profit cricket league with the support of friends in the Capital Region. He was the driving force behind a new law to “Promote and Expand the Sport of Cricket in New York”. His love and passion for cricket is about creating accessibility, especially for young people, to participate in cricket.

### FEEDBACK

*“Ashok shared his amazing talent, skills, and intelligence with us. He is a phenomenal cricket player and coach, an IT professional, and a youth and AAPI advocate. He has also proven to be a face of success, entering an entirely different country from India. Glad we met him!”*

## Heritage Month Activities



In honor of Black Heritage Month, there was a Talent Show that paid tribute to the remarkable contributions of Black artists and performers throughout history.



As part of our Family Weekend, Felix Ortiz, dance instructor and owner of ¡BaliaAlbany!, had the Sage community dancing in the streets.



Students screened *Inhabitants*, a feature documentary that follows five Native American Tribes across deserts, coastlines, forests, and prairies as they restore their traditional land management practices.



**Heritage Month at SODEXO**

Sodexo is proud of the work they do in diversity management by fostering inclusivity through providing culturally diverse menus. Integrating DEI principles into our food services, creates a more inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment that acknowledges and values the diverse backgrounds and needs of their student population. This year, our menus were inspired by local restaurants and entrepreneurs.

**Black History Month**

Dining at Russell Sage College is a great partner to the diversity, equity, and inclusion mission of Russell Sage College. Our Black menu featured soul food, Caribbean, Greek, and African cuisine. Each menu featured a dish inspired by a local restaurant. The first was Afro Big City Kitchen in Atlanta. Dining at RSC has an obligation to promote these local culinary champions and enlighten our students to the hidden treasures of the Capital Region, both local and worldwide.

**With an American-Inspired menu influenced by Black-owned businesses in the Capital District**  
**Thurs, Feb 1**  
 Soul Food at Afro Big City Kitchen  
 TRUNG

**With an American-Inspired menu influenced by Black-owned businesses in the Capital District**  
**Thurs, Feb 8**  
 Soul Food at Afro Big City Kitchen  
 TRUNG

Social Media posts are the first step. We connect directly with the businesses we are promoting.

**Caribbean Rum Cake**  
**Sunday Supper Soul Food**  
**National Pancake Day**

**Middle Eastern North African Heritage Month**

Dining at Russell Sage College has worked with Geoff Miller, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to expand our Heritage Month Acknowledgments, including MENA Heritage Month 2024. Our MENA menu featured cuisine inspired by Lebanese and Moroccan restaurants in the Capital Region. We are very excited to continue this tradition annually and further diversify the Dining at RSC Community.

**Thurs, Apr 4th**  
 Lebanese Cuisine at SODEXO

**Thurs, Apr 11th**  
 Moroccan Delight at SODEXO

**Thurs, Apr 18th**  
 Algerian Cornbread Bibbiano at SODEXO

**Lebanese Cuisine**  
**Moroccan Delight**  
**Algerian Cornbread Bibbiano**

**Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month**

AAPI Heritage Month takes place during the month of May, however, because of finals and commencement, we bring about the celebration a few weeks early.

Our AAPI menu featured traditional Thai, Polynesian, and Hawaiian fare. We were able to feature a few AAPI-themed pop-ups such as Boba Blast and Sensational Sushi within our retail locations as well as resident dining.

**Thurs, Apr 18th**  
 Sensational Sushi at SODEXO

**Thurs, Apr 18th**  
 Hawaiian Loco Moco Grill Spectacular at SODEXO

**Sodexo Thai Restaurant**  
**LET THE GOOD TIMES ROLL**  
 Thai Dinner at SODEXO

**Bobo Blast Pop-Up**  
**TEA DAY**  
 Dining at SODEXO

## DEI Presentations at Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour is a casual, and engaging weekly event designed to foster communication, collaboration, and camaraderie among colleagues across different departments and locations. This virtual gathering provides an opportunity for team members to connect, share ideas, and unwind in a relaxed setting, transcending physical office boundaries.



Dr. Ilham AlMahmid, Research Associate Professor at SUNY and a founding member of New York for Syrian Refugees, shared her journey in higher education as a MENA leader and how higher education can support other MENA-identifying students be successful.



Seven Dancers Coalition was at Coffee Hour and educated the Sage community about their mission to uplift the families of Indigenous Communities by educating and restoring traditional values with the purpose of strengthening self-confidence and dignity.



### Heritage Month at Solutions

Solutions desks are located in the libraries on both the Troy and the Albany campuses. This year, Library staff curated a list of Open Educational Resources (OER) that reflect the words from diverse identities and heritages.



## PRIORITY 3

**Continuously build upon a campus climate where everyone feels welcome, supported, included, and valued.**

---

Service learning and DEI are interconnected at Sage, providing students with opportunities to engage with diverse communities, reflect on their own biases, and contribute to social change. In May, Sage, led by our Service Learning Office, partnered with Siena College to host Engage for Change on the Troy campus. The half-day gathering brought together faculty, staff and administrators from 9 institutions of higher education gathered to engage with 35 nonprofits to deepen their connections and practices of service learning through a lens of research and equity.



### FEEDBACK

*“Engaging with community partners, as well as faculty, was valuable. The fact that community partners were there saying, “there is a need in my work and I am looking for people to help me with these things”, was a great exercise in making connections that will benefit many!”*

*“Seeing old friends, meeting folks who I’ve been trying to track down, and getting ideas for how to move forward on projects that have been stuck for a while was amazing.”*

The DEI Coalition members are the network of support within their department of the college. Investing in the on-going training and development of the Coalition is the key to amplifying their impact while also celebrating their commitment to this enduring work.



Russell Sage College was honored at the Pride Center of the Capital Region's annual gala on November 17, 2023. The college received the "Advocate for the Future" award, recognizing the development and delivery of programs to develop and empower students to make a positive impact on LGBTQ policy and in their communities.

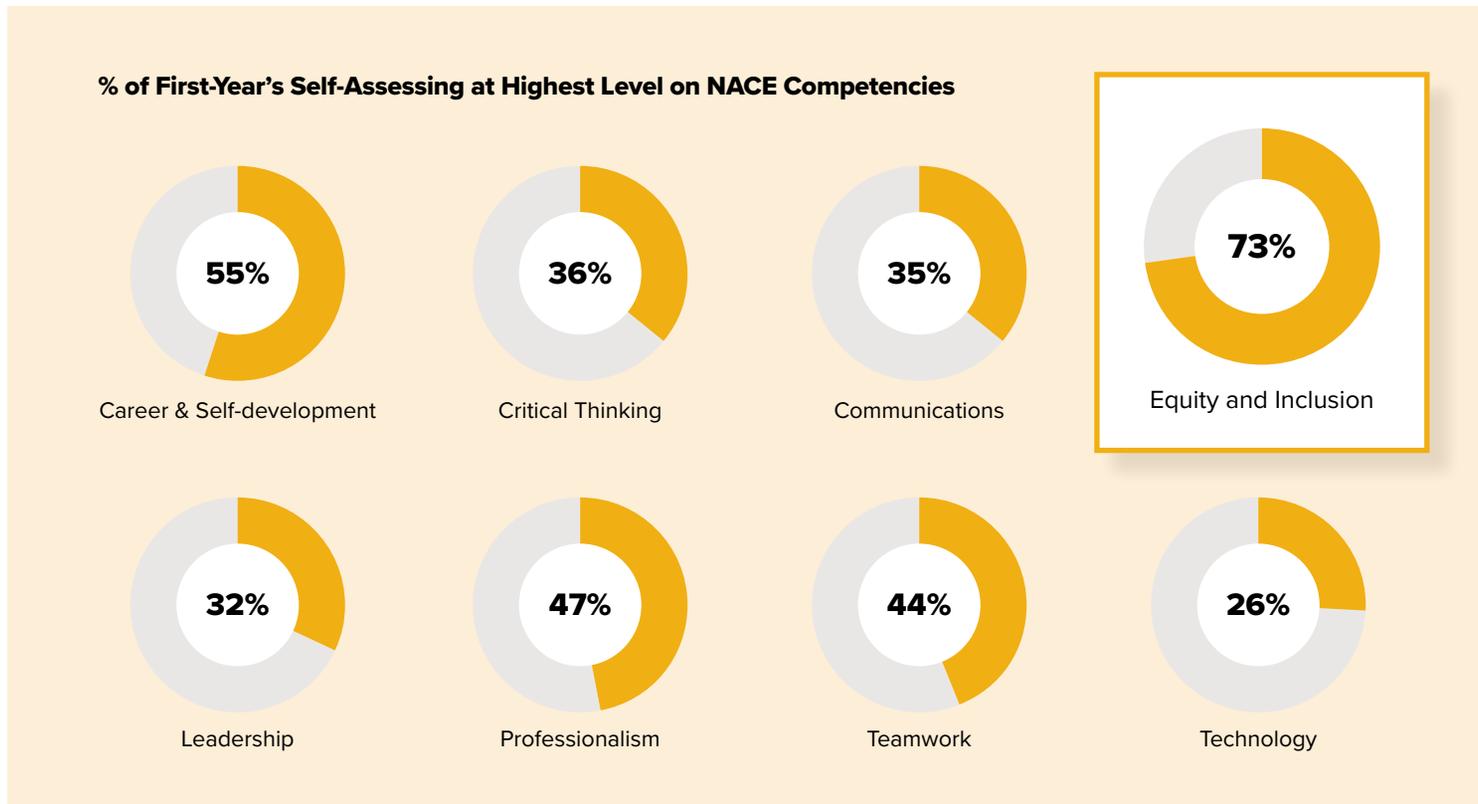
Maintaining a strong online representation of college DEI efforts is essential for transparent communication and engagement with the campus community. The DEI web page serves as a central hub for information related to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, policies, resources, and reporting capabilities. The web page was very recently updated to reflect the current progress to date. Check it out at <https://www.sage.edu/about/community-resources/diversity-equity-inclusion/>.



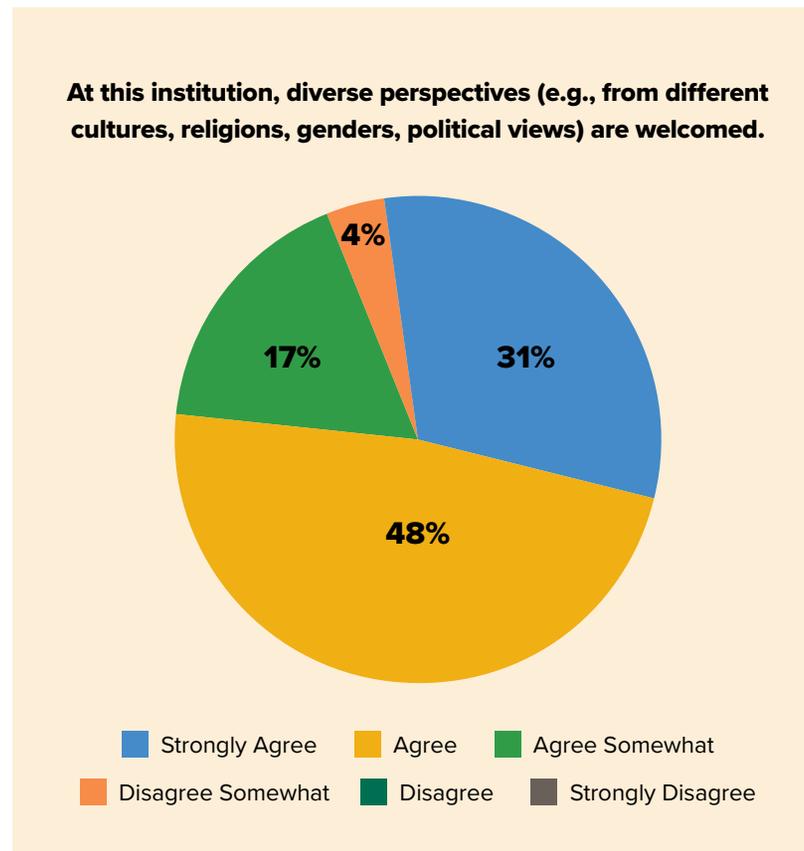
DEI pages from July 1, 2023 until May 20, 2024 have had:

-  **1,008 page views**
-  **387 users**
-  **2.6 views per user**
-  **44 seconds of average engagement time**

An element of Priority 3 of our Strategic Plan is to infuse DEI assessment throughout the institution. An example from the last academic year comes from our first-year seminar, RSC 101, where students take the industry standard Focus 2 Self-Assessment, in which students rate their own level of ability in eight career-ready outcomes established by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). Of note, 73% of students rate themselves at the highest possible level on *Equity and Inclusion*, while only 35% rate themselves at the highest level on *Communications*. When we recognize that one of the items self-assessed under *Equity and Inclusion* is “I recognize and eliminate my biases,” it may indicate that our first-year students are more aware of and familiar with difficulties intrinsic to the other seven NACE outcomes.



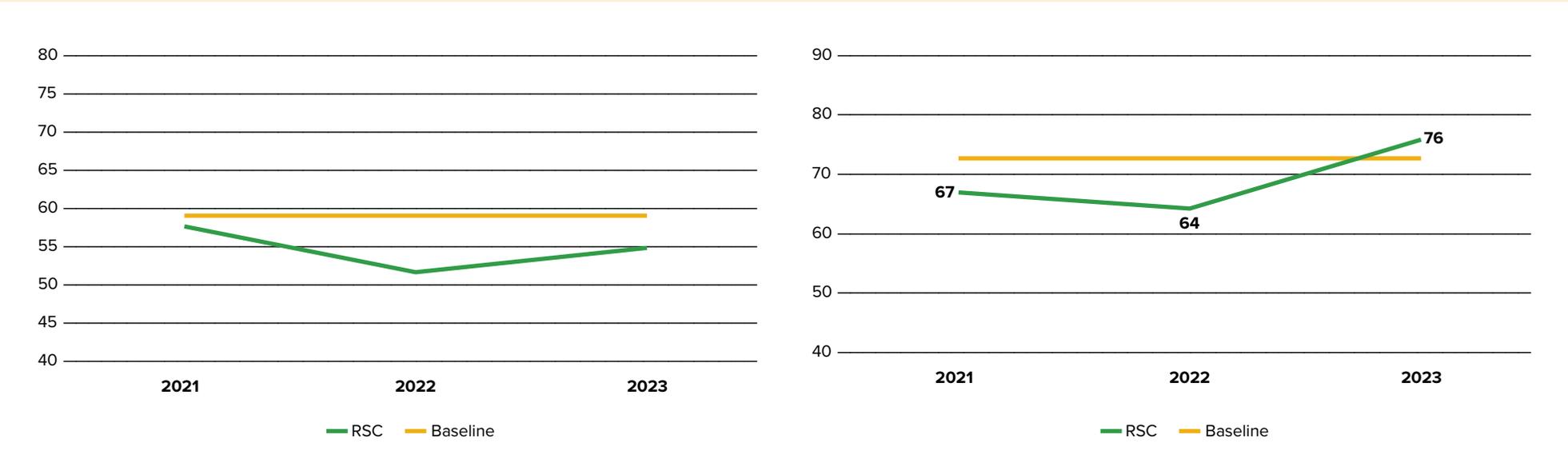
Second-year students enrolled in RSC 201 take an assessment called the Student Social Connectedness Inventory, a measure of belonging and inclusion, in and out of class. We piloted the instrument in Spring '23, and gathered our first full set of data in Spring '24. It's clear from the Spring '24 administration of the tool that students feel diverse views are welcomed at Russell Sage College, with zero % of students choosing *Disagree* or *Disagree Strongly*.



Russell Sage College recently began to participate in the *Great Colleges to Work For* survey, a measure of Higher Ed workplace culture and satisfaction facilitated by ModernThink. This widely used annual instrument measures satisfaction in several dimensions, including opportunities for professional development. Of the hundreds of institutions who take part, Russell Sage College has identified several comparator schools to help contextualize our own progress, and average of their results gives us a baseline. We see from the graphics below that RSC satisfaction with professional development opportunities approaches but doesn't surpass the baseline during the most recent years but significant growth in employee awareness and involvement in DEI initiatives and effort. 2024 Results will be available by October.

**Professional Development (% “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)**

**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (% “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”)**



## PRIORITY 4

**Attract, recruit, support and develop a diverse community inclusive of all students, faculty, and staff.**

---



The United Negro College Fund reports that among students enrolled in four-year public institutions, 45.9% of Black students complete their degrees in six years—the lowest rate compared to other races and ethnicities and Black men have the lowest completion rate at 40%. Finding community is critical to improve this national trend and at Sage we create a Men of Color and their allies group to empower one another and encourage success at Sage.

Alumni Pressage Predestin, Lamont Garland, Jaquan Mack, Richard Sanchez, and Kelvin Zapata participated in a roundtable discussion with students.

#### FEEDBACK

*“Your diversity is an asset, not a limitation.”*

*“Put yourself in all different situations and environments”*

*“If you have to change yourself to fit in, you’re at the wrong place.”*



#### **DEI and Human Resources**

DEI and Human Resources should walk hand in hand as our office administers policies and procedures. It shapes our hiring practices, interview process and onboarding as we continue to build a more supportive and engaging place to work by understanding the perceptual, institutional, and psychological processes that impact the ways people interact with each other focusing on employee engagement, then identifying interventions surrounding unconscious bias and specific diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies, this program this partnership ensures our commitment to going beyond mere compliance to build a truly aware and inclusive work culture.



The Social Justice Scholars (SJS) contribute significantly to fostering a culture of critical inquiry, activism, and social change on our campuses. This year, our SJS students participated in The Greater Good Science Center's Bridging Differences initiative which mixes science and storytelling. They each received a certificate of completion to add to their resume. Using their skills, SJS went into a class and facilitated conversations with their peers about challenging topics.

#### FEEDBACK

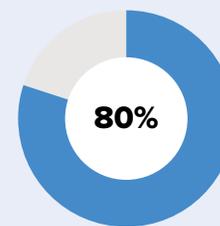
*“Overall this was a great way to touch on sensitive topics. I liked how not everyone was pressured to speak and how we just needed to hold up the flashcards.”*



Douglas Sato is a third year History Childhood Education major who holds several leadership roles at Sage. Last summer Doug studied abroad and attended the prestigious arts, activism, and social justice summer school at the University of Bristol.



Saadé White is a senior Public Health major and Social Entrepreneur who advocates for climate justice as President of the Sustainability Club. Whether Saadé is organizing a recycling drive around move out day in the dorms or drafting policies at the Capitol as a NYS Senate and Assembly intern, Saadé is a force for good.



80% of participants found this activity an effective way to initiate a healthy and inclusive dialogue in your learning community.

PRIORITY 5

**Develop an institutional  
infrastructure to drive change.**

---

Through the I Can Achieve a Nursing (ICAN) Degree program, Sage has been working in partnership with Albany Medical Center, Albany Leadership Charter School for Girls, and the Black Nurses Coalition to develop a program that provide high school students with an early college exploration experience designed to build their interest in the profession of nursing and health sciences.

We believe that the ICAN program will remove barriers to health-related career pathways for underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students and will foster an interest in nursing and health related careers through the academic pipeline, from high school through college. The program has a strong mentorship component and creates meaningful employment and direct professional experience in the healthcare field as students. This model could become scalable and replicated by others to colleges, and medical centers not only in the Capital Region but throughout the United States. A program like this at Sage has the ability to drive institutional infrastructural change.



### FEEDBACK

*“I learned more about nursing from really kind people who answered my questions.”*

*“I liked how nice everyone is, all the fun activities, and I got to understand the life of a student in Russell Sage College.”*

*“I loved the way they genuinely teach you and take their time answering any question you could possibly ask. I also loved the hands-on experience.”*

*“The Albany Med atmosphere seems like a place where I can see myself.”*



With continued funding through the New York State Students with Disabilities grant program, the Office of DEI, the Office of Accessibility, and Thrive at Sage hosted a National Disability Employee Awareness month luncheon and an armchair discussion with Yvonne Clark Rogers to discuss how we can create a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities. Participants included students, faculty, and staff who filled Bush Memorial for an engaging and enlightening conversation.

### FEEDBACK

*“To address ability concerns the person who is disabled should be a part of the conversation and the solution.”*

*“There are great community partners that are looking to help us support students, patients, and community members with disabilities in meaningful employment.”*

*“Employers can benefit from hiring workers with disabilities.”*





Bringing Theory to Practice is a national initiative, launched in 2003, to advance the core purposes of college: holistic learning, preparation for meaningful work and democratic citizenship, contribution to community wellbeing, and the flourishing of the whole person. Offering all students such transformative education, we believe, requires transformative change in higher education.

The change Sage explored was college access for refugees through the Refugee Voice Project which documented the story of refugees as they navigate their college experience. Importantly, this project places current and prospective college students at the center of the work to foster empowered and informed decisions, and collaboratively build more inclusive and responsive higher education institutions.

Filmmaker Elahe Gol Pari created a short documentary to share Farkhondeh's story of perseverance and you are invited to see the early edit of the film and learn about the obstacles students like Farkhondeh encounter and how to persist and succeed in college.



<https://www.youtube.com/@voiceofutamechannel>

## Conclusion

Good DEI work is about accountability. The successful execution of our DEI Strategic Plan continues to be a collaborative effort at all levels of the institution, involving cabinet, faculty, staff, students, and the broader community.

We are proud of the positive changes we have witnessed, but we also recognize that our journey toward inclusivity is on-going. We remain committed to evolving our practices and addressing challenges as we strive to create a campus that truly embodies the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

If you have questions, inquiries or want to discuss more, please contact the office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion via Geoff Miller at [milleg3@sage.edu](mailto:milleg3@sage.edu).



**PRIORITY 1: Grow our leadership on inclusive teaching and scholarship in relation to Equity, Inclusion and Diversity.**

Goal	Strategy	Partner Office(s)	Year 2 Measure	Results/Updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Holding/Further Consideration
<b>1) Implement Universal Design for Learning</b>	1) Identify and develop UDL resources for faculty and offer introductory UDL training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• CTL</li> </ul>	45% of full-time faculty attend professional development by the end of Year 2 (May College, J-College and/or Opening Day.	○ UDL resources listed on DEI webpage and will be incorporated in the campus-wide e-newsletter in the Fall and training will happen for faculty in August	
<b>2) Support inclusive teaching, scholarship, and professional development</b>	1) Provide opportunities for faculty to deepen their knowledge of DEI through workshops and access to resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• CTL</li> </ul>	Faculty are encouraged to create professional development plan DEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 3 of 3 faculty trainings completed this year</li> <li>✓ Completed 7-week Exploring Intercultural Perspectives &amp; Social Identity learning community with a cohort of 9 faculty members this fall</li> <li>✓ DEI Faculty Liaisons participated in a half-day retreat to deepen their practice and knowledge of DEI</li> </ul>	
<b>3) Provide opportunities for Russell Sage College students to see their lives reflected in curriculum</b>	1) Incorporate a diverse range of representative texts, speakers, and other relevant materials to teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost</li> <li>• Gen-Ed</li> <li>• Undergrad Dean</li> <li>• CTL</li> </ul>	Process created by each discipline. Each academic discipline will create a process to review the current curriculum and determine where there is a need to include a diverse range of representative texts and other relevant teaching materials.	○ DEI Faculty Liaisons, who represent each academic department, have met as a group twice, and individually with the office of DEI, to discuss this goal. Liaison have compiled a collection of resources specific to their discipline and it will be added to the website over the summer	
	2) Departments to develop and share public-facing commitments to DEI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost</li> <li>• CTL</li> <li>• Communications</li> </ul>	Departments will have a positive increase to responding that there is equity found in their curriculum and department key documents.	○ DEI Faculty Liaisons, who represent each academic department, have met with their department to discuss this goal. Each department has indicated professional development is needed in this area and will be offered in Spring 2025	
	3) Promote experiential learning that exposes students to multiple cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undergrad Dean</li> <li>• Service Learning</li> </ul>	Engage with a diverse community of experiential learning partners.	✓ The Office of DEI and Experiential Learning partnered to deliver 3 experiential learning in coordination of heritage month celebration, along with support for a community-wide Engaged Learning event	
<b>4) Appoint a DEI Faculty Fellow.</b>	1) Create, develop, recruit, hire and implement the position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost</li> </ul>	Continue the DEI Fellow's Plan.	✓ Professor Dr. Emilly Obuya continues to serve as DEI Faculty Fellow and has developed a network of colleagues, DEI Faculty Liaisons, to increase reach and partnership	

**PRIORITY 2: Increase access and success for under-represented and marginalized populations.**

Goal	Strategy	Partner Office(s)	Year 2 Measure	Results/Updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Holding/Further Consideration
<b>1) Provide trainings for campus members who work with students from underrepresented and marginalized populations</b>	1) Offer comprehensive training and professional development program that balances foundational learning and exploration of DEI principles.	• Student Life	Six programs annually (two for faculty and staff, two for student leaders, and two for public safety) and evaluating programs via programmatic evaluations. <i>REVISED MEASURE:</i> Help bridge 1+ opportunity for Public Safety to engage with students.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty & Staff Trainings: 6 of 6 (Obuya, Clark-Rogers, Smith, Evers, Melton, Hannah) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Leaders Training: 6 of 6 (3 RA Training, 2 Advocacy Training, 1 HEOP Training) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Safety Training: 0 (UHA will continue to provide their own mandatory trainings)	
	2) Host an annual DEI workshop for all college employees.				Participant evaluation and feedback.
<b>2) Educate community members about the values and strengths of students from underrepresented and marginalized populations.</b>	1) Create a campaign that highlights community members up by telling their stories through digital and/or print mediums.	• Communications	Run the campaigns and establish a baseline of online impressions in Year 2 to benchmark in Year 3.	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to partner with the Communications and Marketing Office to advise on the importance of representation	
	2) Host events on campus that center DEI as a way to connect with peers and learn.				• DEI Coalition • Student Life • Provost

**PRIORITY 3: Continuously build upon a campus climate where everyone feels welcome, supported, included, and valued.**

Goal	Strategy	Partner Office(s)	Year 2 Measure	Results/Updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Holding/Further Consideration
<b>1) Create an Institution of Belonging.</b>	1) Develop a webpage that includes the college's DEI mission and vision, DEI definitions, bias reporting procedures, the DEI strategic plan and other relevant resources.	• Communications	Measure effectiveness by the impressions of the webpage and social media and establish a baseline (of online impressions) in Year 2 to benchmark in Year 3.	✓ Webpage Updated 1.15.24 ✓ Reporting links included and updated ○ Continue to add resources for the upcoming academic year	
	2) Disseminate information about DEI training and resources.	• DEI Coalition • Communications • CTL	Will be measured by an increase of .325% on the sense of belonging section on the CECE survey by 2025.	○ 5 Coalition meetings and 3 professional development trainings	
	3) Engage commuter students or students that take classes remotely.		The addition of commuter and/or remote student on DEI Coalition.	✓ Commuter student serves on Coalition	
<b>2) Coordinate DEI reporting across all RSC to keep progress prominent.</b>	1) Develop a written and visual annual DEI report that addresses progress within each priority of the plan.	• Communications	Completed annual report by June 2025.	✓ You're reading it!	
	2) President will update the college community on DEI progress annually.		Delivered comments.	✓ President delivered comments Opening Day ✓ President's letter in the Year 2 report	
	3) Assemble the climate study group to conduct the next climate study in academic year 2024-2025.	• DEI Coalition	Assemble the climate study group at the end of Year 2.	■ Hold for Fall of 2024	
<b>3) Provide a range of DEI learning opportunities in various formats.</b>	1) Provide and assess multiple informal and formal opportunities for information sharing, learning and processing (Critical Conversations, Advocacy, Social Justice Scholars, Heritage celebrations, speaker series, etc.)		Program implementation and evaluations.	○ Evaluations continue to be collected	
	2) Create a calendar that will also include best practices that acknowledge the multiple religious and cultural holidays.		Complete and incorporate calendar across the college community.	✓ Calendar created and disseminated	
	3) Identify and build a robust network of external community partners that can support the college with DEI and social justice initiatives.		Partner with 10 organizations annually.	✓ 17 Partnerships Occurred: Albany Business Review; Capital Region Chamber of Commerce; Albany International Center; Schenectady Community Ministry; Albany Black Chamber of Commerce; Jessica González-Rojas Assembly District 34; Seven Dancers Coalition; Pride Center of the Capital District; Intercultural Café, Troy; Black Nurses Coalition; Albany Med; Albany Leadership Charter School for Girls; Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs; Siena College; SUNY at Albany; Refugee Welcome Center; Underground Railroad Museum	

**PRIORITY 4: Attract, recruit, support and develop a diverse community inclusive of faculty, staff, under- graduate students and graduate students.**

Goal	Strategy	Partner Office(s)	Year 2 Measure	Results/Updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Holding/Further Consideration
<b>1) Increase the retention rate of underrepresented students by 1% to 3% percent within three years.</b>	1) Establish a Men of Color program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost</li> <li>• Advancement</li> </ul>	Implement program.	✓ 3 of 3 programs occurred	
	2) Create a Dialogue on Diversity series which is a platform that allows for conversations between students, faculty and staff on DEI.			Implement the program and create a baseline of attendees.	✓ Social Justice Scholars completed the Building Bridges program via Berkeley EdX series and will develop an event for students this spring
<b>2) Coordinate, with the Office of Human Resources, an equitable recruitment process and hiring practices to increase and retain diverse hires.</b>	1) Adopt the Search Advocate Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR</li> <li>• Provost</li> </ul>	15 employees trained annually.	■ HOLDING – Vendor for Search Advocate is not taking new clients – we will adopt and deliver our own Search Advocate training in the 2024-25	
	2) Review job descriptions to ensure descriptions are standardized and unbiased.	• HR	Create a committee to review job descriptions or train an employee in HR.	■ HR Director began this year and will implement in the Fall	
	3) Hire a consultant to complete HR assessment.	• HR	Hire consultant.	■ CANCEL this strategy based on budget restrictions	
	4) Advertise in diversity publications, on diverse job boards and educational/professional conferences or organizations, etc.	• HR	Review all advertisements for placements.	■ HR Director began this year and will implement in the Fall	
	5) Support the Office of Human Resources to conduct exit interviews	• HR	Ensure we are conducting exit interviews with departing employees.	■ HR Director began this year and will implement in the Fall	
	6) Conduct stay interviews with employees to ensure they feel included and have a sense of belonging in their position and department.	• HR	Research and develop stay interview schedule and process.	■ HR Director began this year and will implement in the Fall	

**PRIORITY 5: Develop an institutional infrastructure to drive change.**

Goal	Strategy	Partner Office(s)	Year 2 Measure	Results/Updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Holding/Further Consideration
<b>1) Identify and distribute new and existing funding sources to support DEI programming and capacity.</b>	1) Collaborate with Institutional Advancement to identify fiscal support.	• Institutional Advancement	Track dollars raised in support of DEI by June 30.	✓ Currently managing \$275,000 ICAN project ✓ Projected to have raised an additional \$500,000 in phase 2 funding for ICAN project for 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years ✓ \$125K request to combat hate crimes on campus via NYS Department of Criminal Justice ✓ Secured \$5K from NYSED for trainings	
	2) Allocate funding to support cultural competence in research and teaching activities.	• Provost	Ensure budget allocation.	✓ Provost sponsored 7-week Community Faculty Group: Exploring Intercultural Perspectives & Social Identity	
<b>2) Develop a Center for Diversity on both campuses.</b>	1) Hire an additional DEI employee.	• President	Person is hired, onboarded and performing at an excellent/outstanding level.	■ Hold on DEI Personnel	
	2) Survey and evaluate the DEI Coalition's composition and function to increase effectiveness.		Create and implement DEI Coalition growth plan, recruit new members and reward existing members.	✓ 20 active Coalition members ✓ 14 DEI Faculty Liaison	
	3) Evaluate existing programs in student life as they pertain to DEI.* <i>*This strategy is contingent on additional personnel, as per plan.</i>	• Student Life	Determine how many programs will be needed and execute.	■ VP of Student Life requires areas to have an annual DEI goal associated with systems, policies, and procedures that impact the function and operation of the Student Life department.	
<b>3) Enhance accessibility and inclusive spaces.</b>	1) Incorporate the principles of UDL when evaluating and improving spaces.	• Cabinet	ADA compliance.	✓ Space study provides remedy to help achieve greater accessibility	
	2) Identify spaces on each campus and remedy spaces and/or services to increase access.	• Cabinet	Set multi-year goals based on report.	✓ Space study provides remedy to help achieve greater accessibility	
	3) Participate in Space Utilization committee meetings.	• Cabinet	Space Utilization committee to contribute and ensure that DEI objectives are considered.	✓ Space study provides remedy to help achieve greater accessibility	
	4) Provide a series of programs or workshops for faculty and staff that deepen their understanding for working with people with disabilities.	• Wellness and Accessibility	Program evaluations and improved feedback from the next climate study.	✓ Supporting Students with Disabilities: ADA & Section 504 of the American with Disabilities Act	
	5) Extend the availability of Accessibility services.		The Accessibility Office is open when students need it.	✓ Solutions Desk has allowed the Accessibility Office to provide expanded hours	
	6) Develop ways students can benefit from the government program Access-VR (Vocational Rehabilitation).		ROI based greater access to accommodations.	■ HOLD for feasibility	

Continued →

**PRIORITY 5: Develop an institutional infrastructure to drive change.**

Goal	Strategy	Partner Office(s)	Year 2 Measure	Results/Updates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete <input type="checkbox"/> In Progress <input type="checkbox"/> Holding/Further Consideration
<b>4) Assure that college systems, policies and procedures promote equity, facilitate diversity goals, improve clarity, provide transparency and enhance accountability.</b>	1) Convene a working group dedicated to the audit of institutional policies and practices for alignment with diversity strategic priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Student Life</li> <li>• Institutional</li> <li>• Advancement</li> <li>• Provost/Dean</li> <li>• Enrollment</li> <li>• Title IX</li> </ul>	Working group provides report to community in 2024-25.	<input type="checkbox"/> Group began meeting bi-weekly in Spring of 2023 and continues by prioritizing assessment of institutional policies and practices	
	2) Conduct unit-level DEI assessment with each department of the college.			Collect and compile program survey generating qualitative and quantitative data by 2024-25.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met with all faculty departments in 2022-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Will meet with staff departments in 2025-26 for Climate Study
<b>5) Create a Bias Response Team to support the college's strategy for achieving an inclusive campus climate.</b>	1) Create the policy and procedures of the Bias Response Team.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost</li> <li>• Student Life</li> <li>• President</li> </ul>	Completion of policy and procedure.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Response Team Members Identified and Confirmed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Draft procedure submitted to meet Middle States Standards	
	2) Convene team to meet to review reports and make findings and recommendations in tandem with the director of EEOC and Title IX.			Develop framework and reporting system.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Team assembled <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize training this summer