CASTLETON UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT
NORTHERN VERMONT UNIVERSITY
VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

VERMONT
— STATE COLLEGES SYSTEM —

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR
PO BOX 7
MONTPELIER, VT 05601
P (802) 224-3000

MEMORANDUM

TO: <u>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee</u>
Mary Moran, Chair
Ryan Cooney
Dylan Giambatista
Bill Lippert
Jim Masland

FROM: Kathryn Santiago, Assistant General Counsel *K. Santiago*

DATE: June 3, 2021

SUBJECT: DEI Committee Meeting June 7, 2021

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee of the Board of Trustees is scheduled to meet on Monday, June 7th from 1:00pm to 2:30pm by Zoom.

The focus for this meeting will be for the committee to discuss definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion to be incorporated into the committee charter, discuss diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives that currently exist at individual institutions, and to have preliminary discussions in furtherance of identifying ways to improve equitable access to its educational programs and recruitment for employment for those who have been marginalized or underrepresented historically.

In preparation for the committee's discussion, in the accompanying materials please find the DEI Committee meeting minutes of March 12th, draft definitions from VSCS Social Justice group, reports from the individual institutions' diversity, equity and inclusion committees and/or groups, and an update on the anti-racism pledge.

Also, on the agenda are updates on the proposed anti-racism pledge and information concerning diversity, equity and inclusion academic initiatives.

I can be reached directly at (802) 224-3012 if you have any questions. Thank you.

Cc: VSCS Board of Trustees
Council of Presidents
Academic Deans
HR Council
Student Affairs Council

Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee Meeting

Zoom Meeting/YouTube Stream
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **Monday June 7, 2021**

AGENDA

1:00 P.M. – Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of March 12th, 2021 Meeting Minutes
3. Update on DEI academic initiatives
4. Update of DEI definitions from VSCS Social Justice group
5. Update on proposed anti-racism pledge from VSCS Social Justice group
6. Information on existing DEI committees at individual intuitions
7. Additional Business
8. Public Comment – sign up here: www.vsc.edu/signup
9. Adjourn

MEETING MATERIALS

ITEM 1:

March 12, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the VSCS Board of Trustees Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee meeting held Friday March 12, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom - UNAPPROVED

Note: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at the subsequent meeting.

The VSCS Board of Trustees Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee met on Friday, March 12, 2021 via Zoom.

Committee Members present: Mary Moran (Chair), Dylan Giambatista, Bill Lippert (1:36 p.m.), Jim Masland

Absent: Ryan Cooney

Other Trustees Present: Karen Luneau

Presidents: Joyce Judy

Chancellor's Office Staff: Donny Bazluke, Network/Security Analyst
Doug Eastman, Director of Information Systems
Katrina Meigs, System Director of HR and Benefits
Jen Porrier, Administrative Director
Kathryn Santiago, Assistant General Counsel & System Investigator
Patty Turley, General Counsel
Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor
Yasmine Ziesler, Chief Academic Officer

From the Colleges: Sarah Chambers, Coordinator of Instructional Technology, Castleton University
Kathleen Mason, Coordinator for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Vermont Technical College
Hannah Miller, Faculty, Northern Vermont University
Miles Smith, Assistant Athletic Director, Northern Vermont University
Jamey Ventura, Associate Dean of Athletics, Northern Vermont University

1. Call to Order

Chair Moran called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and the attendees performed a round robin introduction.

2. Discussion of draft Committee Charter

Chair Moran introduced the charter as seen on page 4 in the materials packet and invited discussion. Assistant General Counsel Kathryn Santiago shared that the charter was drafted using verbiage drawn directly from NECHE accreditation standards and definitions for Committee charters. Trustee Giambatista asked about the process of amending the charter after the fact, and Chancellor Zdatny replied that the process of amending the charter, which was done recently for other committees as part of amendments to the Trustee Handbook, is not prohibitive. Chancellor Zdatny raised the point that the charter does not include definitions for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Through discussion, it was agreed that the VSC Social Justice group would discuss the topic at their monthly meetings. Hannah Miller of Northern Vermont University agreed to be the point person for this work and Kathryn Santiago will forward some materials gathered regarding definitions. The Charter will be adopted as written but as the Committee moves forward, these terms will be defined and refined further.

Trustee Giambatista moved and Trustee Masland seconded the motion to recommend to the Board the adoption of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Charter as written. The motion was approved unanimously.

3. Update on proposed anti-racism pledge from VSC Social Justice

NVU Associate Dean of Athletics Jamey Ventura shared that a group of students showed interest in developing an anti-racism pledge for the colleges. A draft was created, and grant money was obtained. Experts have been identified to assist with furthering the pledge. NVU Assistant Athletic Director Miles Smith then shared further variables that the students discussed such as comparisons between the COVID pledge and the anti-racism pledge and what happens if students don't want to sign the anti-racism pledge. These issues are being explored now.

4. Information on DEI academic and hiring initiatives

Chief Academic Officer Yasmine Ziesler shared an update on the new General Education core set of requirements that are currently under review for adoption as a common core of requirements across the system. This work was charged by the Board as a result of a recommendation from the VSCS Forward Task Force. The Social Justice Group at the VSC reviewed the first draft of the VSC General Education Agreement proposal through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion and the DEI learning outcomes in bold in the final proposal in the materials packet is the distillation of their recommendations.

General Counsel Patty Turley, on behalf of System Director of HR Katrina Meigs, then shared information on DEI hiring initiatives. Ms. Turley mentioned that HR Council has been working with the campuses on consistent approaches reflecting DEI in hiring. Ms. Meigs has consulted with Wanda Headings-Grant to potentially develop training related to DEI in hiring through the outlining of goals, optional instruction and workshops, and open communication with leadership.

5. Information on Gender Identity and VSCS Information Systems

Director of Information Systems, Doug Eastman, informed the Committee that a cross college cross function working group is being formed in an effort to make the VSC Enterprise Information Systems more gender inclusive. Members of this working group were recommended by the Presidents and are already involved in these issues on their campuses. Mr. Eastman stated that implementing these kinds of changes is not only technical but also requires awareness and training. This work is ongoing.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Comments from the public

There were no comments from the public.

Chair Moran adjourned the meeting at 1:58 p.m.

ITEM 2:

Definitions from VSCS Social Justice Group

These definitions were drafted by the VSCS Social Justice group in April and May 2021.

Diversity: A community where individuals with various intersecting identities thrive. We acknowledge that no person may be defined by one identity, and our various identities intersect in unique ways. These identities include race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, sex, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, medical status, religion, language, culture, marital status, height, weight, national origin, age, and disability. Note: we recommend excluding "political ideology" from this list. We do not tolerate, for example, white supremacist ideologies in the VSCS.

Equity: The active and sustained deconstruction of unjust power hierarchies that privilege certain voices, identities, and bodies over others, at both the interpersonal and structural scales.

Inclusion: Being a part of a meaningful decision-making process. Note: we recommend avoiding the term "feel" in this definition. We want people to *be* included, not *feel* included.

Statement of Gender Inclusivity: The VSCS draws on the Agency of Education's 4 core principles to guide gender inclusivity:

1. All students, faculty, and staff have a gender identity which is self-determined and valid.
2. All students, faculty, and staff have privacy rights.
3. All students, faculty, and staff have a right to a safe learning environment and social community.
4. All students, faculty, and staff have a right to a learning environment free from discrimination.

https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-best-practices-transgender-and-gnc.pdf

ITEM 3:

Update on Anti-Racism

Pledge

Update on Anti-Racism Pledge provided by Jamey Ventura and Miles Smith of VSCS Social Justice Group
*formatted by Kathryn N. Santiago

The student group, Miles, and I are still meeting and working on a draft of the Anti-racist pledge to present to the DEI committee and BOT to approve.

We had our first meeting with Nevin Caple, a DEI expert, on May 6th. Nevin discussed with our students the difference between a statement and a pledge. After a great discussion, Nevin provided our students some questions to respond to in order to gather the information necessary to build out the pledge. Those questions included: Define Anti-Racism, addressing the challenge/barrier and importance to them, why is anti-racism important to them, NVU, and the Vermont State Colleges, share optimism for the future, identify key stakeholders, who is our target audience, what is group commitment to anti-racism, what are their racial equity dreams, what is needed to realize those dreams, what is the pledge asking the target audience to do, and create a list of actions.

After the students completed their homework on the questions above, Nevin, Miles, and I met on May 18th to review their answers. We all agreed that, first, our students are incredible and their in-depth answers were amazing. Second, we agreed that their detailed answers contain everything needed for them to develop the pledge. From there we reached back out to the students and gave them more homework. We asked them to read the answers to the questions that their peers wrote and highlight the statements that really resonated with them.

Miles and I then met with the students on Thursday May 27th, to review the homework assignment with them and recap our conversation with Nevin.

On Thursday June 10th, Nevin will meet with Miles, me and our students and help them to formulate the pledge from what they highlighted from each other's answers. Our hope is by late June we will have a draft ready to the VSC social Justice partners to review and provide feedback. Then we will be ready to share what the students developed with the DEI Committee and BOT for review. The hope is that this pledge will be supported by the BOT and the Chancellor will ask that each campus of the Vermont State Colleges system adopt this pledge for their faculty, staff, and students to sign starting the new academic year, similar to how we all signed a COVID pledge at the beginning of the past academic year in order to keep our campuses safe.

As for student representation, when we started back in November as the students presented to the board, we had representation from each institution. However, when the spring semester rolled around, we lost representation from Castleton. We reached out to see if another student wanted to join us, but Castleton was unable to connect another student with our group. Therefore, the following people make up our anti-racist pledge working group:

Kevin McGreal - CCV

Ayo Shokeye – NVU-Johnson

Sabra Anne Snyder – NVU-Lyndon

Devyn Thompson – NVU-Johnson

Cyncere Watkins – Vermont Tech

Miles Smith –NVU-Johnson

Update on Anti-Racism Pledge provided by Jamey Ventura and Miles Smith of VSCS Social Justice Group
formatted by Kathryn N. Santiago

Jamey Ventura – NVU Johnson

I will also mention that the VSC Social Justice Partners group, made up of 1-2 representatives from each campus that the Chancellor and BOT have reached out to for updates on the DEI work on each campus, meet monthly and it was from this group that Miles and I were appointed to take the lead with the students in the development of this pledge. The representatives from each campus in this group also helped identify the students that are involved in the creation of this pledge.

ITEM 4:

DEI Reports by Campus

Castleton University

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

Report to the Chancellor, May 17, 2021

Castleton's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee evolved from the University's Access & Equity Committee in response to Interim President Spiro's pledge to the community in June 2020. Our mission is to work toward the removal of barriers for underrepresented members of the Castleton University community and to implement the President's Pledge, as follows.

- Strengthen our efforts to diversify the student body.
- Foster a climate of safety for students, employees, and visitors of color and other historically marginalized groups.
- Provide co-curricular programming about racism and white privilege.
- Support students of color and other historically marginalized groups who seek to create programs and organizations that ensure they feel supported and heard on our campus.
- Support anti-racism training for staff and faculty.
- Review our curriculum in order to combat systemic racism and implicit bias.
- Revise our hiring practices to increase diversity among faculty and staff.
- Encourage students to vote and engage in other political action.

Our members include a cross-section of the campus community.

Students
> Raynolds Awusi '21
> Kaetlyn Collins '19, G'22
> Katie Feeney '19, G'21

Faculty
> Dr. Megan Blossom, Associate Professor and Chair, Psychological Sciences
> Dr. Leigh-Ann Brown, Associate Professor of Education
> Sam Davis-Boyd, Assistant Professor of Media and Communication
> Dr. Tersh Palmer, Professor of English
> Maya Kraus, Part-Time Faculty; Student of Color Advocate
> Dr. Lisa Pleban, Professor and Coordinator of Physical Education Teacher Education

Staff
> Adnane Adossama, Upward Bound Student Development Coordinator
> Victoria Angis, Associate Dean of Students
> Miranda Axworthy, Reference Librarian
> Amy Bremel, Coordinator of Advocacy, Activism, and Non-Violence Education
> Dr. Francesca Catalano, Dean of the College of Health and Sciences
> Becky Eno, Academic Counselor
> Dr. Gillian Galle, Associate Academic Dean

Janet Hazelton, Director of Human Resources

Rob Macfarlane, General Manager, Sodexo at Castleton University

Raphael Okutoro, Assistant Director of Admissions

Matt Patry, Director of Student Activities

Elicia Pinsonault, Communications Coordinator

Amanda Richardson, Director of Institutional Research & the McNair Scholars Program

Marisa Valent, Manager of the Fine Arts Center & Soundings

Much of the fall 2020 semester was spent developing an action plan for implementation of the President's Pledge and educating ourselves about microaggressions as well as Admissions policies and procedures. The DEI website {https://www.castleton.edu/campus-life/inclusive-excellence/} was redesigned and extensive resource guides were included on the topics of race, gender, and poverty. The web site and the guides are continually updated.

DEI recommended that a new position of Student of Color Advocate be created. Maya Kraus, long-time dance instructor, ably fills that role. Maya has made it a priority to make herself available to meet with BIPOC students and share their concerns with appropriate University personnel. Maya frequently shares resources with the campus community and, with CU See Me's support, has organized several virtual programs including:

- "Safe Space" discussion with BIPOC students and allies;
- Discussion on Indigenous Peoples Day;
- Discussion with Lisa Ryan (former Rutland Alderman), Tabitha Moore (former president, Rutland Area NAACP), and Kesha Ram (Vermont State Senator);
- AAPI film discussion.

Co-curricular programming has been an important focus of our work. CU See Me is the programing arm of DEI. That committee produced a video which was used as the campus-wide convocation in February. They also supported two film discussions during Black History Month and several relevant Soundings events including:

- Didge Evolution (indigenous Australian culture);
- RENT (LGBTQA+ community, AIDS/HIV, income inequality);
- LGBTQA+ Voices in Ballet (interview with LGBTQA+ members of a ballet company);
- A Woman's Place is in the House and the Senate (Kesha Ram).

CU See Me is working on expanding its outreach to the community by developing a calendar of DEI-related anniversaries, holidays, and community programs to be launched in the fall.

The DEI Committee is currently working on the following projects.

Assessment

Funding has been approved to administer the Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium (HEDS) Campus Climate survey to Castleton students, faculty, and staff in the fall of 2021. The assessment sub-committee, spearheaded by Amanda Richardson, has also spent considerable time reviewing the DEI Maturity Index from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA). Based on their recommendations we have initiated a working group to develop a definition of diversity which will guide our work going forward.

Bias Reporting and Responding

In response to students' concerns that it is difficult to know how to report a bias incident on campus, this sub-committee reviewed our existing policies and procedures and has recommended an overhaul of our web site to make it much easier to report an incident. The next step in this process will be to collaborate with Public Safety, Residence Life, and Student Life to review our current response protocols and agree to changes if needed.

Land Acknowledgement

Led by Dean Catalano, this group of faculty has received approval from the President's cabinet to convene a Native American Advisory Board to assist with development of a land acknowledgement statement and protocols for its use. In addition, they are planning a three-part seminar series on Native American culture to begin on October 11, 2021. Abenaki and Mohawk Nation flags have been purchased by the SGA and will soon be hung in the Campus Center. Several faculty are developing or revising relevant coursework, and a Native American library guide and digital history page are in the works. The Dean of Enrollment has agreed to work on a scholarship for Native American students as a result of this sub-committee's work.

Training

In April 2021 DEI sponsored two training sessions on Implicit Bias facilitated by Nikki Fuller, Esq., Senior Consultant at Workplace Matters in Williston. Over 60 members of the University community participated. We have been collaborating with the Castleton Center for Teaching and Learning to provide resources and professional development opportunities for faculty. Other groups are working on training for staff and students. Preliminary conversations have been held with Connections Seminar faculty and Student Life staff to incorporate DEI topics into programs for First-Year students this fall.

In addition to the projects described above, we have sub-committees focused on:

- Surveying faculty about their training needs,
- Inventorying other DEI initiatives among faculty and staff,
- Developing a protocol for responding to adverse community incidents,
- Initiating a review of our curriculum, and
- Reviewing Admissions data and developing recruitment materials for BIPOC students.

The DEI Committee is not alone in its efforts to provide a safe, bias-free community at Castleton University. The Student Government Association (SGA) decided that it was important to have the Black Lives Matter flag on campus, and they paid for the erection of two new flag poles near the center of campus. One pole now flies the BLM flag, and the other will soon hold a GLBTQ+ flag. Ray Awusi, a DEA member and SGA delegate, initiated and received recognition for the Aspiring NAACP Club which is now in the process of applying for approval as an official NAACP Chapter. Ray has been supported in these efforts by DEI member Raphael Okutoro and Dr. Rich Clark, Professor of Political Science.

In summary, the DEI Committee is ambitious, hard-working, and committed to making changes at Castleton despite the overwhelming scope of this important work.

From:	Albeck, Angie
To:	Judy, Joyce M.; Zdatny, Sophie E.
Cc:	DiMascio, Marianne
Subject:	Summary of CCV"s DEI Task Force
Date:	Tuesday, May 11, 2021 1:20:18 PM
Attachments:	image001.jpg

Dear Sophie and Joyce,

You have each asked for a summary of the work of CCV's DEI Task Force. Please see below, and let us know if we can provide any additional information.

Thanks,
Angie and Marianne

CCV's DEI Task Force, 2020 - 2021

At the direction of President Joyce Judy, CCV's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force formed in September of 2020 with a goal of bringing a DEI lens to all areas and levels of the
college. Its members include Angie Albeck (staff, co-chair), Miki Dash
(faculty), Marianne DiMascio (staff, co-chair), Gilberto Diaz Santos (staff), Mina Ganguly-Kiefner (staff), Jenny Gundy (staff), Bradford Houk (faculty), Amy Beth Kessinger (faculty) Nina Kunimoto (faculty), Becky Millard (staff), Tuipate Mubiay (staff), Alex Northern (faculty), and Sanju Tamang (student). During the 20-21 academic year the Task Force established norms, formed relationships with other groups within the college, and identified goals and proposals.

Achievements of the Task Force include writing a statement of purpose, clarifying the group's goals and orientation in the college; developing a proposal for faculty and staff professional development; and identifying a need for a creative project to uplift student voices.

In addition, the Task Force worked with a variety of other groups in the college. Faculty and staff reached out to the Task Force for suggestions and support and to provide outreach. Task Force members served as liaisons to a wide variety of committees and work groups to support them in identifying and executing their own goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. A list of the groups and their first round of goals is below.

Group/Committee/ Department	Goal/Initiative
President's Council	Use a DEI lens for policy development – create and use a list of questions when updating, evaluating, and creating policy. Develop an implementation plan. Assess status of institutional support of DEI work –evaluate current status using a rubric; develop action plan to move forward with the work.
Academic Council	Training: how to talk about race in the classroom.

Arts, Communication, and Humanities CC	Create a Racial Justice Module for Dimensions.
Student Advisory and Leadership Council/ PTK	PTK - Develop a cookbook that highlights diversity at CCV and use it to promote and raise funds to combat food insecurity. SALC – Create a series of conversations for students around topics and media related to equity.
College Council	45-minute to 1-hour DEI conversation based on a pre-agreed upon reading/ audio/ video at the March, April, and May 2021 meetings. We anticipate carrying these discussions over to next year. Develop a list of suggestions for staff trainings/ outside presenters for staff. Cindy and Christine will present these suggestions to PC in May. Monthly DEI Newsletter (with input from DEI taskforce) with possible inclusion of historical bio's, staff picks for readings/ audio/ videos, non-Christian holiday highlight, cultural highlights, and an equity challenge.
GRACIE	Review all agenda items through a DEI lens. GRACIE has added a DEI column to their standard minutes template. GRACIE Idea Box now includes DEI related ideas as a category.
Student Affairs	TRIO – Assess and eliminate deficit-based language in TRIO materials. Career Services- Work with Resource Coordinators and develop plan for supporting students in the justice system. Veterans – Develop program for women vets at CCV.
50th Anniversary Planning Team	Abenaki Speaker Series
Marketing & Communications	Increase the intentionality with which we attend to diversity, equity, and inclusion in marketing and communications efforts by expanding our interpretation of diversity. This means featuring students, alumni, faculty, and staff from a broad range of backgrounds. Include and represent diversity in terms of: Race and ethnicity; Age; Gender; LGBTQ+, Disability status;

	Socioeconomic background; Programmatic diversity
	Promote and provide coverage of significant DEI efforts throughout the College, including events, curriculum and academic changes, and community partnerships.
Hartness Library	Promote the Racial Justice & Antiracism Resources subject guide to faculty and students; Promote the Book Club (especially discussions in honor of Black History Month and Women's History Month).
CCV United Faculty Anti-Racism Working Group	Create a recommendation for Academic Council for courses and program requirements that will increase CCV students' understanding of structural racism and systemic inequities.

The Task Force will start its work for 21-22 in July, beginning with a review of the goals set for the prior year and an identification of next steps to deepen and expand the College's commitment to dismantling systems of inequity.

Angie Albeck [she/her pronouns]
Associate Dean of Students
Community College of Vermont

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05/17/2021

Dear President Collins and Provost Atkins:

We would like to thank you for establishing the Diversity and Inclusion Task (DITF) force for the 2020-2021 academic year, and for prioritizing and supporting our work. In this academic year we divided ourselves into 5 working groups to tackle specific needs that had been previously identified on our campus. Each month the five working groups met separately to work on their specialized goals, and then sent at least one representative to a larger, monthly DITF meeting to report on each group's progress and discuss our goals as a group. This year we had an active membership of approximately 40 faculty, staff, students, and community members. These members were from both Johnson and Lyndon in efforts to collaborate and share this work between DITF and Lyndon FAIR. In our final DITF meeting in the academic year of 2020-2021, we invited our working groups to share reflections on three questions:

1. What are your <u>accomplishments</u> for 2020-2021?
2. What are your current <u>needs</u>?
3. What are your <u>goals</u> for continued work going forward?

In this report we'd like to share these reflections on our work.

Task Force 1: Create an equity workshop for incoming faculty, staff, and students
1. <u>Accomplishments</u>: Identified learning objectives for equity workshops; Developed a framework and protocol for modules for incoming faculty/staff, which involves a face-to-face reflective conversation as a capstone experience; Identified a student-facing training module to which VSCS already has access; Collaborated with the Center for Teaching and Learning to share resources and plan.
2. <u>Needs</u>: Funding for faculty and staff to develop faculty/staff-facing equity modules in Summer 2021 or during the academic year; Identify a faculty/staff person to facilitate the critical capstone conversation going forward.
3. <u>Goals</u>: Develop the educational modules and implement educational protocols for faculty/staff; integrate the VSCS educational model into orientation for incoming students.

Task Force 2: Create a protocol for responding to incidents of racism on campus
1. <u>Accomplishments</u>: Researched other campus response protocols; Identified a need for a system to support students who have experienced discrimination, harm, violence, or harassment immediately after the incident; Developed a form for students to complete when an incident occurs; Applied for funding to hire an external consultant, Margaret Bass, to facilitate BIPOC student focus groups; Developed a draft NVU Inclusion

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Lyndon Campus | 1001 College Road | PO Box 919 | Lyndonville, VT 05851

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Accountability Protocol to follow immediately when an incident is reported; Developed a budget needed to implement the protocol; Secured funding to implement the protocol from Title 3 grant.

2. <u>Needs</u>: Sustained funding to integrate the NVU Inclusion Accountability Protocol into our permanent support systems for students.
3. <u>Goals</u>: Continue to oversee the implementation of the newly established NVU Inclusion Accountability Protocol.

Task Force 3: Develop web presence

1. <u>Accomplishments</u>: Identified space and framework for sharing our work with our community and the public through the NVU Website
2. <u>Needs</u>: Development of a mechanism for collecting and synthesizing information about work happening across campus to put on the site (this report could serve that to some degree);
3. <u>Goals</u>: Identify a way to keep this web presence responsive to changes on campus and updated continuously.

Task Force 4: Create a campus climate survey

1. <u>Accomplishments</u>: Developed a campus climate survey with support from Title 3 funding and resources; Applied for funding to provide raffle prizes to incentivize student participation; Implemented the survey across both campuses; Received ~300 student responses; Began data analysis with resources from Title 3 (for data analysis); Shared preliminary results with DITF.
2. <u>Needs</u>: The first round of analysis revealed a need for (1) BIPOC staff in the wellness center, (2) increased institutional support for BIPOC students, (3) a multicultural space/center that would provide space for BIPOC students to build community and capacity on campus and (4) protocols for responding to incidents of racism on campus.
3. <u>Goals</u>: Continue data analysis with Elaine Harvey and Adam Johnson; Establish a multicultural community center or space on campus or in the library for the purpose of (1) providing a physical space for BIPOC students to build community and host events; (2) archiving and storing knowledge and art created by local BIPOC community members, artists, organizations, and students.

Task Force 5: Adopt equitable hiring practices

1. <u>Accomplishments</u>: Piloted two search committees with Equity Advocates; collected feedback from search committees and equity advocates to refine and improve the process; developed a handbook/guide to equitable hiring practices; organized a free community conversation to share what we have learned with community partners and the VSCS; collaborated with the Consortium for Faculty Diversity (CFD) and secured funding to join the CFD for 2021-2022.
2. <u>Needs</u>: An HR director or contact who will prioritize collaboration on this work and integrate Equity Advocates into hiring processes and procedures at NVU; Access to VSC

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policies and procedures to examine how our work interfaces with their systems; Funding to post job announcements in diverse venues.

3. <u>Goals</u>: Develop orientation/training modules for equity advocates; Work with the incoming NVU HR director and VSC staff to implement our protocols, processes, and procedures for all search committees beginning in Fall 2022 while continuing our pilot program in 2021-2022; Extend this work into systems of retention and promotion.

<u>Recommendation</u>: **In reflection on our work this year, we realize that to sustain this work going forward we need an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).** In spring 2021, a group of students from across VSC institutions met with the Board of Trustees and made a series of recommendations based on their experiences as students. One of their recommendations was to establish an office of DEI. We want to take this moment of reflection to revoice and affirm the students' request to establish this office. Ideally this office would be staffed by an intentional cluster hire process and would be housed at a system level with DEI Directors on each campus. We see our campus DEI Director this office being responsible for (but not limited to) the following work:

- Working closely with the Learning Working Communities coordinator, Lyndon FAIR, and DITF to build partnerships in the community that are built on equitable collaboration and exchange of resources;
- Working closely with Lyndon FAIR and DITF to support and coordinate the ongoing work of the Task Force working groups 1-5 (see above), including implementing the NVU Inclusion Accountability Protocol, continued assessment of campus climate, implementing equity education for students and faculty/staff, and implementing diverse hiring practices and procedures;
- Communicating progress, opportunities, and challenges with the Executive Team, Board of Trustees, Office of the Chancellor, and members of the legislature;
- Working closely with the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide ongoing professional development to faculty/staff related to DEI;
- Critically analyzing campus's policies and procedures through a DEI lens and developing action and accountability plans for change;
- Work closely with HR on policies and procedures to retain and promote faculty and staff with minoritized identities;
- Work with administrators to allocate and manage funding to prioritize and support ongoing DEI initiatives.

As the VSCS enters unification, this is a critical opportunity to establish this office. Based on our work this year, we see a need for staff members whose full-time work is focused on the goals

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above. Preliminary data from our campus climate survey and focus groups suggest that many of our BIPOC students report a desire for a sense of belonging on campus, and often do not feel included. They shared a variety of experiences and noted observations, including lack of racial diversity in our faculty and staff, experiences with racist or discriminatory incidents that were disregarded or unresolved, and needing more resources to build community on campus. We recognize that these symptoms of historic inequities stem the national, state, and cultural inequities and that they are not unique to NVU, and we also know that the way that NVU community will address these historical systemic problems must be specific to our local systems and context. A cluster hire of staff to oversee and support inclusion and belonging initiatives in an Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion would provide much-needed visible resources on campus where our students with minoritized identities could turn for support and resources, and would designate full-time work to the goals and needs outlined in this report.

We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation and hope to have an opportunity to further discuss our vision for this work going forward.

Sincerely,
Hannah Miller & Jamey Ventura, Diversity & Inclusion Task Force co-chairs

DITF Members:
1. Lisa Zinn (lisa.zinn@northernvermont.edu) NVU faculty
2. Jenny Echarte (Jennifer.Echarte@NorthernVermont.edu) NVU staff
3. Kathleen Brinegar (kathleen.brinegar@northernvermont.edu) NVU faculty
4. Haleigh West (haleigh.west@northernvermont.edu) NVU staff
5. Isaac Eddy (Isaac.eddy@northernvermont.edu) NVU Faculty
6. Erin Rossetti (erin.rossetti@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
7. Addie White (atw11030@nvu.vsc.edu) NVU student
8. Jasmin Daigle-Arnold (jld12180@nvu.vsc.edu) NVU Student
9. Jae Basiliere (Jae.Basiliere@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
10. Mareesa Miles (Mareesa.Miles@Northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
11. Rasul Jackson (rmj12080@nvu.vsc.edu) NVU Staff
12. Rob Schulze (robert.schulze@northernvermont.edu) NVU Faculty
13. Becca Simon (res10131@nvu.vsc.edu) NVU Student
14. Michele Whitmore (michele.whitmore@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
15. Leah Hollenberger (leah.hollenberger@northernvermont.edu) NVU staff
16. Jacki Stanton (jstan44@yahoo.com) Community Member
17. Elaine Harvey (elaine.harvey@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
18. Kate Abdel Fatah (kateabdelfatah101@gmail.com) NVU Alumni
19. Mike Secreti (Michael.Secreti@NorthernVermont.edu) NVU Staff

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20. Raz Eltman (exe06210@vsc.edu)
21. Cait Wilkins (caitlin.wilkins@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
22. Greg Eckman (gpe07230@nvu.vsc.edu) NVU Staff
23. Sylvia Plumb (Sylvia.plumb@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
24. Jamey E (Jamey.ventura@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
25. Pat Shine (patricia.shine@northernvermont.edu) NVU Faculty
26. Nedah Warstler (nedahwarstler@gmail.com) NVU Alumni/Community
27. Miles Smith (miles.smith@northernvermont.edu) NVU staff
28. Shavonna Bent (sbent@mit.edu ; shavonnabent@gmail.com) NVU Alumni
29. Siobhan Anderson-Judkins (sca03130@nvu.vsc.edu) NVU Staff
30. Kate Gold (kathleen.gold@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
31. Kate McCarthy (kathleen.mccarthy@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
32. Ben Mirkin (ben.mirkin@northernvermont.edu) NVU Faculty
33. Hannah Miller (Hannah.miller@northernvermont.edu) NVU Faculty
34. Beth Walsh (beth.walsh@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
35. Lisa Kent (lisa.kent@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
36. Andrew Lafrenz (andrew.lafrenz@northernvermont.edu) NVU Staff
37. Kathy Armstrong (kathy.armstrong@northernvermont.edu) NVU staff
38. Kristi Castleberry (kristi.castleberry@northernvermont.edu) NVU Faculty
39. Julie Theoret (Julie.Theoret@northernvermont.edu) NVU Faculty
40. Krystine Villeneuve (kav11210@nvu.vsc.edu) NVU Student

Part-time Faculty Project Advisors:
1. Karen Madden (karen.madden@northernvermont.edu)-- Academic Support Services/History
2. David Rouse (dgr12040@nvu.vsc.edu)-- Writing & Literature
3. Danny Anguiano (dxa08260@nvu.vsc.edu)- Art
4. Dawn Crowell (dfc08070@nvu.vsc.edu)- NVU Online (Environmental Science)

From:	Shine, Patricia E.
To:	Zdatny, Sophie E.
Subject:	RE: DEI Committees
Date:	Thursday, May 20, 2021 1:13:52 PM
Attachments:	image004.png
	Diversity In NVU Syllabi Report (002).pdf
	image001.png

Hi Sophie –

My apologies for the delay in responding to your request below.

FAIR members this year:

> Staff: Kate Gold, Sam Boss (left earlier this year), Erin Rossetti, Amy Wright, Deb Bailin
> Students: Nat Sullivan
> Faculty: David Johnston, Kristi Castleberry, Pat Shine
> Part-time faculty/Alum: Henekis Stoddard

In terms of our work this past academic year, we certainly have not been as robust as in previous years due to the pandemic and the many changes taking place at the college and within our individual workloads. That being said, as noted in material that Hannah & Jamey have likely already sent you, FAIR members were part of the NVU-J DITF work groups.

In addition:

- Kristi Castleberry worked with Rob Schulze to review NVU syllabi for social justice content, "Diversity in NVU Syllabi". (I've attached a copy, fyi.)
     o Presented to the NVU community (March, 2021)

- Racial Justice Training open to all NVU community members (October, 2020)

- Follow-up "Continuing the Conversation" meetings for any community members who ever attended one of our Racial Justice trainings (we've offered several over the years)
     o Implicit Bias (April, 2021)
     o White Fragility (January, 2021)

- Bystander Training: Being an effective bystander in addressing sexism. (October, 2020)

- World Café – Community in a Time of COVID (September, 2020)

- Social Justice Workshop for Alums – Stamped from the Beginning. (September, 2020 –

w/ Hannah Miller)

- Meeting with NVU-L alums of color – eliciting feedback re: racial justice (August, 2020)

FAIR has an annual summer retreat during which we plan our programming & initiatives for the upcoming academic year, thus nothing specific has yet been identified for AY 21-22.

We continue to work in collaboration with the VSC Social Justice Group in order to share and strengthen cross-campus social justice work.

In closing, when the topic is social justice, I can't let any opportunity to go by without continuing to vigorously advocate for a DEI-dedicated position for the VSC.   As an institution of higher learning, we are incredibly behind the times in having such a position. It is the right thing to do from a moral perspective, from a legal perspective, and from a recruitment & retention perspective. It is worth the financial investment, even in challenging financial times such as those in which we are.

If there's other information you need from me, just let me know. Thanks, Sophie.

Pat

Patricia Shine, MSW, LICSW
She/Her
Professor, Human Services
Northern Vermont University – Lyndon
1001 College Road
Lyndonville, VT 05851
802-626-6252

From: Zdatny, Sophie E. <sophie.zdatny@vsc.edu>
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 7:59 PM
To: Shine, Patricia E. <pes03140@nvu.vsc.edu>; Miller, Hannah K. <hannah.miller@northernvermont.edu>; Mason, Kathleen F. <kfm09260@vtc.vsc.edu>; Angis, Victoria <victoria.angis@castleton.edu>; Albeck, Angie <ara06040@ccv.vsc.edu>; DiMascio, Marianne <mxd02060@ccv.vsc.edu>
Cc: Collins, Elaine C. <elaine.collins@northernvermont.edu>; Moulton, Patricia L. <plm08130@vtc.vsc.edu>; Spiro, Jonathan P. <jonathan.spiro@castleton.edu>; Judy, Joyce M. <jmj10300@ccv.vsc.edu>
Subject: DEI Committees

Pat, Hannah, Kathleen, Victoria, and Angie/Marianne:

The Council or Presidents and I have been considering how best to advance the various initiatives and projects around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion that are underway or contemplated on the different campuses across the system so we can consider how best to support such efforts and maximize the use of our limited financial resources.

The Presidents identified each of you as the leader (or co-leader) for the DEI committees on your respective campuses.

As a first step, I am hereby asking that each of your committees provide a brief narrative/summary of current initiatives that you are working on and identify your committee members (including whether they are a student, faculty member, of staff member). If you could send these to me, I will compile them and share them with the Presidents. I know this is a busy time of year so want to be respectful of your time – would three weeks (Monday, May 17th) give you sufficient time?

We very much appreciate all of the work that you have been undertaking and want to make sure that we have a coordinated, thoughtful and strategic approach as we move forward.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,

Sophie

Sophie Zdatny, Chancellor
Vermont State Colleges
Office of the Chancellor
P.O. Box 7, Montpelier, VT 05601
(802) 224-3013 (direct)
Sophie.Zdatny@vsc.edu

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Diversity in Northern Vermont University Syllabi
A Report for the Strategic Plan

Kristi Castleberry, Ph.D
Rob Schulze, Ed.D

Johnson Campus | 337 College Hill | Johnson, VT 05656
Lyndon Campus | 1001 College Road | PO Box 919 | Lyndonville, VT 05851

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Introduction

As part of the Diversity and Inclusion plank of the Northern Vermont University Strategic

Plan, the University decided that it needed information on how well diversity was represented

in the curriculum. While there are other ways to assess diversity in higher education (in the

student body, campus programming, website, admissions materials, etc.), the curriculum is an

essential part of the collegiate experience and the institution lacked information in this area.

This report is intended to inform that aspect of the strategic plan.

Literature Review

Diversity is an important consideration in the higher education curriculum. Research

shows that diversity is not only crucial in creating equitable opportunities for marginalized

student populations, but also helps all students develop crucial skills in critical thinking and civic

engagement that are essential both for employment and for citizenship in a democratic society

(National Leadership Council, 2007, p.38). In fact, "the question is not whether we want

diversity or whether we can accommodate diversity, for diversity is clearly our present and our

future. Rather, it is time to move beyond old questions and to ask instead how we can build

diversity into the center of higher education" (Smith, 2009, p. 3). The push for a diverse campus

experience and curriculum has been called "a fight against racism (not a racist fight). It is an

education that capitalizes on the resources and endowments of all individuals'' (Obiakor, 1994,

3-4). While diversity is difficult to categorize specifically, on college campuses it includes such

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"historically marginalized" categories as race, disability, sexuality, documentation status, and student veterans (Hoffmann & Toutant, 2018, p. 156). Many methods used to increase capacity for diversity on campus focus on trainings for staff or for students (Kruse, Rakha, & Calderone, 2018). However, the curriculum itself can also be a vessel for the consideration of diversity in higher education.

The curriculum of a higher education institution can be used to highlight diversity or to disregard it. A curriculum that makes use of diverse perspectives can result in students who are better critical thinkers and problem solvers (Reddy, 2018). While many colleges have courses that are specifically designed to meet diversity requirements (Akombo, 2013), infusing diversity throughout the university takes more than isolated courses. Diversity is not relegated to any particular course or program or discipline. According to the National Leadership Council (2007):

> Every field of study, no matter how "technical," is a community of practice. . . . In every community of practice, there are some people with power and others who lack and/or seek power. Often, questions of power are further complicated by legacies of racial, ethnic, gender, and other disparities. (p.39)

It is thus important for every program to examine its own relationship to issues of diversity and inclusion in order to provide students with opportunities to better understand both their fields and their responsibilities in relation to those fields.

Syllabi reviews have been used to analyze for multicultural competencies and course content (Stebnicki & Cubero, 2008; Booker & Campbell-Whatley, 2015; Teasley & Archuleta,

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2015). They can provide insight into instructors' course content, teaching and learning activities, assessment methods, and course rules (Goodwin, Chittle, Dixon, & Andrews, 2018; Merced, Stutman, & Mann, 2018). Syllabi change over time and can provide information about classroom climate, and factors such as the gender of the instructor can have an impact on the contents of the syllabi (Valentin & Grauerholz, 2019).

A syllabus is "a physical artifact outlining key structural elements of a course," and is a contract of sorts between the instructor and the students about what students will do, what they will not do, and other policies and rules (Palmer, Wheeler, & Aneece, 2016). According to You, Ruiz, & Warchal, "the format of any individual syllabus varies widely but generally includes the following sections: learning outcomes/objectives/ goals, course description, assignments, textbooks, grading, schedule, and policy" (2018, p. 347). In addition to these technical aspects of a course, a syllabus also gives insight into the instructor's philosophy of teaching and their viewpoint on students (Cullen & Harris, 2009). Diversity aims can appear in a syllabus' goals, course content, instructional materials and national standards (Basbay, 2014; Pugach & Blanton, 2012). One study, analyzing syllabi in teacher education programs, found that while the syllabi repeatedly referenced 'diversity,' a closer analysis showed that the term was typically used to refer to only disability, and not other identities such as race or class (Pugach & Blanton, 2012). As a syllabus is a complicated document, the inclusion of the word 'diversity' is not enough to show a real commitment to diversity — a deeper analysis is necessary.

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Colleges and universities need to do institutional research in order to make informed decisions on how to move forward in their goals. Even small colleges and universities are establishing institutional research offices with evolving roles to help the institutions grow (Brown, Hewitt, Lin & Vater, 2017). Institutional research can be used to enhance the student experience and lead to increased student success (Swing & Ross, 2016).

The need for this type of institutional research led directly to this study. To determine a path forward, the University decided that it needed to know just how much the curriculum — as it appears in syllabi — reflected diversity. With that knowledge, informed choices for faculty development and curricular reform could be proposed.

Method

This study was undertaken across the two campuses of Northern Vermont University. As part of a diversity initiative, two faculty researchers were recruited to analyze syllabi to determine the level of diversity present in the curriculum by conducting a syllabi analysis. The study was undertaken to determine how much diversity was present in the written syllabi at the University, and which categories of diversity were more represented than others.

The syllabi were collected from the central administration of the University, which collects syllabi from all faculty each semester. In order to keep a focus on the undergraduate

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experience, graduate syllabi and extension (non-campus) syllabi were removed from the sample. 261 total syllabi from all academic departments were analyzed.

Building on the work of Merced et al (2018), Valentin & Grauerholz (2019) and You et al (2018), the researchers created a coding system to rate the syllabi (Table 1). Further guiding the coding was a set of working definitions for diversity terminology (Table 2). All syllabi were coded as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
Coding Protocol

1. Course #
2. Campus
3. Instructor
4. Course Descriptions: Does the course description address 1 Race/ethnicity, 2 Cultural Diversity, 3 Gender, 4 Diverse sexualities, 5 Gender identity, 6 Ability, 7 Socio-economic status, 8 None present, 0 No such section in the syllabus
5. Learning objectives (Coded as in 5)
6. Assignments (Task used to evaluate a student): Separately graded assignments (not just mentioned in course calendar, but major assignments with descriptions and separate grade percentage in syllabus) (Coded as in 5)
7. Subject of required reading (Coded as in 5)
8. Class Topics (Focal areas of study addressed in each class, from course calendar) (Coded as in 5)
9. Disability statement: 1 present, 0 not present

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Table 2
Coding Definitions

> 1 Race/ethnicity: Relating to racial or ethnic history, policies, contemporary issues, or other similar topics
> 2 Cultural diversity: Relating to differences in traditions, languages, belief systems, or other similar topics
> 3 Gender: Relating to gender studies or theory, comparative gender studies, feminism, Title 9, or other similar topics
> 4 Diverse sexualities: Relating to LGBQ studies, identity, history, policy, or other similar topics
> 5 Gender identity: Relating to transgender issues or studies
> 6 Ability: Relating to disability issues, laws, or policies or other similar topics
> 7 Socio-economic status: Relating to poverty, class, income disparities, legal and political issues, or other similar topics

In addition, the study made note of which syllabi included a disability statement. A 'disability statement' is a notification of rights to accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities act and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act with directions as to how to access such accommodations.

Assignments in the syllabi which were optional (as in, students could choose to research a topic in the above list, but were not required to do so) were not counted as meeting the rubric. The syllabus needed to reflect that every student would learn this material in order to qualify.

In order to assure the quality of the coding, two researchers coded each syllabus. As per the method in Diament, Howat, & Lacome (2018) and You et al (2018), any discrepancy

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between the two coders' ratings was discussed and resolved. There was 100% inter-rater

agreement.

Results

The data for all analyzed syllabi are summarized in Tables 3-5.

Table 3
Overall Results

	Course Description		Learning Outcomes		Course Assignments		Subject of Assigned Reading		Course Calendar Topics	
	N	Percent (n/261)	N	Percent (n/261)	N	Percent (n/261)	N	Percent (n/261)	N	Percent (n/261)
Race/ Ethnicity	6	2.3	5	2	6	2.3	11	4.2	13	5
Cultural Diversity	25	9.6	24	9.2	13	5	20	7.7	27	10.3
Gender	6	2.3	6	2.3	6	2.3	7	2.7	12	4.6
Diverse Sexualities	1	0.3	2	0.8	6	2.3	4	1.5	5	2
Gender Identity	0	0	0	0	1	0.4	1	0.3	2	0.8
Ability	6	2.3	7	2.7	7	2.7	6	2.3	9	3.4
Socio- Economic Status	7	2.7	8	3	5	2	7	2.7	9	3.4
None Present	203	77.8	186	71.3	214	82	131	50.2	124	47.1

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No such section in syllabus	24	9.2	39	14.9	26	10	102	39.1	100	38.3

Table 4
Disability Statement Results

Present	225 (86.2%)
Not Present	36 (13.8%)

Table 5
Discrete Syllabi With Diversity Representation

Category	Number of Syllabi (n)	Percent (n/261)
Race/Ethnicity	22	8.4
Cultural Diversity	48	18.4
Gender	24	9.2
Diverse Sexuality	11	4.2
Gender Identity	3	1.1
Ability	14	5.4
Socio-Economic Status	23	8.8
Any Diversity Category Present	62	23.8
No Diversity Categories Present	199	76.2

For the curriculum as a whole, the representation of diversity was variable. Cultural diversity was the most represented, both in the curriculum as a whole (18.4%) and in each

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analyzed syllabus component. Race, gender, and socio-economic status were in a roughly equivalent number of syllabi, each appearing in roughly 9% of syllabi and represented across the syllabi components. Ability and diverse sexuality were in the next tier, appearing in 5.4 and 4.2 percent of syllabi respectively. Gender identity was the least represented, in only three syllabi (or 1.1%) in the entire analyzed curriculum.

By far the largest percentage of all syllabi did not, according to the research protocol, contain any of the diversity categories. 76.2% of the 261 syllabi contained no curricular diversity of any sort.

To take a closer look at how the diversity present in the curriculum as indicated by syllabi was represented in the content areas, the data was further separated by the Schools of the University. Since the sample sizes in certain majors or departments was so small as to not maintain anonymity, the use of Schools allows for a closer look into how academic focus areas are representing diversity in their syllabi without drawing conclusions about individual faculty or departments. Figures 6-17 show this data.

School of Arts and Communications

The School of Arts and Communications contains such programs as animation, journalism, creative writing and English, music, photography, dance, and visual arts. The dataset included 91 syllabi from the school of Arts and Communication.

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Table 6
Overall Results: School of Arts and Communications

	Course Description		Learning Outcomes		Course Assignments		Subject of Assigned Reading		Course Calendar Topics	
	N	Percent (n/91)	N	Percent (n/91)	N	Percent (n/91)	N	Percent (n/91)	N	Percent (n/91)
Race/ Ethnicity	1	1.1	1	1.1	1	1.1	3	3.3	3	3.3
Cultural Diversity	9	9.9	9	9.9	3	3.3	8	8.8	8	8.8
Gender	3	3.3	1	1.1	1	1.1	6	6.6	6	6.6
Diverse Sexualities	1	1.1	0	0	1	1.1	2	2.2	2	2.2
Gender Identity	0	0	0	0	1	1.1	1	1.1	1	1.1
Ability	0	0	0	0	1	1.1	0	0	0	0
Socio-Economic Status	1	1.1	1	1.1	1	1.1	4	4.4	4	4.4
None Present	72	79.1	67	73.6	71	78	28	30.8	44	48.4
No such section in syllabus	10	11	14	15.4	17	18.7	54	59.3	38	41.8

Table 7
Disability Statement Results: School of Arts and Communications

Present	72 (79.1%)
Not Present	19 (20.9%)

Table 8
Discrete Syllabi With Diversity Representation: School of Arts and Communications

Category	Number of Syllabi (n)	Percent (n/91)
Race/Ethnicity	5	5.5
Cultural Diversity	16	17.6
Gender	8	8.8
Diverse Sexuality	3	3.3
Gender Identity	2	2.2
Ability	1	1.1
Socio-Economic Status	6	6.6
Any Diversity Category Present	17	18.7
No Diversity Categories Present	74	81.3

School of Business and Leadership

The School of Business and Leadership contains such programs as accounting, business administration, music management and production, and outdoor education and tourism. The dataset included 51 syllabi from the school of Business and Leadership.

Table 9
Overall Results: School of Business and Leadership

	Course Description		Learning Outcomes		Course Assignments		Subject of Assigned Reading		Course Calendar Topics	
	N	Percent (n/51)	N	Percent (n/51)	N	Percent (n/51)	N	Percent (n/51)	N	Percent (n/51)
Race/ Ethnicity	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2
Cultural Diversity	2	3.9	4	7.8	1	2	1	2	4	7.8
Gender	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Diverse Sexualities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gender Identity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ability	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Socio- Economic Status	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	2
None Present	49	96.1	37	72.5	49	96.1	39	76.5	29	56.9
No such section in syllabus	0	0	9	17.6	1	2	10	19.6	17	33.3

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Table 10
Disability Statement Results: School of Business and Leadership

Present	48 (94.1%)
Not Present	3 (5.9%)

Table 11
Discrete Syllabi With Diversity Representation: School of Business and Leadership

Category	Number of Syllabi (n)	Percent (n/51)
Race/Ethnicity	2	3.9
Cultural Diversity	7	13.7
Gender	1	2
Diverse Sexuality	0	0
Gender Identity	0	0
Ability	1	2
Socio-Economic Status	1	2
Any Diversity Category Present	9	17.6
No Diversity Categories Present	42	82.4

School of Cultural and Human Studies

The School of Cultural and Human Studies includes such programs as anthropology, education, criminal justice, history, and psychology. The dataset included 47 syllabi from the school of Cultural and Human Studies.

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Table 12
Overall Results: School of Cultural and Human Studies

	Course Description		Learning Outcomes		Course Assignments		Subject of Assigned Reading		Course Calendar Topics	
	N	Percent (n/47)	N	Percent (n/47)	N	Percent (n/47)	N	Percent (n/47)	N	Percent (n/47)
Race/ Ethnicity	4	8.5	4	8.5	5	10.6	7	14.9	8	17
Cultural Diversity	13	27.7	9	19.1	9	19.1	11	23.4	13	27.7
Gender	3	6.4	4	8.5	5	10.6	1	2.1	4	8.5
Diverse Sexualities	0	0	2	4.3	5	10.6	2	4.3	2	4.3
Gender Identity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ability	6	12.8	6	12.8	6	12.8	6	12.8	9	19.1
Socio- Economic Status	6	12.8	6	12.8	4	8.5	3	6.4	3	6.4
None Present	23	48.9	24	51.1	29	61.7	18	38.3	15	31.9
No such section in syllabus	2	4.3	5	10.6	1	2.1	12	25.5	12	25.5

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Table 13
Disability Statement Results: School of Cultural and Human Studies

Present	39 (83%)
Not Present	8 (17%)

Table 14
Discrete Syllabi With Diversity Representation: School of Cultural and Human Studies

Category	Number of Syllabi (n)	Percent (n/47)
Race/Ethnicity	14	29.8
Cultural Diversity	22	46.8
Gender	13	27.7
Diverse Sexuality	7	14.9
Gender Identity	0	0
Ability	12	25.5
Socio-Economic Status	15	31.9
Any Diversity Category Present	32	68
No Diversity Categories Present	15	31.9

School of Physical and Life Sciences

The School of Physical and Life Sciences contains such programs as atmospheric sciences, biology, computer information systems, data science, exercise science, and mathematics. The dataset included 72 syllabi from the school of Physical and Life Sciences.

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Table 15
Overall Results: School of Physical and Life Sciences

	Course Description		Learning Outcomes		Course Assignments		Subject of Assigned Reading		Course Calendar Topics	
	N	Percent (n/72)	N	Percent (n/72)	N	Percent (n/72)	N	Percent (n/72)	N	Percent (n/72)
Race/ Ethnicity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4
Cultural Diversity	1	1.4	2	2.8	0	0	0	0	2	2.8
Gender	0	0	1	1.4	0	0	0	0	1	1.4
Diverse Sexualities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4
Gender Identity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4
Ability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Socio-Economic Status	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.4
None Present	59	81.9	58	80.6	65	90.3	46	63.9	36	50
No such section in syllabus	12	16.7	11	15.3	7	9.7	26	36.1	33	45.8

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Table 16
Disability Statement Results: School of Physical and Life Sciences

Present	66 (91.7%)
Not Present	6 (8.3%)

Table 17
Discrete Syllabi With Diversity Representation: School of Physical and Life Sciences

Category	Number of Syllabi (n)	Percent (n/72)
Race/Ethnicity	1	1.4
Cultural Diversity	3	4.2
Gender	2	2.8
Diverse Sexuality	1	1.4
Gender Identity	1	1.4
Ability	0	0
Socio-Economic Status	1	1.4
Any Diversity Category Present	4	5.6
No Diversity Categories Present	68	94.4

Discussion

The results show several sobering trends in the University curriculum. One is that the

vast majority of syllabi (76.2%) show no diversity representation which meets the terms used in

the study protocol. Another is that the 23.8% of syllabi which do have diversity are not evenly

distributed, with the vast majority of them being located in the School of Cultural and Human

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Studies and the School of Arts and Communications. The sciences, in particular, had almost a total dearth of diversity present.

In addition, is it clear that the types of diversity which are present in that segment of syllabi that contain evidence of diversity are not evenly represented across the categories of diversity. Cultural diversity was the most represented, followed by race, gender, and socio-economic status. Ability, diverse sexuality, and gender identity were the least represented. If syllabi represent what is important within a course, it is clear that these are the least key to the curriculum of the University. Considering the modern controversies about all of these issues, it is a deficit in the curriculum to have them represented so poorly. Additionally, "if diversity is conceptualized as a series of independent, unconnected social identity markers, paying much greater attention to one such marker relative to another may create an imbalance… that has real consequences for how graduates are prepared" (Pugach & Blanton, 2012, p. 264). Having syllabi that address diversity in such an uneven way shows that even such diversity as was presented was not balanced or integrated with other aspects of the human condition. A student who has taken some of the classes in this curriculum may be somewhat prepared to encounter a person of a different culture, but perhaps not a transgender person of a different culture.

It can be argued that an analysis of syllabi does not capture the full scope of a course's content, and that there may be diversity present in classes which does not show up in the syllabus. However, as Palmer et al. noted, the syllabi do contain the "key structural elements"

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of a course and its content (2016). The syllabi which do visibly incorporate diversity into the syllabus communicate to the student and to any instructors who teach the course that this is, in fact, a key element of the course. Whereas a syllabus that does not directly include diversity in the written text of what is important about the course leaves that subject to the discretion and interest of the instructor, and communicates that such topics are not central to the course, or at least not as central as the things which are listed. Such courses certainly would not meet the idea of diversity as the 'center of higher education' (Smith, 2009). Certainly, for schools or programs that carry almost no mention of diversity at all, it communicates that such topics are not only marginal, but irrelevant to the curriculum.

It does not seem likely that a student in the sciences or the arts should know nothing about ability or disability, but according to the written curriculum there are no courses whatsoever that address this topic. It is the same for a business and leadership student in the area of sexuality, and a cultural and human studies student in the area of gender identity. It is possible that it is assumed that those areas are covered in out-of-major classes in the general education curriculum, but this idea is not borne out in this data; finding a class with gender identity in the general education curriculum would be a needle in a haystack. Even if, as stated in the limitations, there may be a syllabus or two in each school which does reflect these things but which was not submitted and therefore not included in the data, the lack of representation of these topics in the schools would still be a clear issue.

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The overwhelming presence of disability statements in the syllabi across the schools shows that a concerted effort to provide this content has been mostly, though not completely, successful. The force of the ADA and Section 504 as laws put forth by the federal government, and not only as university-based suggestions or initiatives, could have had an impact on this relative success of this area of the study. However, it is most likely that University emphasis on disability statements, via consistent messaging from the disability support offices and administration, has led to the widespread adoption of such language. This suggests that placing an emphasis as an institution on certain parts of the syllabus can have an impact. It is important to note, however, that the inclusion of a disability statement in a syllabus does not change any other part of the course. Instruction, topics, and other curricular aspects of a course are not changed by the presence of a disability statement. Increasing the presence of other types of diversity in syllabi would very likely require such curricular change.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First of all, the scope was restricted to campus-based undergraduates only, leaving out the graduate, extension, and online programs offered by the University. Furthermore, the study focused on a large sample of syllabi and only used the information contained explicitly within the syllabus. Therefore, it did not analyze valuable information such as the diversity background of the authors of the readings contained in the syllabi, which would have required additional research. It is of particular interest to consider

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which voices are given authority in our classrooms, but it was simply not possible to adequately discern identity categories such as race and ethnicity of textbook authors with the time and resources available.

Also, only syllabi which were actually submitted to the administration were included; while all syllabi are meant to be submitted, not all faculty had done so and therefore not all possible classes and sources of diversity were considered. Thus, while the sample size was large enough to adequately represent the curriculum, the sample itself was not neither complete nor random, but was instead shaped by which faculty chose to submit syllabi.

One necessary but noteworthy limitation of this study was that syllabi do not provide a full picture of what happens in a classroom. They serve as a starting point, and the data we collect from them opens up larger discussions about how instructors can make diversity and inclusion more central to their courses and curricula. This study did not measure other diversity-related instruction which might occur in a course, but which is not reflected on the syllabus, nor did the study examine how diversity mentioned in syllabi was actually used in the classroom.

Another limitation is that the method could not include every possible issue related to diversity and inclusion. Several syllabi included discrimination based on age, for example, which was not a category in the study method. Some syllabi also referenced social justice in broad

ways that could not be reflected in the protocol for this study; with different methodology, such syllabus content could have been measured.

Implications & Moving Forward

There are two main possibilities to be drawn from the data: that three-fourths of courses across the University do not address diversity at all, or that some percentage of them do so but do not represent it in their syllabi. Either way, some introspection is required.

If faculty believe that there is diversity present in their courses that does not show up in their syllabi, and that therefore the results presented here underreport the diversity in the curriculum, then the question becomes 'Why?' If diversity is important to the class, why was it not important enough to note on the syllabus when other things were considered that critical? This would require some soul-searching about what is considered critical and what is not. What is it about diversity content that has caused it to be unspoken, undocumented, an 'off the books' part of the curriculum? Have syllabi simply not been revised over time as the content of the course has shifted? Do some faculty see syllabi as only a way to get across technical information and not course content, and is that a mindset that can be shifted? If this is the case, then the implication is that syllabi have to be treated as living documents, and revised more frequently to convey accurately what is important in the class content. Schools,

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departments, or majors could dedicate time to make sure that all important aspects of the course are noted accurately.

The other possibility — that, in large part, the data here is accurate and disability is present in a vanishingly small part of the coursework in the University — would require equal soul-searching and more work. This would require a hard look at our curriculum to see where diversity should be and yet is not. It would also require that some programs and majors who perhaps have not reflected on the importance of diversity in their academic focus do some deep thinking to reframe that view. It is not a requirement that every course in the curriculum have aspects of diversity as a focus, but to find that certain programs do not engage in a study of diversity at all would be a flaw that would require program-level analysis to see where students are being short-changed. Professional development, to help faculty look at their curriculum and see where inclusion of diversity in the curriculum would enrich their programs and improve their student experience and outcomes, would be a wise step. Faculty-to-faculty discussion, where faculty who do include diversity explain why and how they do so, could be a high-impact practice.

It is most likely that both of the above theories are true to an extent: that there is some diversity in an unwritten curriculum that should become codified, and that there is diversity which is simply not present in programs and majors where it should be. In this case, both of the above strategies should be pursued. Professional development and faculty conversations

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should ensue, with coordination by some level of the administration, either at the school or the University level. The on-campus diversity committees, in cooperation with the Center for Teaching and Learning, could be entrusted with facilitating this discussion, hosting syllabus workshops, offering resources, or pursuing other avenues to increase the study of diversity in the curriculum. Campus social justice groups and the Center For Teaching and Learning have begun this important work, but the data suggests that the University must be even more intentional in supporting and furthering these efforts. Also, as the other colleges in the system become more unified, the other campuses may want to conduct similar studies so that a unified system could move forward toward a more inclusive curriculum. The newly-designed VSC General Education Program, for example, includes diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes in each cluster, and faculty across the Vermont State Colleges System will need sufficient professional development to make those outcomes a meaningful part of their courses.

The study also noted that there are two mutually constitutive pieces to crafting diverse syllabi and courses — on one hand there is diverse content and on the other there are inclusive classroom practices. Equitable classroom policies and management, as well as disability statements and other similar statements, help to create an environment for students that works in tandem with more inclusive content to create a pedagogy that, as explained by the National Leadership Council (2007), fosters cognitive development and civic engagement. It is therefore recommended that the institution work to offer information about statements that

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faculty can use or adapt for inclusion in their syllabi. Although it exceeds the scope of this study, it is also suggested that professional development opportunities address equity in pedagogical methods and policies as well as in course content.

A Title III student focus group study conducted with NVU students in fall 2020 aligns with the findings of this curriculum review as well. Students in that study indicated that they felt their courses lacked sufficient diversity, and minority student-athletes also reported a lack of psychological safety on campus. These student concerns support the findings and recommendations of this curriculum review. Furthermore, these focus group reports serve as a reminder that students must have a voice in the diversity work the University undertakes moving forward. Workshops or community conversations that include faculty, staff, and students will ensure that the diversity work more fully addresses the needs of our community and more fully incorporates all facets of our community.

Given the lack of diversity present in these findings, It is also recommended, as per Goodwin et al (2018), that the University continue to analyze syllabi on an ongoing basis moving forward as part of institutional research and to track progress. While a sample size as large as the one included in this study is probably not feasible on an ongoing basis, periodic syllabi analysis on a random, targeted, or school/department level could help show if progress is being made and of what sort, and if the professional development program is having any effect.

Johnson Campus | 337 College Hill | Johnson, VT 05656
Lyndon Campus | 1001 College Road | PO Box 919 | Lyndonville, VT 05851

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Summary

Diversity is represented on syllabi in roughly 25% of the courses evaluated for this study. Cultural, racial, gender, and socioeconomic diversity are the most represented, with sexuality, gender identity, and ability the least. Statements of ADA/504 disability services are mostly represented, but not always. Further action to increase the visibility of diversity in both syllabi and the overall curriculum is advised to move the University forward.

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Vermont Technical College End Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report AY 20-21

Kathleen Mason, Coordinator of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

<u>Achievement and Highlights for the Year</u>

Vermont Tech made tangible progress in creating a more equitable and inclusive community during the 20-21 Academic Year despite being predominantly remote for learning, teaching, supporting and communicating with our Vermont Tech community.

Among the many achievements for Diversity Equity and Inclusion were the implementation of a robust "Lunch and Learn" fundamental DEI educational programming. Faculty, Staff and Students attended 6 different trainings on Fundamental DEI topics. Similar educational trainings were presented to numerous offices, classrooms and Resident Assistant trainings.

Another major achievement that was accomplished this year was the establishment of a college wide Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee. This committee established a mission statement and 4 separate priority areas that are being addressed by subcommittees. This work will continue into the next academic year. Please reference the attachment for the mission statement.

Finally we were able to engage in intentional conversation and planning across the VSC as it relates to supporting students with marginalized identities. This work included: supporting BIPOC students across the system to voice their concerns to the Board of Trustees, creating a VSC wide system for pronoun and gender identity selection and increasing understanding of inclusive practices within the classrooms.

<u>Critical Issues</u>
Challenges will always be present when asking communities to broaden understanding of how to be a more inclusive and equitable community. Change and self-reflection is difficult both for the individual as well as for any system. There were multiple attempts to establish a campus climate reporting system, however after multiple attempts to collaborate with many different people and offices it became apparent that creating a campus climate reporting system was not a priority during this academic year. Please see goals for AY 21.22 to address campus climate in a more manageable manner.

Another challenge that surfaced this year was the ability to address hiring practices to ensure that our practices are as free from implicit bias as possible. Attempts to address implicit bias in hiring practices were met with resistance because there was fear that anything that might be done at Vermont Tech would have to be approved by the Chancellor's Office. Therefore any attempts to examine or potentially change hiring practices will need to be addressed from the Chancellor's office moving forward.

<u>Department Goal Achievements from 2020/2021</u>
1. Provide racial/social justice trainings/workshops/programming each month
    Introductory level racial and social justice trainings were provided throughout the year including monthly "Lunch and learn" sessions as well as trainings for offices and different courses as a guest lecturer. Specifically the following topics and the dates they were addressed are below.

    - Implicit Bias 10/2/20

- Words Matter: Recognizing Stereotypes, and racist/bias expressions in our everyday lives: 10/9/20
- Interrupting Bias and racism: Decision making and Practice 10/16/20
- Engaging in challenging conversations 10/30/20
- So the election just happened. Now what? 11/6/20
- Becoming an Ally 11/13/20

2. Establish a college wide DEI committee with stakeholders from across the state which include faculty, staff and students

- 1/6/21: DEI committee retreat. A three hour virtual retreat with 20 faculty and staff. Staff and Faculty included:
  - Karry Booska, Director of Career Services
  - Darcy Brouillette, Student Support Project Manager, CEWD
  - Caitlyn Clark, Coordinator of Student Support Services
  - Jean-Marie Clark, Dean of Williston Campus
  - Mary Cooper, Center for Academic Success Coordinator
  - Jason Enser, Dean of Students
  - Veronica Golden, Hartness Library Cataloger
  - Robin Goodall, Coordinator of Disability Services
  - Linda Gustafson, Faculty
  - Mary Kathryn Juskiewicz, Associate Dean of Outreach and Support
  - Hilary Linehan, Director of Athletics
  - Bonnie Lord, Hartness Library Reference Librarian
  - Dana Mitchell, Coordinator of Student Activities
  - Curtis Ostler, Associate Dean of Resource Development
  - John Popkiss, Faculty- Aviation
  - Steven Prochet, Hartness Library Reference Librarian
  - Kelly Rue Riso, Director of Human Resources
  - Cory Tardie, Senior Associate Director of Admissions
  - Keith Tookey, Faculty- Computer Sciences
  - Linda Wise, Faculty - Mathematics

No students participated during the 20-21 academic year however students have been invited to join the committees for the 21-22 academic year. During the retreat, we established our motivation to engage in this work, developed a working mission statement and set priorities. The four priority areas are:

1. Onboarding and Hiring practices:
2. Inclusive language and practices
3. Education opportunities and Speaker events
4. Resource Hub and Web page development.

3. Engage faculty in discussions of inclusivity in curriculum and materials

- This goal became part of a large conversation that the VSC engaged in. The VSC asked that the colleges collaborate to develop a singular VSC designated General Education Learning Outcomes. As part of that work, the committee incorporated DEI objectives into each of the 7 learning objectives. The VSC designated General Education Learning Outcomes with DEI objectives were approved by VTC but not approved by NVU or Castleton. This will be an on-going conversation across the VSC to find consensus. Next

steps include faculty training to support the inclusion of DEI concepts into the learning objectives. Training will start at this year's Academic Retreat on May 24, 2021

Goals for 2021/2022

1. Goal: Implement and Manage DEI Web page to include general information, college, local and national resources, training opportunities, Best Practice Guides, Campus Climate reporting

    How it will be measured:
    1. Continue DEI committee work with 4 priority areas including:
        a. On boarding resources (students) and hiring practices
        b. Educational programming and speakers
        c. Best Practice guide development and inclusive language
        d. Resource Hub
    2. Launch of live Web Page that is linked from a "front facing" page
    3. Implementation of a Campus Climate Reporting system** focusing on baseline data collection
    4. Monthly DEI Newsletter that is posted to DEI landing page that addresses campus, local or national occurrences, reinforces the focus of the year, the goals we are trying to address
    5. Implementation and management of on-going DEI trainings and events including:
        a. Fundamentals lunch and learns
        b. Speaker series
        c. Learning community opportunities
        d. Incorporate feedback forms with trainings to gain more insight into how effective trainings are
        e. Start each training with establishing ground rules for learning communities including:
            i. Commit to learning
            ii. Assume good intentions
            iii. Share the learning, maintain the confidences
            iv. There are no bad people
            v. This is a journey, not a destination
            vi. Bring your whole authentic self to the conversation

2. Goal: Increase a positive Campus Climate

    How it will be measured:
    1. Administer a baseline campus climate survey in Fall semester, incorporate questions that elicit topics students, faculty and staff are most interested in learning about.
    2. Intentional training to Public Safety and Resident Assistants on Identity, empathy, Diversity and Inclusion as well as community building.
    3. Establish data points and distinct student groups to aggregate data for comparison late in spring semester
    4. Provide on-going training and events on Equity and Inclusion, provide affinity group opportunities for different identity groups such as BIPOC students and LGBTQ+ students
    5. Establish a Campus Climate Reporting system with tracking, follow up and supports ** focus on baseline data collection
    6. Establish end of year "award" recognizing student, faculty and staff that has shown significant dedication to learning and engaging in DEI best practices and actively improving campus climate.
    7. Develop a BIPOC affinity and student leadership group in collaboration with other VSCs

3. Goal: Targeted student support to defined student populations

How it will be measured:
1. Regular communication and follow up support to determined student populations (URM, International, students in non-traditional major for their gender)
2. Support individual students who require more than the general outreach provided.
3. Begin discussions with other VSCs regarding best path forward for International student recruitment and support

Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) Review

1. **Is Student Affairs providing comprehensive DEI information, resources and opportunities to the VTC community?**

How do we know?
Student Affairs has provided fundamental learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff. This was accomplished through Lunch and Learn DEI fundamentals workshops, office workshops and student leadership trainings and classroom workshops.

Through the 2019-20 Student Affairs Student Survey it was determined that students do want to have access to more information about diversity, equity and inclusion. The 20-21 student survey also indicated that students do not understand the depth and breadth of what is meant by "diversity". Therefore trainings next year will include many opportunities to define and learn about the multiple and intersectionality of identities that people can hold.

Faculty and Staff were not surveyed specifically about DEI information that they would like to know more about. However, faculty and staff were offered the opportunity to become members of the DEI committee where they could help shape the priorities moving forward. Surveying staff and faculty about what DEI information they would like to know more about is an important next step in providing information to our community.

2. **Is Student Affairs collaborating with offices and departments to provide DEI information and programming tailored to specific student, staff or faculty groups? (i.e, provide workshops in collaboration with career services about DEI in the workplace, and employment interview process)**

How would we know?
1.   Weekly retention meetings with Key SS, Admissions, Marketing, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.
2. Career Services and non profit VT Professional of Color Network to support career connections and mentoring for BIPOC students
3. Key SS and admissions workshop on implicit bias
4. Bi-weekly Students of Concern meetings

3. **Do VTC students, staff and faculty know what resources and supports they have to address incidents of harm they may have witnessed or experienced that was based on their identity due to bias, micro-aggressions, stereotyping, discrimination or other exclusionary actions?**

   How would we know?
   1. 6 college wide introductory level DEI workshops
   2. Collaboration with Academic Affairs to address student reported incidents of bias, micro-aggressions, stereotyping, or discrimination

4. **Do Students, staff or Faculty who identify as a member of a marginalized group have the resources and supports to believe that they are an integral and included member of our community?**

   How would we know?
1. Students are directed to Kathleen Mason, Coordinator of Diversity Equity and Inclusion when incidences of harm are known.